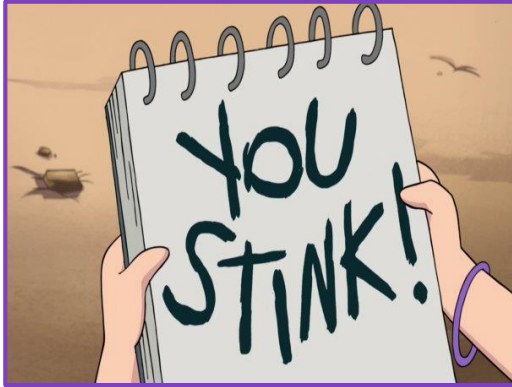


Ask the Customer!

A customer sent a manufacturer a short, clear response to a satisfaction survey: “You stink!”



A company representative promptly visited the customer, who said the company’s labels were at fault.

“Oh, there’s got to be a mistake,” said the rep. “We researched all the important information customers need about our shipments – codes, points of origin, dates – and have included these on our labels. We haven’t omitted any useful information.”

The customer shook his head and led the rep back to the warehouse, which featured particularly high shelving.

“Your boxes are on that shelf,” the customer said, pointing to the top shelf. “For example, what’s in that box over there?”

“I don’t know – I can’t read it from here,” said the rep, followed by, “Oh, I see the point.”

“That’s why you stink,” said the customer in a friendly way. “The print is too small to be read in our warehouse. Did you ask about storage needs in that survey?”

The rep had to admit that you do a much better job of helping your customer when you start by asking them what kind of help they actually need.

That story is instructive for us in Life Care and Century Park.

We teach and preach and strive to practice good customer service, but sometimes our best efforts fall short, and a complaint comes our way.

As the customer shares a concern, we may be so busy listening – and perhaps in a defensive mode – that we fail to find out from the customer what exactly it is he or she wants, or what will make the individual happy.

Let’s be sure to ask our customers what they need or how we may help. Even if there is no complaint or negative response to a customer survey.

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered (Proverbs 11:25 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter