

## ONE DAY IN AMERICA: Service Rules

*By Ron Kaufman*

Walking off the plane we got stuck behind two large Americans who were talking loud, walking slow and had no sense that an entire planeload of others were stuck behind them.

**Rule #1:** *Service is not just commercial; it's a way of living that pays attention and cares about others.*

Immigration was fast and polite. How nice for America's official representative to greet us in such a friendly fashion.

**Rule #2:** *First impressions are lasting impressions. Make yours count!*

The luggage cart had wheels in disrepair. Most of them were like that.

**Rule #3:** *Smiling service is not enough; your product must work well, too!*

The taxi was big, old and rattled all the way to our hotel. The meter started at \$6.50. I mentioned the charge to the driver who said, "Two dollars to get in, four-fifty to get out. That's how it works here." I wondered how many non-English speakers would understand his explanation.

**Rule #4:** *Good service is using language your customer understands.*

The Hotel Bellman groaned when he saw our three suitcases and turned to get a baggage trolley. He literally threw my bag from the trunk to the trolley as I winced. Then he waited for a tip.

**Sorry, Rule #5:** *No one is "entitled" to a tip. Good service "earns" a tip.*

The Concierge was fabulous. If you are ever in Boston, look up Rob Fournier, Chef Concierge at the Wyndham Boston Hotel.

**Rule #6:** *Good service leads to referrals, which is good for everyone.*

We arrived at 2:00pm but check-in was not until 3:00. The check-in clerk suggested we wait in the Business Center on the 3rd floor. We went up and found a tiny room with only one chair available. Back downstairs, we discovered a lovely library on the ground floor with many comfortable chairs and lighting.

When we checked in at 3:00pm, I asked the clerk why she suggested we wait in the Business Center instead of the Library. She said she thought the Business Center was a nice place to sit. I asked if she had actually ever SEEN it, and she admitted she never had. I asked how long she'd been working at the hotel and she replied, "Three months."

**Rule #7:** *Good service requires good product knowledge. Sending your customer to the wrong product or location will send them out the door.*

The room-service menu was poorly printed and almost impossible to read. I showed it to the housekeeper who said, "They told me to put it in the room".

**Rule #8:** *Good service means bringing obvious problems to someone who can fix them, not just perpetuating the problem.*

I called to reconfirm our campervan reservation and got a recording: "Leave a message and we will call you back. We value your business." They never did call back.

**Rule #9:** *Good service means keeping your promises.*

We made a reservation at a campground, but later changed our travel plans. I called to cancel the reservation and was told "Our policy is to charge you if you do not cancel within 48 hours." But I had just made the reservation for that very night! "Sorry, that's our policy," she said. I asked to speak with the owner, who promptly agreed not to charge me.

**Rule #10:** *Good service means using your common sense.*

**Service Rules:**

#1: Service is a way of living that pays attention and cares about others.

#2: First impressions are lasting impressions. Make yours count!

#3: Smiling service is not enough; your product must work well, too!

#4: Good service is using language your customer understands.

#5: No one is "entitled" to a tip. Good service "earns" a tip.

#6: Good service leads to referrals, which is good for everyone.

#7: Good service requires good product knowledge. Sending your customer to the wrong product or location will send them out the door.

#8: Good service means bringing obvious problems to someone who can fix them, not just perpetuating the problem.

#9: Good service means keeping your promises.

#10: Good service means using your common sense.

SERVICE IN AMERICA? Inconsistency Rules.

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