

Customer Service in your tasting room – making black ink



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Why bother?



- Good to great service??? Boomers DEMAND it, Millennials EXPECT it
- It is 7 times more expensive to find a new customer than to retain an old one or sell him/her more
- Social Media realities
- Growing a business is no longer about getting more bodies through your door – it is about individualizing an **authentic experience** for every customer – the HOTTEST MARKETING WORDS ARE **ENGAGEMENT AND CONTEXT**
 - You cannot just sell....you must engage **THEM**
- Michael Michalowicz: Toilet Paper Entrepreneur:
 - What are the 3 most important words in the English language?

Remember: you are selling in the present, but building for the future

- Know your customers.....
 - How they want to hear from you?
 - Their age and the things which mold their decisions
 - Frank vs. Elvis vs. Beatles vs. KISS vs. whomever
 - What do they like to do?
 - Outdoor adventure, retirement travel, weekend escapes
 - How much and what do they buy?
- Match your offers with their wants and needs
 - How??? –
 - Simple note taking
 - Constant Contact or other e-tools segmentation



Create a pleasing environment

- In your tasting room: for your customers AND your staff
 - Walk in as a guest – not from the back parking lot
 - Correct scratches on the front door
 - Keep display areas fresh and attractive
 - Make the break room pleasant and offer amenities like coffee and water
 - Research says your staff will sell more and your customers will share their positive impressions more frequently



Hire nice – and by ‘variety’

- Personality first – the 5-90-5 rule
 - Ignore the unteachables, train the 90% and celebrate if you can find and keep the crème de la crème 5%
- Appearance: A dress code? A ‘uniform’??
- Age categories – some of each if possible
 - Millennials: buyers of the future
 - Boomers: buyers of the present
 - Seniors: lots of disposal income
- Don’t let them be judgmental. Did you say sweet red? Moscato???
- When customers come in: people like to buy from those who look and think like them...and treat them with respect – so make matches where possible



Teach well



- YOUR story, wine in general, grape growing, legalities
- Share and TEACH observation/communication skills
- Practice: role playing, coaching from and with management
- Keep reading materials in the break room, establish a lending library -- Zrally book
- Empower decision making [after coaching- also be sure to make 'adjustments' afterward and only in private]
- Record and handle incidents, bad AND good
- Disney: everyone is a 'cast member and always on stage'

Teaching hints

- 10 second eye contact, a smile and a nod
 - Also precludes theft
- Get out from behind counter when possible
- Walk them to the sales shelves
- Start a casual conversation
- Determine their wine preferences
- Put the bottle in their hands
- Create 'barriers' in the tasting room
- Make notes after they leave
- 'Sterling' program



More hints



- Answer phone within 3 rings – return calls and e mails within 24-48 hours maximum
- Use tasting room down time to
 - Review ‘incident’ notes
 - Enter customers’ names, preferences, etc. into e categories: case buyers vs. interests, high rollers, casual tourists, etc. [Management to establish the most important categories and perhaps even a reporting format]
 - Encourage staff to quiz one another on various facts
 - Role play handling great customers/cranky customers
- **BTW: IN ALL CASES, MANAGEMENT MUST WALK THE WALK**

Build loyalty in your staff

- Rewards
 - Your staff
 - Pat on the back
 - Plaque on the wall
 - Different color shirts
 - Different positions in the tasting room
 - Employee parties
 - Paid days off
 - Cash incentives
 - You want to keep them, not have them move to a competitor – and be sure they keep your customers happy



Rewards for your customers

- Make them feel special....what were those 3 words?
 - Personal attention – think about a favorite restaurant you frequent
 - Segment your e lists by interests [DO NOT use ‘Dear Sam’ without making the rest of the communication unique]
 - Birthday and other milestone cards
 - Thank you events for your ‘best’ customers
 - Special seating areas even if there is an extra charge
 - Ask them for advice [and tell them when you have implemented their ideas – and why some would not work]
 - Focus groups are easy – LTS doing a session
 - Teach them – Never start your e letters with a selling proposition: use a story, some wine trivia, a recipe, a holiday idea, etc.



Some take aways



- Old rules no longer apply – the bad-good story ratio is no longer 9 to 4 -- can now be 100 or 1000 to one or more
- It is 7 times more expensive to find new customers than to re-sell to the ones you already have
- There is lots of competition [from within and far beyond just other wines and wineries] -- the nice guys will win the most – the mediocre will struggle, the grumps will disappear
- Third party validation via SN can be sooo powerful
- By creating a memorable, personal experience, you will engage your customers, sell more wine in your tasting rooms, via your wine clubs, in restaurants and on retail shelves and build life long loyalists

To Watch for

- License to Steal – April
 - Peter Shankman – HARO
- Tuesday Tidbits
- www.OhioWines.org –
Information Station – steal
away

A couple of books to read

- Scott Stratten: UnMarketing
- Gilmore and Pine: Experience Economy/Authenticity
- Kim and Mauborgne: Blue Ocean Strategy
- Peter Shankman:

• Thank you.....

