

The Workbook

AMAZE

EVERY CUSTOMER

EVERY TIME



52 TOOLS *for* Delivering
the Most Amazing
Customer Service *on the Planet*

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Amaze Every Customer Every Time

The Workbook

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The Tools Come to Life

I believe that each and every one of the principles shared with you in Part Two of *Amaze Every Customer Every Time* has the potential to transform you and your entire organization. However, I also believe that no principle can transform any individual or any enterprise unless it's actually implemented.

This is where the Tools you've read about come to life. Part Two of this book identifies 52 different Tools you can use to *amaze every customer every time*. It just so happens that there are also 52 cards in a deck of playing cards. But, this deck is special. Each card is an Ace. Think of each one of the 52 strategies as an Ace that you can play in the "game" of *amazing* service that will move you and your company to the next level.

When it comes to customer service, we all need to learn how to play the Ace. And the more personal experience that you connect with playing a given Ace, the better you will be at executing that principle. In this part of the book, I ask you some key questions about each of those 52 strategies, with the aim of helping you to develop a personal narrative that connects to each concept.

All you have to do to develop your own personal success story for each of these tools is dig into, and answer, each the questions that follow. Some of these questions and conversation starters will be easier to answer than others, depending on the level of responsibility or the length of time or experience you have with your company. If you have difficulty answering a question, try thinking about someone else you've worked with, someone whose actions or behaviors you may have observed. Tell that story. Or perhaps you have worked somewhere else and can share an example from that past experience. The goal is for you to use a true story to get clarity in regard to each of the 52 tools.

Take the time to think about each question carefully, and to create your own best response to it, either written or verbal, either as an individual or while working as part of a team. By the way, there is a great advantage to working as a team. That's an excellent way to make the book come to life and start to build an employee-centric and customer-centric culture into your organization.

You can start with any tool you like. Create just one real-world success story a week – and within one year, you will have mastered the entire "deck!"

LEADERSHIP

“Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.”
—John Maxwell

Don’t get hung up on the word “leadership.” When it comes to amazing your customers, everyone, regardless of title or responsibility, can be a leader—and that includes you, whatever your job title. The most amazing companies, in fact, are those in which everyone assumes a leadership role.

You really do have the opportunity to be a great role model for the customer, as well as for all the people with whom you work, in delivering an amazing service experience.

Leadership Tools

1. Act Like You Own the Place
2. Trust
3. Debrief on Both Misery and Magic
4. Befriend the Competition
5. Adapt or Die
6. Know the Value of Your Customers
7. Know What Drives Your Success
8. You Can’t Be Good at Everything
9. Play to Your Strengths

1. ACT LIKE YOU OWN THE PLACE

Do you take as much pride and “ownership” in your responsibilities that you act like the owner or CEO? If so, share an example.

2. TRUST

When was the last time a manager or a colleague entrusted you with an important responsibility?

When was a time when you trusted someone else and were glad you did? How did that experience make you feel?

3. DEBRIEF ON BOTH MISERY AND MAGIC

What is the most important lesson you have learned from a happy customer?

What is the most important lesson you have learned from an unhappy customer?

4. BEFRIEND THE COMPETITION

How do your company's strengths differ from those of your competitors? Do these strengths give you an advantage that generates referrals from competitors?

For managers: How much do you know about your direct competition? How could you find out more?

5. ADAPT OR DIE

How have your customers' expectations and buying habits changed within the past year?

Has a customer shared an idea for a new product, a new service, or a change in the way that you do business? If so, what did you do with that suggestion?

6. KNOW THE VALUE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

What do you estimate is the lifetime value of your average customer?

Think of a time that you solved a problem for a customer that cost a little money in the short-term, but won the person's loyalty for the long-term. Describe what took place.

7. KNOW WHAT DRIVES YOUR SUCCESS

What would you say are the five most important reasons a customer would want to do business with you? Which of these factors is *the most* important?

8. YOU CAN'T BE GOOD AT EVERYTHING

What does your company do best? What gives – or could give – your company a competitive advantage?

Is there something your company might not be great at, but that you make up for with excellence in another area?

9. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

What is your greatest personal and professional strength?

What are you doing now (or plan to do) to develop that strength even more?

CULTURE

“The culture is made—or destroyed—by its articulate voices.”

—Ayn Rand

The culture defines the business. And culture starts with you.

Your job is to be an articulate voice. Why focus time and attention on your company’s culture? Because most, if not all, companies that fail to amaze the customer have failed to amaze the employee. The two challenges are always linked together. In this chapter, you learn how to address that challenge, and why it is everyone’s job to do so.

The next thirteen Amazement Tools (#s 10–22) will help you create and sustain a culture that is customer - and employee - focused. It is up to you to do your part in setting the example and maintaining that culture.

You have the power to create it and sustain that positive culture—or, if you choose not to manage it well, to erode it. Culture always starts on the inside, with you. And whatever the culture is on the inside of your organization, it is going to be felt on the outside by the customer.

Culture Tools

10. To Be the Best Place to Buy, Be the Best Place to Work
11. Don’t Take the Easy Way Out
12. The Awesome Responsibility
13. Defend the Culture
14. Shift Your Vocabulary
15. Adopt a Customer-First Mindset
16. Celebrate Uniqueness
17. Great Ideas Come from Everyone
18. Consistency
19. Tell the Story
20. Be a Committed Learner
21. Mentoring
22. Starting Over

10. TO BE THE BEST PLACE TO BUY, BE THE BEST PLACE TO WORK

What does it mean to “Treat employees the way you want your customers to be treated – maybe even better”? Share an example.

11. DON'T TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT

Think of a time when you *could* have told a customer that you couldn't help, but you chose to make the effort, even though it might have been a little inconvenient, to take care of the customer. What did you do, and what happened as a result?

12. THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY

Think of a time when you interacted with a customer in such a way that the customer developed a positive impression about not just you, but the entire company. What did you do to make that customer “love” you and the company?

13. DEFEND THE CULTURE!

Was there ever a time when you witnessed a colleague doing something that seemed to you to undermine your company's positive culture? What did you do? Or, looking back, what do you *wish* you had done?

14. SHIFT YOUR VOCABULARY

How do you refer to your customers? Do you call them customers, or members, guests or ... *neighbors*? Is there another positive word that you could use to refer to your customers? If so, what would it be?

15. ADOPT A CUSTOMER-FIRST MINDSET

How do your job and responsibilities *directly and indirectly* impact the customer experience?

Are you supporting someone else who deals directly with the customer? If so, who? And how do you support that person?

16. CELEBRATE UNIQUENESS

Describe a time when a colleague successfully solved a customer problem by taking a very different approach than you would have taken.

17. GREAT IDEAS COME FROM EVERYONE

Have you ever come up with a new or different way to do your job? What was it? Did you share the idea with others?

Does your company have a process to elicit suggestions from employees and customers?

What is the best such idea you have ever heard?

18. CONSISTENCY

Customers love consistency. What can your customers count on receiving from you the first time – and every time – without exception?

How would your customers finish this sentence: “I can always count on them to ...”?

19. TELL THE STORY

Think of a time that you created an amazing customer service experience for a customer. (This can be either an internal or external customer.) What happened?

20. BE A COMMITTED LEARNER

How do you plan to continue your own personal development?

21. MENTORING

Who have been the most important mentors in your life, and why?

Do you have an example of a time when you taught or mentored someone?

22. STARTING OVER

What experiences and lessons from yesterday can you use to deliver Amazement today? How can you do even better?

ONE-ON-ONE

“Customers perceive service in their own unique, idiosyncratic, emotional, irrational, end-of-the-day, and totally human terms. Perception is all there is!”

—Tom Peters

I have used the term “one-on-one” to describe this interaction in its broadest sense. It can be in person, over the phone, via email, texting, or any other form of direct communication.

It is your direct interaction with your customers, both internal and external, that will ultimately determine your own success and that of your company. Managed well, these interactions will succeed in engaging, amazing, and winning the loyalty of your customers. The next sixteen Amazement Tools (#s 23–38) help you to manage Moments of Truth and create Moments of Magic.

One-on-One Tools

23. It’s Showtime!
24. Treat Customers the Way They Want to Be Treated
25. Focus on the Customer, Not the Money
26. Manage the First Impression
27. Engage!
28. Ask the Extra Question
29. One to Say Yes, Two to Say No
30. Cross-Sell and Up-Sell!
31. Last Impressions
32. Be Accountable
33. The Customer Is Not Always Right
34. Bounce Back
35. Master the Art of Recovery
36. Manage the Wait
37. Avoid Loyalty Killers
38. Seize the Moment!

23. IT'S SHOWTIME!

What interaction with a customer do you wish you could have videotaped, so that you could have shared it with others as a “best practice”?

What happened that made it so special?

How could you repeat that great performance, or even improve upon it, next time?

24. TREAT CUSTOMERS THE WAY THEY WANT TO BE TREATED

Have you ever had a customer who had a very different expectation of something than you did – or a very different communication style? What was different? Were you able to adapt?

25. FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER, NOT THE MONEY

Think of a time when you or a colleague helped a customer even though you didn't make a sale. What did you do, specifically, that made the customer feel that you cared more about him or her as an individual than just another sale?

26. MANAGE THE FIRST IMPRESSION

What do you do to manage the first impression? How do you greet people? What do you wear to work? Do you shake hands? How do you answer the phone? Is there an opportunity for improvement?

27. ENGAGE!

What's the first question you ask a customer to start a conversation and find out what you can do to truly help him or her? (Hint: It's not "Can I help you?") How does that question help you engage with the customer?

28. ASK THE EXTRA QUESTION

When have you asked a customer a “follow-up” question that uncovered new information that allowed you to help the customer in a way that you would not have done otherwise? (Often, these are questions that begin with words like, “Just out of curiosity ...”) What could you have asked?

29. ONE TO SAY YES, TWO TO SAY NO

Can you think of a time that it would have been much easier to say “no” to a customer, but you found a way instead to say “yes”?

How did you feel?

How do you think the customer felt?

30. CROSS-SELL AND UP-SELL!

Think of a time when a customer was thinking about purchasing one thing, and you made an “up-sell or cross-sell” recommendation that helped the customer to do and accomplish more by buying more. What would have happened if you had not made the recommendation? Would the customer have better off or worse off?

31. LAST IMPRESSIONS

What do you say or do to ensure that your last impression with the customer is a positive one?

32. BE ACCOUNTABLE!

Can you think of a time when you assumed personal ownership of solving a problem for a customer? Did you follow up to make sure the issue was resolved to the customer's complete satisfaction? What was the customer's response?

33. THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

Can you think of a time when you knew that the customer was not right? How did you respond? How did that make the customer feel?

Are there any common mistakes your customers make? If so, how do you respond in a way that lets them be wrong with dignity and respect?

34. BOUNCE BACK

Can you think of a time when you had an interaction with a customer that made you upset, or even angry? How did you handle it? What did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently if you the same thing happened again?

35. MASTER THE ART OF RECOVERY

Think of a time that a customer complained to you about something and you were able to turn the complaint into a positive experience – one that renewed the customer's confidence. How did you do that?

36. MANAGE THE WAIT

Have you ever been able to exceed a customer's expectations in terms of how long he or she had to wait for something? Was it an accident, or did you truly *underpromise and overdeliver*?

How did the customer react?

37. AVOID LOYALTY KILLERS

Have you ever been on the receiving end of one of a “loyalty killer” phrase such as “That’s not my department” or “Sorry, it’s company policy”? If so, how did that make you feel? If not, how do you think you would have felt?

38. SEIZE THE MOMENT!

Think of a time when you delivered an above-average experience to a loyal customer. What, specifically, did you do that made that customer want to come back the next time he or she needed what you sell?

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

“If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that. Word of mouth is very powerful.”

—Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon.com

If you’ve already created a customer-first culture within your organization, and if you have consistently executed on that culture, then you’re ready for the next step.

The next step is simply this: delivering Moments of Magic that go beyond being above average. These moments are the kind that really stand out, the kind that make your customers say “Wow!” The next ten Amazement Tools (#s 39–48) show you how to deliver a customer experience so powerful that it builds intense loyalty, increases evangelism for your brand, and leaves the competition shaking its collective head.

These are Tools that will help your enterprise get closer to joining the ranks of the “superstar” service providers!

Competitive Edge Tools

39. Own Your Mile
40. Satisfaction Is a Rating, Loyalty Is an Emotion
41. Be Easy to Do Business With
42. Get Firsthand Experience
43. Show Your Gratitude
44. Don’t Leave Loyalty to Chance
45. Do What Is Not Expected
46. Deliver Amazing Follow-Up
47. Stay in Touch
48. Get Proactive

39. OWN YOUR MILE

- Define your company's "mile" – the area where you choose to excel. What do you do to "own" or stand out in this mile?

40. SATISFACTION IS A RATING, LOYALTY IS AN EMOTION

- Think of a company to which you are truly loyal – the company you love the most. What specific experiences caused you to become a loyal customer?
- Are you aware of any of your current customers that are that loyal to you and your company?

41. BE EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH

- What are some examples of things that can get in the way of an “easy” buying experience from your company?

42. GET FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

- When was the last time you helped a customer by using your own personal knowledge of, and experience with, the product or service you sell?
- How often do you get to take your company's products or services "out for a test drive"?

43. SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE

- When have you showed a customer, through both words and actions, just how grateful you were for his or her business?
- Who was the customer?
- How did you show that gratitude?

44. DON'T LEAVE LOYALTY TO CHANCE

- Is your customer experience so much better than your competitors' that your best customers are willing to pay a little more?
- If so, what exactly are you doing to make the price less relevant? If not, what can you do?

45. DO WHAT IS NOT EXPECTED

- Have you ever taken advantage of an opportunity to surprise the customer with something that he or she didn't expect? What was it?
- How did the customer react?

46. DELIVER AMAZING FOLLOW-UP

- Think of a time you followed up with a customer after the sale. What did you do?
- How could you use this follow-up approach with other customers?

47. STAY IN TOUCH

- Are there certain customers that you, or your company, stay in touch with on a regular basis? How do you go about doing it (phone calls, emails, newsletters, etc.)?

48. GET PROACTIVE!

- Were you ever able to *prevent* a problem from happening, or anticipate a customer's needs before he or she asked for something? How did you do that?

COMMUNITY

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

—Winston Churchill

Churchill couldn't have realized it, but he was expressing, with perfect faithfulness, the philosophy that truly sets Ace Hardware apart in each of the communities where it operates.

We close with an essential reminder, one that distinguishes the most amazing companies from everyone else. Business and success are not just about us. True success happens when we start to look beyond the short-term outcomes that immediately benefit ourselves and our business. The strongest loyalty of all is the loyalty that's rooted in being a member of the same community that the customer belongs to. The final four Amazement Tools (#s 49–52) show you how to build much stronger ties to that community.

Community Tools

- 49. The Law of Reciprocity
- 50. Do Local Well
- 51. Loyalty Goes Both Ways
- 52. Be Part of Something Bigger than Yourself

49. THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY

- What, if anything, does your company do to give back to the community?
- When was the last time that you personally had a positive impact on the life of someone who was in need? (Use examples from inside *or* outside the workplace.)

50. DO LOCAL WELL

- Think of a local store or restaurant where you really enjoy shopping or eating. How does this business make you feel like you are a *local* or a *regular*?
- What can you do to give your company a more “local” feel (especially if your company is large, national or international)?

51. LOYALTY GOES BOTH WAYS

- How do you or your company show loyalty to customers?
- Identify a time when you and/or your company made a point of “being there” for customers and the larger community, especially in a time of need. What role did you play in that experience?

52. BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

- How do you define community?
- What do you and/or your organization give back to the community?
- Or what could you give back?

EPILOGUE

The ultimate test of customer amazement: Be so good that you create a problem for the competition.

Congratulations! You have made it to the end of the book, but the journey is not over. It's really beginning. As good as you are today, when the next customer walks through your door, calls on the phone or clicks to place their order, you start over. Each and every customer is a new opportunity to create customer amazement.

Creating a demanding customer is a powerful strategy. Work hard to answer this question as it will give you the competitive advantage that will make your customers come back, make price relevant and *amaze every customer every time*.

CREATE A DEMANDING CUSTOMER

- Are you so good at what you do that if one of your customers happened to do business with a competitor and demanded the same level of service, that competitor would consider your customer to be “too demanding?”
- If not, what would it take to *be* that good?