



AMCIS

Admissions, Marketing and Communications
in Independent Schools

www.amcis.co.uk

“The Top Three Things that Customers Really Notice about Your Service!”

Derek Williams – Founder of The WOW! Awards, reflects on what most inspires customers to compliment great service. Derek was the keynote speaker at the AMCIS 2021 Admissions Connect conference.

Customers love to say, “Thank you.” This might come as quite a surprise to some organisations that are swamped with complaints. But when the service is outstanding, customers really do love to express their gratitude and no incentive is necessary.

Looking back over 25 years of customer nominations that have been received at The WOW! Awards, there are three things that customers really notice and make judgement on.



1. Little things

It’s always the little things (or “bricks in a wall” as I refer to them). Things that you might think would never get noticed or that seem insignificant. Things that show you care. Things that make it easy for customers to work with you.

Making it easy for customers to find a phone number and speak to a real person is probably top of the list. Replying to a message or following up on promises is a close second. Nothing is more frustrating than telling a customer that you will call them back and failing to do so.

You cannot improve any one part of our business by 1000%. But you can improve 1000 little things by 1% - Jan Carlzon

If you want to know what little things would really delight your customers, ask them what their frustrations are in dealing with other companies in your sector. I get upset if I’m served a meal without any cutlery or hot food on a cold plate. And why is it so hard to pay the bill in some restaurants? I get frustrated when I’m in a shop needing help and the assistants are more interested in chatting to each other rather than serving me.

2. Systems

Derek Williams – Inspirational Speaker



AMCIS

Admissions, Marketing and Communications
in Independent Schools

www.amcis.co.uk

I am often asked by business leaders where they should start with improving their customer service. The fact that they are asking means that they have already started; they already have some vision that things could be better. Looking at systems is the next step.

Every successful business that I have ever worked with has figured out that they need systems; systems to make all the little things happen consistently. They don't need to be complex or expensive systems; a simple checklist can often do the job. A system for answering the phone. A system for answering customer enquiries. A system for making certain that cutlery is on the table at the same time as a meal is served.

Systems are the safety net that can save you when things go wrong. How should your people respond if a customer has a problem? Which leads you into, what authority do they have to resolve a customer problem in the best possible way? Think about what is going to be best for the customer rather than putting obstacles in the way. The more hoops that you make the customer jump through, the less likely they are to use you again in the future.

A key system will be seeking feedback from your customers and your colleagues. What do your customers think of your service? Have regular meetings and ask your people, "What has gone well this week and what could have been done better?" Don't point the finger of blame if something went wrong, simply change the system. It's okay to learn from mistakes but don't allow the same mistake to be made repeatedly.

Catching your people doing things right is the most powerful motivator (i)

If you use The WOW! Awards, then you will have a system for catching your people doing things right. This will encourage them to live your brand values and do what is right for your customers.

3. Communication

Everything that you say and do is sending a message. Dirty windows might suggest to a customer that you're not the best solicitor in town.

First impressions may be made in as little as 33 milli seconds! (ii)

How do you want your business to be perceived? And is this reflected in everything that you say and do. The fonts that you use, the words that you use, your body language, your tone and your smile are all communicating with your customers.

Think about the people who are your customers, internal and external. How do they wish to be communicated with? Some people will appreciate you being meticulous and detailed. Others may want you to be direct and concise. Are you communicating with them enough and are you adding value when you communicate?



AMCIS

Admissions, Marketing and Communications
in Independent Schools

www.amcis.co.uk

Really get on side and create partnerships with your customers. What are their interests and what are the names of their family members? A customer may appreciate hearing from you about something that is a real passion for them much more than receiving details of your latest product.

68% of customers may leave because of perceived indifference (iii)

Remember, that it's not always about price. A customer may be prepared to spend more with you for more of your help. But you will never know unless you get close to them and listen to what they are saying

References

- I. Survey by Engaging Works concludes that Recognition is a more powerful motivator than pay
<https://workplaceinsight.net/recognition-is-a-more-powerful-motivator-than-pay-survey-concludes/>
- II. Research at the University of York reveals how quickly first impressions can be formed
<https://www.psypost.org/2017/10/study-reveals-just-quickly-form-first-impression-50039>
- III. A survey by John Gattorna, visiting profess at Macquarie Graduate School of Management
<https://www.customerthermometer.com/customer-satisfaction/csat-stat-68-percent/>

About Derek Williams

Derek Williams is a professional speaker and author on Customer Service and Employee Recognition.

He is Founder of The WOW! Awards – Employee Recognition Programme. Since 1997, this process has been successfully bringing brand values to life in organisations around the world; organisations that are passionate about creating a great place to work and a great place to be a customer.



Derek@TheWowAwards.co.uk www.TheWowAwards.co.uk +00 44 (0) 7774 217587