

*Delight Your*  
**CUSTOMERS**



## Introduction

**Y**ears ago, I worked in New York City with an English woman named Karen who had a unique work history. During graduate school in England, she had worked on an assembly line in a factory that manufactured dolls.

Karen's job role was to attach doll heads to each of the torsos as they passed by on a long conveyer belt. As she described it, as the torso approached, she would lift a doll head from a large bin, pop the head on the torso, and twist it firmly until it locked into place. One by one, Karen would lift, pop, and twist the dolls' heads into place—each one like the last one—until her quota was met or her shift ended. The next day, she would return and repeat the process over and over again: lift, pop, twist . . . lift, pop, twist . . . until the end of another workday. I can still hear Karen describing her job duties in her refined British accent: “Leeft, paup, tweest . . . Leeft, paup, tweest . . . Leeft, paup, tweest . . .”

To this day, whenever I observe an employee who is simply going through the motions, I'm reminded of Karen's job at the factory. I refer to this demeanor as a *factory mentality*. Perhaps you too have observed this outward behavior by service industry employees. It's easy to spot,

characterized by indifference and a transactional approach to serving customers.

Expressionless, robotic behavior devoid of any personality may be permissible in a factory or warehouse environment where there are no signs of real, live, paying customers (as long as certain production quotas and delivery schedules are met). However, in a customer service job role, employee behavior must be different.

This is not a book about how to “WOW!” customers by continually surpassing their expectations and exceeding their needs—which is unsustainable. Most people don’t want “outrageous” or “over-the-top” customer service at every turn. In everyday service situations, most customers simply want to be acknowledged and appreciated.

*Delight Your Customers* is about doing the little things that convey to customers that they matter and that their business is valued. It’s about breaking with routine by consistently providing the “little extras” that leave lasting positive impressions on customers. After all, the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little “extra.”

Part I sets the stage for delighting customers by identifying the two dimensions of every employee’s job role and identifying three truths of exceptional customer service. Whether you are new to the service industry or a seasoned veteran, this section will expand your definition of employees’ roles and is likely to influence the way you manage service providers.

Part II introduces seven concrete behaviors that will enable you to immediately improve the quality of customer service you provide or influence. These seven simple ways to raise customer service from ordinary to extraordinary are natural and intuitive. Rather than offering scripts or a prescriptive acronym that requires employees to be someone they’re not, these behaviors encourage employees to be themselves at their best!

Part III provides fresh thinking about incorporating your organization’s highest priority into existing employee functions so that exceptional customer service, however it is defined by your particular organization, occurs consistently rather than being left to chance.

Throughout the book, you will see references to customers, clients, guests, shoppers, passengers, patients, members, and more. The lessons in this book will apply, regardless of how you refer to your customers,

even if your “customer” is an employee, owner, vendor, or other stakeholder. In fact, I’d go so far as to say that these lessons also apply to the “customers” you serve in your personal life, whether that means a spouse, children, friends, neighbors—even complete strangers.

Each chapter concludes with a bulleted summary of key insights to assist you in raising customer service from ordinary to extraordinary, followed by a brief application exercise in which you immediately record top-of-mind ideas about applying lessons from the chapter in your world of work.

It’s no secret that the customer service quality most of us experience in our daily lives tends to be pretty mediocre. (And sometimes that assessment is being generous.) It’s my aspiration to contribute to the conversation about raising customer service quality—and this book is a start. To continue the conversation, I invite you to visit my blog at <http://www.stevecurtin.com/blog/> or email me: [steve@stevecurtin.com](mailto:steve@stevecurtin.com)

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Curtin', with a stylized, cursive script.

Steve Curtin  
Denver, Colorado  
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