

CUSTOMERS ARE NOT “WE” OR “GUYS”!

I HAVE EXAMINED THE INTERACTION BETWEEN CUSTOMER AND SERVER FROM EVERY ANGLE BEFORE, BUT THIS CONCEPT AND THIS NEW ANGLE HIT ME AS I HEARD, ONCE AGAIN, THOSE WORDS. “HOW YOU *GUYS* DOING TONIGHT?” AND “WHAT CAN I GET FOR YOU *GUYS*?”. THESE SEEM LIKE REASONABLE QUESTIONS WHEN ASKED BY A SERVER AS AN “ICE BREAKER”. THE PROBLEM IS THAT I'M NOT SITTING WITH THE “GUYS”, *I AM SITTING THERE WITH MY WIFE AND ANOTHER COUPLE!* IT SEEMS TO BE A TREND LATELY. EVERYWHERE WE GO. “HOW YOU *GUYS* DOING TONIGHT?” *GUYS?* WHAT IS THAT ALL ABOUT? MEN ARE MEN AND WOMEN ARE WOMEN AND THEY SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AS SUCH. PURE AND SIMPLE, MY WIFE IS NOT A *GUY*... AND IN MY MIND, CALLING A WOMAN A *GUY* BORDERS ON OFFENSIVE AS DOES REFERRING TO A MALE CUSTOMER AS A *GUY*. EVEN WHEN I AM OUT HAVING LUNCH OR DINNER ON MY OWN, IT BOTHERS ME BEING CALLED, “THIS *GUY*” AS IN, “AS SOON AS I AM DONE TAKING THE ORDER FROM THIS *GUY*, I’LL BE OVER.”

I KNOW WHAT YOUR THINKING. LIGHTEN UP, IT’S JUST SLANG, A SAYING, A SIGN OF THE TIMES.....

ANOTHER OFFENSIVE QUESTION IS, “HOW ARE *WE* DOING TONIGHT?” *WE?* WHO IS *WE*? I THINK YOU GET WHAT I AM SAYING. YOUR SERVERS SHOULD ALWAYS ADDRESS YOUR CUSTOMERS PROPERLY. EVEN IF YOU'RE OPERATING A SMALL BAR, YOUR CUSTOMERS SHOULD BE TREATED IN A RESPECTFUL WAY.

I STILL LET THE WOMEN OUT OF THE ELEVATOR FIRST AND OPEN THE DOOR FOR ALL BEHIND ME. THESE THINGS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CULTURE AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO FALL BY THE WAYSIDE. IT'S COMMON COURTESY! NOW YOU MAY THINK THAT I AM BEING OVERLY SENSITIVE ABOUT THIS ISSUE, BUT MORE AND MORE, I’VE NOTICED THAT THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF ETIQUETTE IS GOING THE WAY OF OUR ECONOMY, SOUTH!

“A PERSON WHO PURCHASES FROM ANOTHER,” IS WEBSTER’S DEFINITION OF A CUSTOMER. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EVERY CUSTOMER BE ADDRESSED RESPECTFULLY. AFTER ALL, AS CUSTOMERS, THEY ARE BY DEFINITION THERE TO PURCHASE SOMETHING **FROM YOU**. I HAVE DISCUSSED ENDLESSLY HOW CUSTOMERS MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN A POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY WAY IF YOU WANT THEM TO RETURN.

BUT HOW YOUR SERVERS SPEAK, THE THINGS THEY SAY, THE BODY LANGUAGE AND THE EYE CONTACT THEY USE ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE DINING EXPERIENCE. CALL ME OLD FASHIONED, BUT.....

WE ALL KNOW THAT OLD ADAGE, "LADIES FIRST!" CERTAINLY IN THE FINER RESTAURANTS THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A BASIC RULE, OR SO I THOUGHT. JUST LAST NIGHT, AT ONE OF THOSE BETTER RESTAURANTS, THERE WERE FOUR OF US, TWO COUPLES, AND THE SERVER ASKED ME FIRST FOR MY ORDER. I RESPECTFULLY REPLIED, "MY WIFE WILL ORDER FIRST." I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE WOMAN SHOULD BE ASKED HER ORDER FIRST WHEN IN MIXED COMPANY. AS I WRITE THIS, I AM FEELING MORE LIKE A "STARCHED COLLAR" BUT WHEN SOMETHING THAT BOTHERS ME ACCUMULATES, IT COMES OUT IN THE FORM OF AN ARTICLE.

SO, INSTRUCT YOUR SERVERS, BARTENDERS AND BUSSERS TO ADDRESS YOUR CUSTOMERS PROPERLY, *NOT GENERICALLY*. ADDRESS THEM AND SERVE THEM IN A WAY THAT IS, AT LEAST, BASICALLY CORRECT. REVISIT THOSE BASIC RULES OF SERVING..... SERVE TO THE LEFT, CLEAR TO THE RIGHT. WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE IS DONE BEFORE CLEARING. WAIT UNTIL YOUR CUSTOMERS LEAVE TO PICK UP THE PAID BILL. WOMEN ARE SERVED FIRST....AND KEEP REMINDING YOUR STAFF:

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