



Customer Service Talking Points & Discussion Topics

1. Real Stories: Attendees successes and failures with the customer service issue. What worked and why. What didn't and the results.
2. The Most talked about and least understood jewelry issue: Customer Service that works.
3. The empowerment of sales associates to create and maintain customer service at effective levels.
4. Customer service and the "independent contractor" behind your counter.
5. Addressing the belligerent and unreasonable customer: Did you ever "fire" a customer?
6. When you argue with the customer and win: you lose!
7. Customer Service and the derailed "be back" train.
8. The true cost of poor customer service and the rewards of quality customer service.
9. Do you and your associates really care? Deep down?
10. Service as the final differential for the independent jeweler.



Terry W. Chandler President/CEO
Diamond Council of America
3212 West End Avenue, Ste. 202-Nashville, TN 37203
Phone (615) 385-5301-Fax (615) 385-4955
www.diamondcouncil.org / terry@diamondcouncil.org

September 24,

Extreme Customer Service? I'm Still Telling the Story

[ME Liz Strauss](#)

Extreme Times Call for Extreme Customer Service

I have never worked for FedEx, nor do I know anyone who has. . . . I wrote this because Meikah asked whether I knew any stories about extreme customer service and this is the one that I know. I know it because I lived it

The Flood

We stood on the deck of our second floor condo, watching the flood waters rise. The rains had caused the river to rise by 12 feet. It overflowed its banks, wiped out the highway, covered the streets, and was overtaking our parking lot. Word in the building was that we would be evacuated some time that day.

“We” was me, my husband, our 2 year-old son, and a 7-year-old cockatoo named Chicken.

Rescuers were coming, in rowboats on streets of suburban Illinois, to take us away from our home. The rain had stopped — not the flooding. We stood most of the morning on the deck watching the water rise and get closer. It was already up to the seats of our cars.

Deadlines Don't Care About Floods

My husband and I were working freelance on a deadline project. One part was due that day at a publisher about 12 miles east of us. It couldn't be late. It was part of a program costing \$millions being submitted at state level. The state had no give to the cut off submission date.

My husband and I had the work done. We didn't know how to get it there. Our cars were useless. We didn't know where we'd be that night. We got the package ready in hopes of finding an answer before we were evacuated.

The FedEx Guy

About then the phone rang, it was a young man. “Excuse me, this is FedEx,” he said. “I have a package. Do you need it?”

The package was the next part of the same project. Who knew how it would find us, if we didn't take it now? I said, "I'm sorry, but yeah, we really do need it."

"No problem, Ma'am." he said. "I'll walk it over to you."

I put the phone down and took my husband out on the deck. Coming through the water — at one point it was chest deep — was a guy in a FedEx uniform, holding a package above his head.

Our neighbors started cheering and applauding. The young man was smiling and waving. He made it look fun.

When the FedEx guy got to our door, we traded packages. My gratitude was all over him, explaining. He was all smiles still, saying it was his job. (I took his name. I wrote the company about him.)

Meanwhile, our neighbors had gathered everyone they could. The crowd was much larger when the FedEx guy left. As he opened the building door to go through the water, the applause started again.

FedEX man raised the new package high above his head and said very loudly, "Fed EX we deliver. We pick up too!"

What a gift that guy was. Every one of us was worried about what was happening, what damage would be done, when the water would stop. FedEX man did more than deliver a package. He walked right through the scary water to us, smiling.

He got us to laugh.

THAT is extreme customer service on every level.

That happened almost 20 years ago, and I'm still telling the story . . .

—ME "Liz" Strauss

DIAMOND COUNCIL
of AMERICA



The Diamond Professionals

Terry W. Chandler President/CEO
Diamond Council of America
3212 West End Avenue, Ste. 202-Nashville, TN 37203
Phone (615) 385-5301-Fax (615) 385-4955
www.diamondcouncil.org / terry@diamondcouncil.org



Customer Service Reading Room II A Bibliography of “Must Visit” Sites on the Web

- 1) www.tompeters.com Tom Peters
- 2) www.marcusbuckingham.com Marcus Buckingham
- 3) www.hellomynameisscott.com Scott: The Name Tag Guy
- 4) www.brandedservice.com Branded Service Newsletter
- 5) www.gitomer.com Jeffrey Gitomer
- 6) www.sethgodin.com Seth Godin
- 7) www.davidmeermanscott.com David Meerman Scott
- 8) www.ex-sell-ence.com/articles Shane Decker



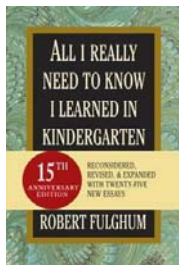
Terry W. Chandler President/CEO
Diamond Council of America
3212 West End Avenue, Ste. 202-Nashville, TN 37203
Phone (615) 385-5301-Fax (615) 385-4955
www.diamondcouncil.org / terry@diamondcouncil.org



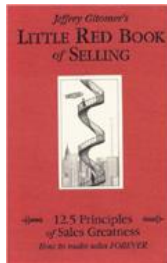
Customer Service Reading Room: A Bibliography Of “Must Read” Books

For the last thirty plus year’s jewelry industry leaders and educators have been preaching about the absolute and critical value: necessity, of customer service to the jewelry and luxury buyer. Yet a quick trip to the mall or the freestanding jewelry store or even the local independent jeweler can reveal a stunning lack of service and understanding of customer needs in this challenging environment.

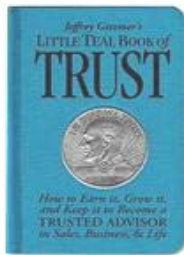
The first step in developing a winning customer service strategy is an understanding of what the experts, sages, and contemporary observers have to say about the subject. To that end we recommend the following books for you and your associates to read, discuss, and glean for the appropriate and effective strategy to make your customer service approach succeed.



"The *15th Anniversary Edition of All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* revises and expands the original essays that became the phenomenal bestseller. With a new preface and twenty-five new stories, this edition once again reminds us that the most basic aspects of life bear its most important opportunities. In the years that have passed since the first publication, Fulghum has had time to ponder, to reevaluate, and to reconsider. Perhaps in today's chaotic, more challenging world, these essays will resonate even deeper - as readers discover how universal insights can be found in ordinary events." *Published 2003*



"The book provides straight forward tips for self motivation as well as sales specific tips. It is in a quirky, fun easy to read format that really makes the points hit home. "The Little Red Book of Selling" is short, sweet, and to the point. It's packed with answers that people are searching for in order to help them make sales for the moment--and the rest of their lives.



By **D. Carpenter "Peak Performance Scholar"** (Atlanta, GA) - [See all my reviews](#)

[TOP 1000 REVIEWER](#) [REAL MPMK™](#) [VINE™ VOICE](#)

This is an important and excellent book.

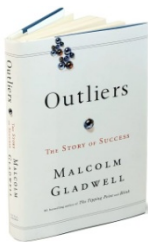
(You will maybe appreciate my tongue-in-cheek headline after reading the first Chapter.) Like so many others, I am a huge fan of Jeff Gitomers' sage, straightforward advice on selling and subjects tangentially related to his core expertise in the sales process. But, Gitomer has outdone himself with this absolute gem. In a world where (some) businesses and politicians are almost daily demonstrating why they can't be trusted, the subject of "trust" needs to be written about. And, this well timed book is a great primer on the subject. Now writing about "trust" is not easy. Who is a "trust" expert? Well the subject is a perfect one for Gitomer who manages to plead for us to do things better in a style that doesn't come over as unduly "preachy." And, he does so with his usual well organized, logical explanations. He does a great job of succinctly explaining the context of trust, it's benefits and ultimately its value, more than 20 characteristics of trust, and how to recover from a breach of trust (which can happen among us humans).

Best of all, his thoughts on becoming a trusted business advisor makes this a book that every professional should read, study, implement and then re-read. As an advisor to leading professional service firms, I have already started giving the book to clients.

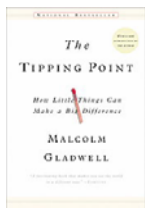
Regretfully, I expect that some who need this book most will never buy it as they see themselves as already fully trustworthy. Respectfully, I would suggest that few among us would not benefit from a tune-up in this area. Including the many that start conversations, as I did this review, with the commonly used phrase "trust me." As a voracious reader of business and self-help books (and a reviewer here on Amazon of the best of that which I read), I consider this one of the most important books, in those two categories, in the last ten years. It really is that good! And that important!!



Turn your company into a dynamic center of excellence, where Amazing Stuff is always being initiated. "Nobody gives you power, you just take it..." Let management expert Tom Peters help you to turn your company into a dynamic centre of excellence. This leadership guide will show you how to fix problems in your organization as well as showing you how to build on your successes. Filled with perceptive, provocative and inspiring ideas to transform the way you work, this compact management companion is your essential guide to leadership. (Copyright 2005 Dorling Kindersley Limited. Text copyright 2005 Tom Peters. All Rights Reserved.



In this stunning new book, Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"--the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band. Brilliant and entertaining, OUTLIERS is a landmark work that will simultaneously delight and illuminate.



Malcolm Gladwell's highly imaginative pop treatise on the flow of goods and ideas in society reached a tipping point of its own, spending many weeks on the New York Times best-seller list, and then appearing for weeks on both lists following its paperback publication.

Proposing a contagion model, in which things spread through the population like viruses, Gladwell examines a range of phenomena--the sudden and unexpected popularity of Hush Puppies in the fashion world, the decline in the crime rate in New York City, how a book (THE YA-YA SISTERHOOD) became a bestseller out of the blue, a spike in youth suicide rates in Malaysia--teasing out the cause and logic, and showing how they all had a "tipping point" and how they illustrate one of three basic principles. He cites sometimes arcanelly sourced studies to support his theories, and along the way has popularized terms such as "word-of-mouth marketing" and "stickiness." THE TIPPING POINT has changed the way we look at and talk about "stuff," and Gladwell's ideas have energized fields such as business, marketing, education, and sociology.



An integrated brand needs to be expressed through every aspect of the company's organizational culture - especially the human exchange of customer service. Branded Customer Service breaks new ground by showing how to take a defined and identifiable brand and bring it to life through service delivery.

Branded Customer Service shows how to:

- unleash the full potential of your brand
- make customer service so distinct that it has as much power as your brand idea possesses
- personalize and reinforce brands through staff/customer interactions

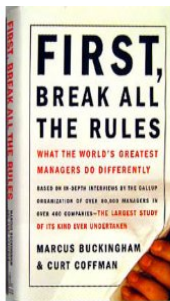
- support your brand from within by management behavior
- link brand propositions to selling style and messages
- imbed on-brand service into organizational DNA through human resource policies, brand champions, and culture/brand alignment
- communicate internally to ensure brands resonate within organizations



Want to know what you are supposed to do with your life? *The Truth About You* is an experience to unlock life's toughest questions. The process this revolutionary toolkit teaches will create higher satisfaction and performance in life and work. This cutting-edge product includes:

- Enhanced DVD. A high-energy film reveals how and why you must discover and prioritize your strengths and includes access to a wealth of downloadable resources, including five bonus Strength Tip videos.
- Interactive Book. With insightful exercises and tried-and-true life wisdom no one else will tell you, the book takes you to the location of your most powerful and unchanging talents.
- ReMemo Pad. Designed for a life on-the-go, the Re Memo Pad becomes your companion to complete the task of revealing your strengths using your everyday experiences.

Perfect for high school and college students, young professionals, and people simply wanting to revitalize their career, *The Truth About You* helps you develop the kind of clarity and passion that drives a successful and satisfying future. Marcus Buckingham will help you discover the real truth, the truth about you . . . it will be your secret to success.



Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman expose the fallacies of standard management thinking in *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*. In seven chapters, the two consultants for the Gallup Organization debunk some dearly held notions about management, such as "treat people as you like to be treated"; "people are capable of almost anything"; and "a manager's role is diminishing in today's economy." "Great managers are revolutionaries," the authors write. "This book will take you inside the minds of these managers to explain why they have toppled conventional wisdom and reveal the new truths they have forged in its place."



Terry W. Chandler President/CEO
 Diamond Council of America
 3212 West End Avenue, Ste. 202-Nashville, TN 37203
 Phone (615) 385-5301-Fax (615) 385-4955
www.diamondcouncil.org / terry@diamondcouncil.org



Extreme Customer Service

Article 8: Empower Employees

Great service starts with the boss. Employees model their behavior on how you treat them, as well as how you treat your customers.

But don't assume that your employees innately know the rules of customer service. In the book [Online Customer Service for Dummies](#) (AMACOM, 2001) the authors cite a case study in which a hotel manager actually had to spell out to a desk clerk the specifics of "friendly service"—smiling, making eye contact, using the customer's name.

You can enhance customer service immediately by hiring the right people. They should be people-oriented problem solvers. Look for job candidates who demonstrate initiative and generate creative service ideas.

Also develop specific guidelines for service. Clearly explain what service is and how it impacts the bottom line in your business. Spell out actions you expect employees to take when greeting customers, accepting refunds and answering questions.

Give employees training in customer service. Use books, seminars, workshops, even company meetings. But before you embark on training, know where your service weaknesses are—and how you can overcome them.

For example, do you have too few employees to promptly handle customer calls? No amount of training will solve that problem. Are employees having to stock shelves instead of helping customers find the merchandise they need? Are you asking employees to fax product information, when customers would much prefer information by e-mail or on a Web site?

Those are the types of service issues only you—as the boss—can solve. But when employees can improve service, give them the power and authority to do so. Then back them up.

Here's an example. I went to an office supply store to buy a PDA. There were five or six to choose from, but none out of the package and on display. I asked a salesperson if she would open a specific PDA package so I could get a hands-on feel for the machine. She cheerfully accommodated me. But when the store manager walked by, he scolded the salesperson for opening the package. And he did it in front of me, a customer.

The salesperson was being helpful. She was doing her best to give me personal service. Her boss yanked that power from her and left her hanging in front of a customer. Not a good policy for any size business.

"With the market the way it is, the fight to retain customers is growing desperate," says Chris Bogan, CEO of Best Practices LLC. "Employees who are empowered to understand and react to individual customer preferences will delight clients and drive repeat business."