



CUSTOMER SERVICE – 1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Chris Lacey asks, “Have you taken an in-depth look at your golf business recently?”

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I would like to pose some questions based on our experiences, good and bad, that we have had on our travels around the country and abroad.

If by any chance you think that you recognize a club or incident, maybe even your own, then I hope that changes have been made and if not, why not?

A few questions for when you are not there:

- ☛ Who is checking to see if all your procedures are being adhered to?
- ☛ Who is ensuring that your customers are being well treated?
- ☛ Who is checking that the course is presented in the best possible way?
- ☛ Who is ensuring that a function is successful?

It may be difficult to face but, because you cannot be in more than one place at a time, 24/7, you have to rely on delegation to staff and management. Incidents may still be occurring in your absence which can cause customers to vote with their feet.

We need to look beyond the norm, from the initial booking enquiry which might be for a tee time, membership or a function through to the final moment when the potential member signs up, to the time that the golfer says see you next time, or to the time that the function organizer says thank you and books another event.

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression and in this article we are looking at this important area which might need your attention.

First Impressions

In this day and age an enquiry often starts with an internet search but it can also be a telephone enquiry or a personal visit.

Website

- ☛ Is your web site updated regularly?
- ☛ Is the web site easy to navigate with clear paths to follow for tee times, group bookings and functions?
- ☛ Is your pricing policy simple, concise and up to date?
- ☛ Can you book additional services, eg buggies, hire clubs, refreshments, accommodation?

- ☛ Is a confirmation e-mail sent out when appropriate?
- ☛ Is there membership information?
- ☛ Is the location easy to follow, print or download if necessary?
- ☛ If the customer wants further information are the contact details clearly highlighted?

Telephone enquiry

- ☛ Are there requirements for the telephone to be answered in a minimum number of rings?
- ☛ Are all staff members who answer the phone coached in answering techniques, ie welcome, their name, etc?
- ☛ Is your pricing policy simple, concise and up to date?
- ☛ After confirming a booking, will the operative offer additional services similar to the web site?
- ☛ Is a confirmation e-mail sent out when appropriate?
- ☛ Is the call ended on a positive note with a thank you and good wishes?

Personal visit

- ☛ Is your location clearly signed from as far away from the course as possible?
- ☛ Will the customer be directed to the appropriate area for enquiries when reaching the course?
- ☛ Are welcoming staff clearly identified by uniform, name tags or prepared to offer their name in greeting?
- ☛ Is the booking process easy?
- ☛ Are all staff aware of promotions, events, services, etc?
- ☛ Are there membership application forms available?
- ☛ Have all staff had an orientation program?

A smile is worth a thousand words and can close a sale often before even starting the process.

Whatever sector you are in, Private Members Club, Proprietary, Golf Course Group or Municipal, the harsh reality is that it is a business and above all else must make a profit to survive.

Chris Lacey 2010

Chris Lacey is a previous Manager/Secretary of Cowes Golf Club, Isle of Wight.

This article is based on his considerable years of enjoyable and sometimes amazingly bad experiences in the golf and retail sectors.

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