

One of Those Days

Yes, I am a coffee lover. People who know me well realize that is a reputation earned a cup at a time any time.

Recently, I read about an experience at a coffee shop – one that I can relate to, and perhaps so can you. It also may illustrate the kind of day you have encountered in the center or office where you work.

The staff of the coffee shop was having “one of those days.” The espresso machine was malfunctioning; the bakery had not delivered the bagels and sweet rolls; someone from the morning shift called in sick; and the crew from the previous evening failed to restock the cabinets with supplies. There were several people waiting to get their first cup of coffee for the day.

A woman at the back of the line began to complain loudly. “What is taking so long? Are you growing the beans back there or what? I don’t have all day!”

“Yes, we are running on empty this morning,” the manager said with a pleasant smile. He motioned for the woman to come forward. “What can I get for you?” he asked.

“I want a large coffee with steamed milk – to go,” barked the woman.

“No problem,” said the manager. He looked past the woman to the other customers waiting in line and offered them a reassuring wink. In a matter of moments, he had made the woman’s coffee, took her money, and sent her on her way with a “Have a nice day.”

The other customers stood silently with confused looks on their faces.

The manager said, “Folks, I’m really sorry for the inconvenience this morning. Because you have been so patient, your coffee is on the house.”

All of us encounter events with negative overtones. As shown by the coffee shop manager, we must look for opportunities to turn them into positive customer interactions. It takes a little thought, a little creative thinking, and a show of concern for those waiting to be served.

And the story shows that patience can have its reward.

– Beecher Hunter