

THE REASON

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UNTIL THERE'S A CURE... CLEANING FOR A REASON®
www.cleaningforareason.org

HAPPY 2016! CLEANING FOR A REASON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF SERVING WOMEN BATTLING CANCER.

HANDLE THE CUSTOMER, NOT THE COMPLAINT

HOW TO NAVIGATE THROUGH A CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUE

"Statistics suggest that when customers complain, business owners and managers ought to get excited about it. The complaining customer represents a huge opportunity for more business."
~Zig Ziglar

Few things are more important in your business today than keeping current customers happy, while adding new customers. Competition for business is fierce and making happy, satisfied customers is the lifeblood of your success. By focusing on the customers, companies are really broadening their customer base by increased referrals. Little else you do in the course of building your business will have the impact that a positive customer experience does.

But what happens when you have customers who are less than happy with the service they received from you? How do we best turn around the situation and create raving fans who will sing your praises?

Here are some ideas that will help you diffuse the situation and keep the customer. As a business that's also donating services to cancer patients, this objective of a happy "customer" will also help ensure that a situation does not create even more added stress for a patient.

We first identify the cause of the problem. Did we promise something we couldn't deliver such as a specific arrival time? Or cleaning performance that didn't meet the customer's expectations? Or a valuable was broken? Did the behavior of cleaning techs fail to live up to the professional image expected?

Industry studies tell us that the #1 reason customers get upset is **failing to meet their expectations of what you will do**. Sometimes known as over promising and under delivering, this happens when clarity and thoroughness are missing from communication with customers and prospective customers. We know that many times customers hear what they want to hear and interpret your conversations differently from your intention. This makes the messaging and clear communication with customers even more important. Customers need to clearly understand exactly what service you will provide and what the cost will be. There can be no room for guessing.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET A CUSTOMER COMPLAINT?

Take a deep breath and put yourself in the customer's place. How would you respond if this happened to you? Use these easy techniques to quickly turn around the situation:

1. Get all the facts as the customer sees them—not your interpretation—the customer's.
2. Listen and process the information before making comments.
3. Check your body language. Do not give the appearance of annoyance as the customer speaks.
4. Check your attitude. Know that your attitude comes through in the tone of your voice—keep it neutral, friendly and show concern for your customer's feelings.
5. Check your language. Use calming phrases such as "I'm happy to look into that," "Thank you for letting me know," "Let me investigate and call you back. What is the best time to reach you?"
6. Use the two most effective words to calm an angry customer—"I understand."
7. Take care of the problem immediately. Customers want action now.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: MAIDPRO DENTON ON WHY CLEANING FOR A REASON?

Recently, I was asked the question "Why Cleaning For A Reason?" My answer is simple: It is the right thing to do. We give women, battling the horrific disease of cancer and its side effects, a little joy in their life. We take something off the To Do list. My reason is also found in my personal journey.

It's 2 a.m. in the morning on September 21, 1973. The doctor has just pronounced my first wife of 14 years, Mary Kathryn, dead at the age of 36. It was just 10 months earlier in November that she was diagnosed with cancer. What followed were several trips to MD Anderson for tests, exploratory surgery, and many months of chemotherapy. Each treatment brought nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, weight loss, and the loss of energy. The children, a 12-year daughter and an 8-year old son, and I did all we could to help keep Mary Kathryn's spirits up and bring some joy into her life. One of our tasks was to clean the areas of our home she spent the most time in; she was to heal, not clean.

Now fast forward to May 18, 2009, my second wife Sharon has just been diagnosed with breast cancer. The doctor had already made an appointment with a surgeon. The treatment suggested was a traditional cut, burn, and poison. At the same time, a trusted friend told us of an alternative treatment they had used. Sharon researched the doctor and talked to some of his patients and decided to go with the alternative. Exactly 90 days after treatment began, a CAT scan revealed no sign of a tumor.

In June of 2009, while attending an industry meeting, we met with Debbie Sardone, founder of Cleaning For A Reason. Honestly, it was a no brainer for us to partner with the foundation. At that time, our cleaning



Owner Clark Vaughan (bottom right) and his staff at MaidPro Denton are committed to making a difference for local women battling cancer.

company was already a 19-year old janitorial and maid service. The idea of donating a priority clean to women undergoing cancer treatment was simply an honor.

It's now May 4, 2011, the big "C" is back and this time it is stage four breast cancer and it has already spread to my wife's lungs and bones. Doctors told us we had six months without treatment and eight months with treatment. Once again, we returned to our doctor with the alternative treatment. In July of that year, Sharon had a CAT scan, which showed no new growth. Then on June 8, 2012, on a return trip to Boston to finalize the conversion of our residential cleaning service

to the MaidPro family, we were involved in an auto accident. My injuries turned out to be insignificant; however Sharon's were life ending. On June 11, 2012, Sharon went home to be with the Lord.

I began with the question "Why Cleaning For A Reason?" The simple answer is it's the right thing to do. Now that I have shared the impact that cancer has had on my life, you can better understand why Cleaning For A Reason is a great ministry. All of my staff who have cleaned for these ladies consider it an absolute honor to be of service for them. We at Maidpro will do our small part to not let this horrific disease win.

WELCOME NEW PARTNERS

- 2 Local Gals Housekeeping** Murray, UT
Alma's Cleaning Services Corona, CA
Amber's Housekeeping Services Perris, CA
Angela's Cleaning Woodbridge, VA
Baltimore's Best Cleaning, LLC
Baltimore, MD
Care Cleaning, LLC Lafayette, IN
Clean Bee Schwenksville, PA
Clean Choices, Inc. Woodbridge, VA
Clean Right Services, LLC Oconto, WI
Divinely Cleaning Los Angeles, CA
Dusted Home Cleaning Pittsville, MD
Generations Cleaning Wakefield, KS
Guardian Angels In Home Services, LLC
Caruthersville, MO
Ketcham Cleaning Sunrise Beach, MO
M&C Cleaning Solutions Orlando, FL
Maid OK Norman, OK
Merry Maids of Rochester Rochester, NY
Merry Maids of Syracuse Syracuse, NY
My Maids Orange Park, FL
Savassi Cleaning Services, LLC
Boca Raton, FL
Sears Maid Services of North Texas
McKinney, TX
Serene Clean Natural & Organic Cleaning Services Denver, NC
Susan's Green Cleaning Seattle, WA
The Mop Ladies, LLC York, PA
Total Care Housekeeping Broken Arrow, OK

CLEANING FOR A REASON CORE VALUES



FREE
House Cleaning
FOR WOMEN UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR CANCER

DELIVER OUR PROMISES WITH COMPASSION to our customers and partners

Provide TRANSPARENCY in all we do
Be HONEST AND ETHICAL in our actions and words

Hold a PASSIONATE COMMITMENT to our vision

Be RESPONSIBLE in the management of our resources
INSPIRE others

Sponsors



FROM THE FOUNDER’S DESK

THE SECRET TO CUSTOMER LOYALTY

“The secret to customer loyalty lies in putting the interests of the customer ahead of your own.”
—Jeff Gitomer, Business Trainer

Customer loyalty is the key to profitability. The math is simple. It costs more to acquire a new customer than to keep a current one. A maid service will spend between \$150 to \$300 to attract one repeat customer. Customer loyalty doesn't just happen; it takes repeated, consistent effort on your part. Here are five secrets to cultivating customer loyalty:

- **Have a sales philosophy that emphasizes long-term relationship building.** Think long-term friendships, not end-of-month sales. Over the years, some customers become friends. You were there when they had their first child, when they had surgery, when their son graduated, the death of a spouse, the journey of cancer. Don't just see your customers as a life-long paycheck. See them now as the life-long relationship you want to have with them. Don't be a stranger, a “company.” Be a person they know, like, and trust. Start early—nurture the relationship.

- **Focus on saying, “Yes!”** Think about how you can make your customer's life better—not necessarily things you will charge for. Are you too focused on what you don't do? Change your no to yes. Windows? Yes—even if you sub or refer it out. Fridge cleaning? Yes—for an extra charge. Strong relationships are built when you can say yes more often than no. A customer needed a chimney sweep service. Though not something we do, we offered to find her one at no charge. She was so grateful; we helped in a time of need. Our ability to help becomes a means of maintaining a relationship and staying on the radar of an existing, former, or prospective client.
- **Always deliver on what you promised.** If you promised the moon, deliver it along with a handful of stars. You want to shine in your customer's eyes. Delivering on your promises is doing what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it. Every time you follow through on a commitment,

small or large, you build trust. And if you go above and beyond, you make an even stronger impression.

- **Become the undeniable expert to your customers, prospects, and community.** Promote that expertise. Offer advice to news media, write articles for magazines, volunteer for the “Ask the Expert” column—or start one! Teach a class on speed cleaning or spring cleaning.
- **Help your customers build their own business.** Refer your customers to those you know. Mention your customers in your newsletters, cross promote, endorse, and recommend. Referrals go a long way with customers. Make it a priority to help your customers succeed.

Customer loyalty is the result of consistently positive emotional experiences and the perceived value of an experience, which includes the product or services. An emphasis on customer relationships is the most cost-effective way to drive customer satisfaction, customer retention, and customer loyalty.



HANDLE THE CUSTOMER, NOT THE COMPLAINT

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If you are hearing this from customers “Oh I thought you were going to . . .,” “I expected you an hour ago,” “I didn't know you weren't going to clean that,” it's time to look at how thoroughly you are describing your service during the sales process. Whether it's verbally by phone, in person, or simply listed on your website, a clear description of what you will do and what it will cost is a preventative in keeping complaints to a minimum. If these types of comments are surfacing in your company, be aware that you are setting yourself up for complaints. Review your sales process for clarity and specificity.

Some other causes of poor customer satisfaction that can be avoided are as follows:

- Differences in what is expected and what is delivered in service delivery
- Uncaring and untrained employees
- Poor handling of customer complaints
- No corporate Culture of Care
- Employees not empowered to give good service and take care of the customer (too rule or policy driven)
- Poor treatment of employees as internal customers—sets a very bad example

In each of these causes lies great opportunity for improvement in the way customers are handled and treated. Examine each one to see where your company ranks. Ask yourself the following:

- Am I certain that customers understand what we offer and what we charge?
- Are my field personnel delivering what we said we would?
- Do my employees demonstrate that they care about customers and are they well trained in what they do? Am I sure about that?
- When we get a complaint, do I address it immediately and show the customer I understand? Do I take action and follow up with the customer?
- Does care and concern permeate throughout my company in everything we say and do?
- Do my employees know that whatever decisions they make in the course of their job has to be customer satisfaction driven—no exceptions?
- Do I treat my employees as my best customers—because they are?

Need improvement? It's never too late to work on your **Culture of Care**. Remember that 68 percent of customers who stop doing business with a service

company do so because of the treatment they received and the perception of indifference on the part of the company.

Understand that customers want to be heard, see action taken, and sense that you care. If you can do those three things, you will quickly diffuse the situation and the chance of saving your reputation and the customer will increase.

Customers stay with companies who demonstrate (not just talk) that they care about them. Customers know when you care and appreciate their business. So lead by example, set the tone of customer care in your company, and understand that a positive customer experience is still the most valuable and best form of advertising for your company.



Sharon L. Cowan, CBSE is a business consultant, speaker, and author with over 30 years in the cleaning industry. She was the former chairman and CEO of a successful regional commercial and residential cleaning company. Sharon is an instructor at Indian River State College in the Environmental Services Department and also serves as treasurer on the Cleaning For A Reason Board of Directors.


RECORD CLEANUP WINNERS



Congratulations!

- Simply Sparkling Cleaning Services**
Mike Desjardins, Owner
- I Love to Clean**
Kaye Wallace, Owner
- Merry Maids of Warrenton**
Tom McDermott, Owner
- American Maid Cleaning**
Liz Trotter, Owner

SAVE THE DATE

 **Mark your calendars for our upcoming Teleseminars (4PM CDT)**

January 20 — How To Handle Customer Complaints (Sharon Cowan, Cleaning Business Consulting Group)

February 17 — Marketing Through Social Media (Debbie Saviano, Social Media Consultant)

March 16 — Cleaning For A Reason Week

CHARTER PARTNERS

- American Maid Cleaning, LLC
- Buckets & Bows Maid Service, Inc.
- Clean & Simple Cleaning
- Complete Custom Cleaning, LLC
- Dial A Maid, LLC
- Domestic Aide of Tulsa
- Domestic Service Resource, Inc.
- Guarantee Girls
- Imperial Cleaning Company
- Jo Ann's Home Solution (formerly Jo Ann's Professional Cleaning)
- Johnny Sparkles Cleaning
- Life Maid Easy
- Lilly's Cleaning Service, Inc.
- More Time for You
- Never Clean Again
- Partners In Grime – MO
- Pearl's Home Cleaning Angels
- Pride Klean Service Corp
- Teresa's Family Cleaning, Inc.
- The Cleaning Authority – Nashville
- The Cleaning Pros, Inc.
- The Cleaning Solution
- The Upstairs Maid



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If you're reading this, so are your potential customers.
Contact lynn@cleaningforareason.org for details.

And now we welcome
the new year, full
of things that have
never been.

~Rainer Maria Rilke



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