



First Impressions Count:

Customer Service in Our Schools

PEJE Admission Community of Practice

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Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston



PARTNERSHIP FOR
EXCELLENCE
IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish Day Schools עִתְּדָה לְעוֹתָהּ *Our Future*

January 29, 2008

Etiquette

- To mute yourself, press *1. Press *1 again to unmute yourself.
- Please do not put your phone on hold during the conference call. If you need to leave the call, hang up and then call back in.
- Please participate – say who you are when speaking so we can identify you.

Agenda

- Introductions
- PEJE and Admission COP Announcements
- Setting the Context
- Making the Case for Customer Service
- Elements of Excellent Customer Service
- Starting Now: What Can I Do To Have Immediate Impact?
- Looking Forward: Long Term Improvement
- Upcoming PEJE Conference Calls



Introductions

Dan Levine is currently the Director of Recruitment and Marketing at Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston. Previously, Dan was the Director of Admission at a Boston-area independent school for five years before returning to graduate school to earn his Master's in Business Administration from Boston University in 2002. After a three-year stint as a marketing consultant for kid's products in New York City, Dan returned to education at Solomon Schechter to oversee the Admission, Marketing and Communication functions of the school.

Goals of the Call

- To explore multiple perspectives on our topic, informed by personal experience and research.
- To collaborate with colleagues for mutual benefit.
- To understand the impact customer service may have on recruitment and retention.
- To identify priorities and goals to improve our own practice in this area.



Making the Case for Customer Service





Blank Slate

A Rose By Any Other Name ...

- A name is just a name ...
 - Parent Relations
 - Hospitality
 - Something else all together
- The way we treat families has an impact on our ability to attract and retain families in our schools.

Customer Service and Judaism

- The idea of “Customer Service” is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition
 - Menschlichkeit
 - Derech Eretz
 - Haknasat Orachim (Welcoming Guests)
 - G'milut Chasadim (Acts of Loving Kindness)

Key Point

- Whatever you choose to call it, engage in the idea of customer service
 - In the day school world, we need every advantage ... and this practice doesn't cost you anything except time.

Customer Service Defined

- Excellent customer service is about creating a positive, memorable experience for every customer ... at every opportunity.
- Excellent customer service is the ability of an organization to constantly and consistently exceed its customers' expectations.*
 - It means delivering on your promises.
 - It means paying attention to details.
 - It means understanding that every interaction matters.
- In sum, it means bringing sunshine to your work and to your school and to everyone who comes into contact with your work and school.

Illustrating the Definition

- *Well done is better than well said.*
~ Benjamin Franklin
- *Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.*
~ Gucci motto
- *There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.*
~ Roger Staubach
- *Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring their friends.*
~ Disney motto

Excellent vs. Poor Customer Service



Time out!

Let's hear from you!



Elements of Excellent Customer Service



Elements of Excellent Customer Service

- Deliver on promises
 - You will be judged on what you do not what you say
 - Build trust
- Be honest and forthright – always
 - Build relationships with parents
 - Build trust
- Be welcoming – tangibles matter
 - Make sure the parts of your school that parents see are clean, safe and comfortable

Elements of Excellent Customer Service

- Be helpful: identify and anticipate needs.
 - Even if there's no immediate "profit" in it
- Always take the extra step
 - It's recognized and it matters
 - Don't just meet expectations – exceed parent expectations.
- Treat each family, each parent, as an individual

Elements of Excellent Customer Service

- Be a good listener
- Make parents feel important and appreciated
 - Let them know you value them, how much you appreciate their interest in your school
- Know how to apologize ... and then make it right
 - We all make mistakes. We need to own them and fix them.
- Take action.

Key Point

- Build trust and confidence in you and your school by keeping the parents' needs first and foremost in your mind and actions.
 - It is important that parents know that you respect and value them.

Starbucks: A Core Philosophy



The success of Starbucks demonstrates that we have built an emotional connection with our customers. We have a competitive advantage over classic brands in that every day we touch and interact with our customers directly. Our product is not sitting on a supermarket shelf like a can of soda. Our people have done a wonderful job of knowing your drink, your name, and your kids' names.

-- Howard Schulz, Founder

Starbucks: A Core Philosophy



- The Five Ways of Being
 - Be welcoming
 - Be genuine
 - Be considerate
 - Be knowledgeable
 - Be involved

Benefits of Good Customer Service

- A positive atmosphere in your school
 - People want to connect to something positive
 - Smiles!
- Trust and confidence in you ... and in your school
- Lasting relationships
- Connection to our rich history and tradition
- Admission Referrals
 - Happy parents are our best marketers

Consequences of Poor Customer Service

- Poor word-of-mouth
- Frustrated, unhappy parents
 - = Potential loss of parents
- A negative, unhelpful atmosphere at your school
- Low enrollment/re-enrollment numbers

Yours is a Very Bad Hotel

A graphic complaint prepared for:

Joseph Crosby

General Manager

Lisa Rinker

Front Desk Manager

DoubleTree Club Hotel

2828 Southwest Freeway

Houston, Texas



Refused Rooms... Even When We're "Confirmed" and "Guaranteed"?



- ◆ Mike, your Night Clerk, said the only rooms left were off-limits because their plumbing and air-conditioning had broken!
- ◆ He'd given away the last good rooms three hours ago!
- ◆ He'd done nothing about finding us accommodation elsewhere!
- ◆ And he was deeply unapologetic!

*We Are Very Unlikely to Return to the
DoubleTree Club Houston.*

Lifetime chances of 1 in 1,000

**Landed in tens of thousands
of email inboxes!**

(University of Michigan)

Winning the UK Lottery: **1 in 13,983,816**

(UK Lottery)

Chance of us returning to the DoubleTree Club Houston: **worse
than any of those**

(And what are the chances you'd save rooms for us anyway?)



Questions?

Discussion?



Starting Now: What Can I Do To Have
Immediate Impact?



I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

Theoretical:

- Make every day a good day
- Make a good first impression
- Every interaction matters
 - Customers don't distinguish between you and the organization you work for. To the customer, *you* are the company. Is it fair? No. But it's fact. Everyone needs to be "rowing together as one" seamlessly.
 - On the telephone
 - In person

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

Theoretical:

- Listen
 - Understand the parents' needs
- Recognize that there's no blueprint.
 - Each family, each parent is different.
- Lead by example

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

Practical:

- Point of entry: welcoming, comfortable, warm
- Communicate:
 - Return phone calls and emails immediately
- Cloop

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

- Anticipate and be proactive
- Let teachers, administrators, support staff know in advance when you'll be touring the school with a prospective family
- Make it easy to set up appointments and drop off applications
- Make your materials accessible in case you're not around
- Train the person who answers the phone with answers to FAQs

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

- Simplify and clarify language for non-native speakers
- Send email confirmation when you receive apps, teacher recommendations, etc.
- If people need directions to another campus or a different part of your campus, have printed maps available
- Make sure your website has a link to your email address (info@yourschool.org)

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

- Solve problems
 - But not in a defensive way!
- “Out of office” response for vacations
 - Let folks know when they can expect to hear from you
 - Leave a contact in case of “emergency”

I'm ready to begin ... what can I do?

- Say "Thank You"
 - When they come to visit your school – every time
 - When they compliment you or your school
 - When they offer comments or suggestions
 - When they refer your school to a friend
 - When they are patient ... and not so patient
 - When they complain to you
 - When they make you smile



Looking Forward: Long Term Improvement



Great start ... what's next?

- Visit www.welcomingjewishcommunity.org and see where your school falls on the "Creating a Welcoming Community" scale.
- Begin working with your head of school and school principals on how to provide excellent customer service to current families.
 - Hint: Take care of your current parents ...
 - It costs five times as much to find a new customer than it does to retain a current customer
- Next time ... what your *school* can do to improve customer service

Remember...

This is a marathon, not a sprint.



You *can* and *will* make a difference

- Commit yourself to doing one act of exceptional customer service every day.
175 school days
50 staff members
= 8,750 acts of exceptional customer per year!

PEJE Assembly for Jewish Day School Education

- Early Bird Deadline is February 1 – rates go up after this date
- Deep discounts for school teams
- Register online and book your hotel and travel
- More than 25 sessions on marketing and recruitment, plus over a hundred more on collaboration, financial sustainability, leadership and governance, program quality, and more!
- 7 pre-conference workshops on Sunday morning include two of special interest to admission professionals
- Dedicated networking time for admission, marketing and development professionals
- See the PEJE website for up to the minute information as session titles, presenters, plenary speakers, and final details are announced.

Upcoming Conference Call: Virtual Assembly Session

School Change: A Look from the Inside

Monday, February 4, 2008 1 - 2 pm Eastern

What does school change look like over time? How do leaders explore options, launch programs, and deepen and expand positive change by building and supporting learning communities to foster collaboration and ensure buy-in of all school staff? This Virtual Assembly Session will dig into these key issues, creating a framework and giving you a taste of the kind of ideas to be shared and discussed at the Assembly.

Presenters: Stephanie Hirsh, Executive Director and Joellen Killion, Deputy Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council.

Contact Kirk Tallman at kirk@peje.org to RSVP for this call.

Upcoming Conference Call: Admission COP

Turning Around the Talk: Managing Misinformation and Reining in the Rumor Mill


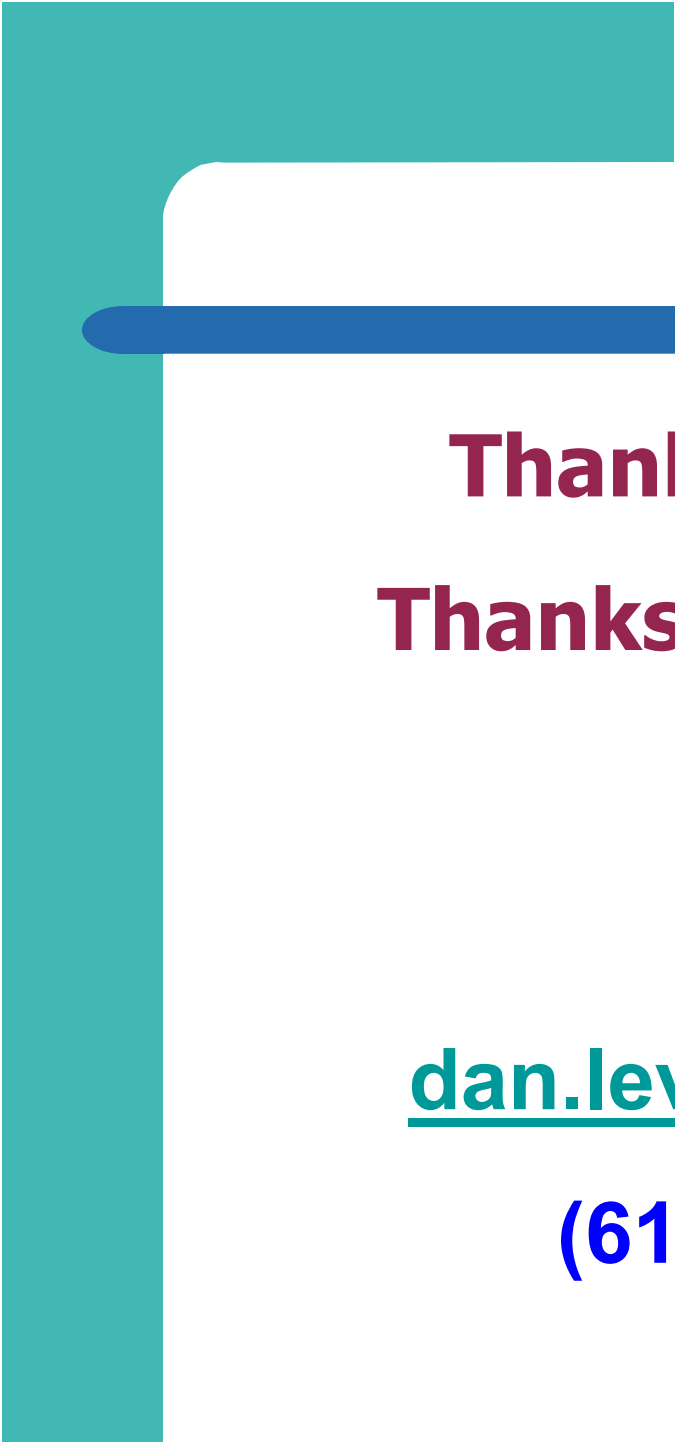
Wednesday, February 27, 2008

1 - 2 pm Eastern

As admission and marketing professionals, we're always paying attention to the rumor mill and what the buzz on the street is about our school. How can we help our schools deal with the out-of-control rumors and frequent misinformation that is in the marketplace? Learn some practical strategies and listen as some of our admission colleagues role play some common scenarios and their creative solutions.

Presenter: Audrey Jacobs, Director of Advancement, Soille San Diego Hebrew Day School

Contact Rebecca Egolf at rebecca@peje.org to RSVP for this call.



Thanks for participating!
Thanks to our special guest,
Dan Levine!

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Don't forget to use the PEJE Admission Google Group to continue this discussion!

- ***Join the conversation***
 - ***Post a question***
 - ***Provide an answer***
 - ***Raise a concern***
 - ***Share information***

Contact Rebecca at rebecca@peje.org if you have questions about accessing or using Google Groups.