

How Politeness Can Save You Time

Pam Vaccaro, MA, CSP

A few years ago two CEOs were seen daily on TV. One promised to replace your SUVs faulty tires and the other apologized for his airlines inability that summer to get you to your destination on time. Tires were replaced as promised, but not one complimentary frequent flyer mile was either promised or delivered for your travel inconvenience....just an apology.

Participants in an informal poll three months later voted the United Airlines CEO most “popular.” When asked why, polled participants said, “Hey, he apologized.” Civility and courtesy are no longer the norm, but the exception. What CEO does not contemplate each day how to get a competitive edge?

There is also a timesaving component to having a reputation as a “very nice company.” Customers will cut you some slack if a glitch occurs resulting in less time dealing with conflicts. Employee complaints drop when there is an atmosphere of respect resulting in less time spent on employee retention. Colleagues put your first when responding to e-mails, phone calls, or voicemails because they know you respect their time.

Consider these small acts of politeness to get more from your investment of time and feel great too.

1. View yourself as the main customer service representative. Respond personally to a few unhappy customers each week and apologize. Time marketing is hardly better spent.
2. Make sure your receptionist or “director of first impressions” is absolutely polite beyond the norm. You will have customers standing in line for two reasons. 1. They got a real person on the phone instead of the highly unpopular automated attendant, and 2. A friendly helpful voice is a welcomed surprise when most consumers expect to have their time or need discounted.
3. The best time and cost saving technique at your disposal for employee satisfaction can be as simple as “thanks...great job...glad you are with us.”

If your company culture says “kind, polite, thoughtful” consider yourself a head above the rest and on your way to saving minutes and hours each day which, of course, add up to days or weeks a year.

Pam Vaccaro, CSP is a professional speaker whose expertise in managing time and attention brings her before audiences internationally. She is a Certified Speaking Professional, the highest earned designation by the National Speakers Association. Her company Designs on Time challenges companies and associations to rethink traditional time management. She is most known for tailored programs and innovative ideas.

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