

A Beautiful Apology

Japanese trains are awesome for a number of reasons, not the least of which is how amazingly punctual they are.

But on one occasion, a train on the Tokyo-area Metropolitan Intercity Railway Company's Tsukuba Express line failed to stick to its timetable.

The line connects Akihabara in Tokyo with Tsukuba in Ibaraki Prefecture, and on weekday mornings there's supposed to be a northbound train that leaves Minami-Nagareyama Station at 9:44 a.m. However, the train instead left at 9:43:40, 20 seconds earlier than it's supposed to.

Before the day was done, the Tsukuba Express management issued an official policy, posted to the company's website. The statement read:

"On November 14, at approximately 9:44 a.m., a northbound Metropolitan Intercity Railway Company (main office in Tokyo, Chiyoda Ward, president and CEO Koichi Yugi) train left Minami-Nagareyama Station



roughly 20 seconds earlier than the time indicated on the timetable. We deeply apologize for the severe inconvenience imposed upon our customers."

The fact that Japanese companies care so much about customer satisfaction, consistently trying to look at things from the end-user's point of view, and are willing to offer a sincere apology even for understandable inconveniences, is one of the most beautiful parts of Japanese society.

How hard is it to say, "I'm sorry?"

In the West, we are quick to make excuses and slow to consider the other person's point of view. Indeed, a sincere apology for an understandable inconvenience is a beautiful thing. It shows that we are looking at things first and foremost with an attitude of service. That should be our standard at Life Care and Century Park.

Be slow to blame and quick to say, "My bad."

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:19 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter