

Above and Beyond

How to WOW Your Customers, Business Partners,
And Employees



Course Book

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Sample

Introduction: The Status Quo vs. The Wow Factor

"Go the extra mile. It's never crowded"
– Wayne Dyer

Try to think of a time when you've been completely blown away by a company's great service. Not just a time when a company did what it was supposed to do, but a time when you were absolutely delighted with the experience you had. What was it that the company did and how did it make you feel towards them?

If you can remember an instance like this, you've had a "wow experience." The experience didn't just meet your needs but exceeded them, surprising and delighting you and creating a feeling towards the company that doesn't fade over time.

Here's a thought experiment. Imagine the three different restaurant experiences:

Situation A

You are welcomed and seated. Once you sit down, you wait for 10 minutes and it seems like your server has disappeared. When the server finally arrives, you order your drinks and meals at the same time. Your food comes out before the drinks, which you can see sitting in the corner waiting to be carried to the table. You have to flag someone down to get them.

The server only comes back once at the end of the meal to say, "Everything okay," in such a tone that you can't tell if he's asking you or telling you. You order another round of drinks that take so long to arrive, they aren't cold anymore. The server testily apologizes, saying the restaurant is busy and drink orders are backed up.

Situation B

You receive a warm welcome and are seated right away. Your server comes over immediately and asks what you'd like to drink. He makes some recommendations when you ask and then tells you about the specials. You order drinks and an appetizer.

Your drinks arrive within minutes and they're ice cold. Your appetizer arrives a few minutes later. The server checks in with you to make sure everything is alright and you order a second round of drinks along with your meal.

After the meal, the server comes along with the dessert tray and an offer of coffee. When he brings your bill, he leaves a coupon for next time where you can receive 20% off any appetizer. You tell the server that unfortunately, you're visiting from out of town, so you can't use the coupon. The server then suggests you share it with a colleague who can enjoy it.

Situation C

Situation C is the same as Situation B but with just one key difference. Instead of suggesting you share the coupon with a colleague, the server applies it to today's appetizer and, smiling, says he hopes you'll remember the restaurant in the future. After you leave, you notice that he left you a note with the receipt thanking you for visiting and urging you to have a good time during your visit, addressing you by name.

Which restaurant would you like to dine at again? It's a given that you won't be visiting Situation A's restaurant on your next visit. That was a classic example of bad customer service. The server did his absolute least for you.

Situation B was great, but Situation C was outstanding. The basics of the service were the same, but C had a few slight touches that personalized the experience and made you not only want to come back again, but also share your experience with friends.

Let's look at the key differences in more detail

Situation A was an example of cascading bad service. Everything was poorly executed from the outset. Even though the server apologizes at the end, it's an excuse at best. Furthermore, even though the service was bad and the server acknowledged it, he offered nothing to compensate the guests.

Situation B is an example of great service, but C is an example of the "wow factor." Not only did you get outstanding service, but your server went the extra mile. He did more than he needed to do for your satisfaction. The coupon was technically for the next visit, but he bent the rules and applied it to your meal tonight because he knew you wouldn't be able to use it. He did this for no immediate benefit to the company, but purely for your enjoyment. In addition, he put your names on the note, which shows that he cares to know who you are.

From a sales perspective, Situations B and C netted more profit for the restaurant. Good customer service encourages people to buy more. You'll notice that in B and C, you bought a second round of drinks, appetizers, and desserts. When a company offers the least possible in terms of service, they can expect the least possible from customers.

From a referral perspective, the guests in Situations B and C will undoubtedly refer others to the restaurant because of its good service. But the difference between the two is that the guests in Situation C will rave about how wonderful the restaurant was. The server created a powerfully memorable experience. The guests will sing the praises of the restaurant for a long time to come and the experience will create a positive enduring association with the restaurant's brand. If it's a chain, they'll likely visit its locations in other cities.

These examples can be altered to suit almost any industry. For example, you bought something online and it arrived late, broken, and/or different from its description, and the website's "customer service" is a user forum without live support people tracking comments. Compare this with a purchase that arrived early with an added gift and a follow-up email from a human being to make sure you were satisfied with your purchase.

The same also goes for professional service suppliers. You might hire a ghostwriter to create two blog posts for you, but they end up over-delivering and throwing in an extra one free of charge, as well as recommending your blog to their large social media following.

The key to delighting your customers or 'wowing' them is to deliver MORE than what you promised and what they expected. Situation A above was far below expectations. Situation B met expectations, but Situation C soared above them. The server over-delivered, and that's the key difference.

While the example above showcases how you can use the wow factor with customers, you can also use it in the same way to wow business partners, colleagues, and employees. Everyone loves to be treated as special and the impact is the same – appreciating people makes them loyal followers who want to be associated with you or your brand.

Example of 'wowing' an affiliate or business partner:

You've been working with an affiliate who has done an outstanding job promoting your product. Sales from this affiliate have grown by 25% in the last year.

Situation A: You're really happy with her results so you send her an email to say thank you with a report that shows the sales growth.

Situation B: Since her results are so good, you call her directly and tell her that you'd like to increase her commission rate by 10% because you appreciate her efforts in promoting you. You remember from her social media profile that her birthday is coming up so you take a moment to wish her a happy birthday and ask how she's planning to celebrate. You then send out five emails to close friends introducing and recommending her as a referral.

Example of 'wowing' an employee:

Let's imagine that you have a new employee joining your team.

Situation A: You greet him on the first day, take him on a tour of the office, and then introduce him to HR for the rest of his onboarding. You tell him you'll reconnect with him tomorrow.

Situation B: You greet the new employee on the first day. You remember from the interview that he said something about liking dark roast coffee served black, so you have a hot cup ready for him. You take him on a tour of the office and introduce him to HR. You tell him you'll be back at lunch and

take him out to eat along with the other team members to welcome him to the group.

Over-delivering, delighting, exceeding expectations, and creating lasting memories is what will help to differentiate you in your market. It's the little things that count. Most companies strive to satisfy their customers through excellent customer service, but businesses that consistently create these "wow experiences" are rare.

Creating memorable experiences does indeed take effort. But the long-term results in terms of referrals, repeat business, branding, and upsells are more than worth it. Very often, creating these experiences is inexpensive or free. It just requires a bit of creativity and thoughtfulness to think them up.

Wowing people has indirect benefits as well. It helps to establish your reputation far and wide. It offers a great deal of social proof when people are out there telling others how great you are. In all areas of your business, it can result in increased profits in the long-term.

As a business owner, it is up to you to prioritize this as a key initiative for your brand and implement strategies to deliver a wow experience. You then need to provide your team with the information, ideas, and resources they require to create these experiences in their daily interactions with others.

Learning Objectives:

By the time you complete this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and describe the key differences between serving customers, business partners, and employees well and wowing them

to create delightful and memorable experiences that translate to long-term relationships.

- Create exceptional experiences for your prospective and existing clients so that they buy more, stay with you over the long-term, and recommend you to others.
- Elevate your business partner relationships so that you are always a top priority, keep your valued partners over the long-term, and acquire new talent.
- Engage and retain your employees, whether full-time or freelancers, by ensuring that they are aware that their contributions are personally valued by you and your team.
- Implement your 'Wow' program so that your customers, business partners, and employees feel heard and valued immediately.

Action Steps:

1. Think of some situations where you've had an exceptional customer experience.
 - What did the person do that caught your attention?
 - How did that experience make you feel?
 - How did you react to that experience?
 - Did you refer any friends, spend more money, or go back again?
2. What experiences are you giving your customers, employees, or partners currently?
3. On a scale of 1/10, rate the types of experiences you are creating for them today, with 10 being 'wow', 8 being very good, 6 being okay, 4 being underwhelming, 2 being terrible.

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Above and Beyond

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