

Does 'Customers first' mean wearing your underwear on the outside?



Aki Kalliatakis

Delight your customers

aki@leadershiplaunchpad.co.za

www.leadershiplaunchpad.co.za

In this series of Supermarket & Retailer's articles, we share stories of what some organisations and managers have done to motivate and inspire their teams. We give you practical ideas of what you can do to create the most amazing, customer-driven company in the world.



A few basic lessons about creating amazing experiences for your customers

In my more cynical moments – and I don't have too many of them, I might add – I sometimes wonder about whether companies actually believe all of their slogans. Just about every business has some kind of catchphrase or motto that describes their commitment to giving customers unique experiences. 95% of the time customers will disagree.

But this column is not called "How to upset your customers without really trying," so as we move into a new era of business unusual, I'd like to get back to basics and talk about a few lessons about

creating amazing experiences for your customers. If you don't, your business is probably doomed to a slow death.

How do you put 'customers first' and give outstanding and remarkable service? Sometimes you have to just do the opposite of what others do. You just have to be a bit original. Halfway between Johannesburg and Nelspruit there are about 10 places where you can have a break and fill up with petrol, but only one of them – the ALZU Petroport, which is the busiest one – makes a show of it all. I'm talking about the choice of a few

restaurants, a kids' play area, impeccable toilets, and most of all a view of the veld with wildlife, including a few rhinos, zebra, gemsbok and more. It just puts you in the right mood for your trip.

I had a boss a long time ago who'd say that when customers asked something, or appeared confused, frustrated or distracted, we'd all have to say ...

“ The answer is yes!
Now, what is the question? ”

This is the very essence of developing great relationships, empathy and trust, and that in turn

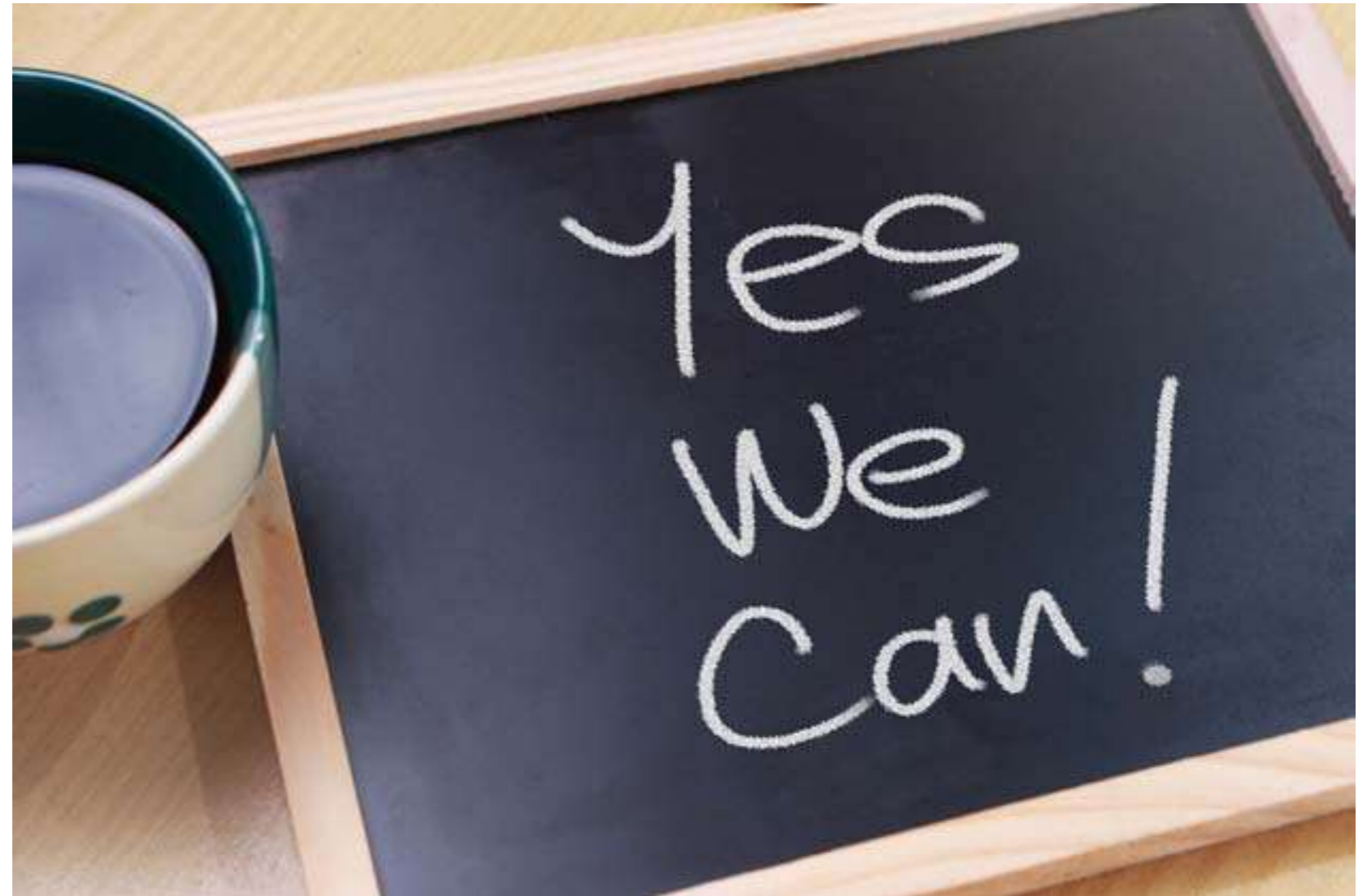


makes you day a better one, whether you are the CEO of a multi-billion rand company, or someone who has to deal with customers on the front line every day.

We somehow know great customer care when we see it and feel it, but how do you define it? A great place to start is with the things that frustrate your customers. What are the bits of your business routine that make them want to walk away? It sometimes just starts with some simple things. Some of you may remember many years ago there was the original Black Steer steakhouse restaurant in Yeoville in Johannesburg, and the queues were sometimes 90 minutes long. As impatient as I am, I never once complained. Amongst other things, the co-owner, Colin, would come around every 20 minutes or so with a tray of cheap sherry and apologise for the wait in the most gracious way and everyone was okay with that.

“ In the USA there’s a great expression about not ‘nickel and diming’ your customers: charging them extra for little things after they’ve already paid over good money. ”

It’s always these little things that seem to be a source of great irritation and exasperation, so just stop doing them. If you have to, add a couple of rand extra to the original price to cover these costs and let customers feel they are getting something for nothing. Imagine if you went to a stadium, paid a huge amount of money for your entrance ticket



and then discovered that you also get free popcorn, a free meal and free drinks included. Wouldn’t that make you feel like a VIP? It’s happened to me with an UBER taxi driver, who had a free newspaper and offered a free cold-drink when he took me to the airport. I still have his number on my phone. What lessons can you learn from other companies outside your industry?

If you really can’t think of anything to do, send your team out to be undercover customers in your business and see what it’s like. Whether it’s trying

to find safe parking, standing waiting in queues to get a special order, waiting in even longer queues to pay an unsmiling cashier, finding out that the bag your shopping was packed in has a tear in it, all of these and more will give you great ideas that may boggle your mind. But then from this experience you can learn something.

I’ll give you one example: one business in Cape Town called the parking attendants the ‘Parking Penguins’ and then someone had an idea that they should also really dress them up as penguins.

Customers – kids and adults alike – loved it.

One of my most enduring memories of the Black Steer was of the waiter, Jallous. He was really tall and looked like an old movie cowboy – an African version of John Wayne or Clint Eastwood. The big black Texas Stetson hat on his head gave him a sense of aloofness, and I don't think he smiled a lot – unless there was a kid with you. Then his huge smile lit up the whole room! Just a hat and a smile made the biggest difference, and created memories that last for decades.



“ So what brings a smile to the face of your customers? What will make them remember you for years? ”

It doesn't have to be complicated, but it's got to be like show business. I've seen a few examples and idea from our clients and their staff ...

- There's a minor league baseball team in the USA where they have 'Flatulence Fridays'. Some customers in their small stadium get whoopee cushions taped under their seats, and when the announcer gives the "Go!" hundreds of people pretend to let off loud farts. Nobody has ever complained.



- In a bank branch in Botswana, the staff start the day with a ritual dance and a song to get fired up for work every day. But sometimes they also spontaneously do this in the middle of the day and, once again, the customers love it, participate, and want to do it again.
- I know it's a bit childish and trivial, but juvenile humour is enjoyable to most people. One pub/restaurant had a 'Salute to Underwear Challenge' where customers who walked into the restaurant with their underwear on the outside got a free drink – an adult slushie with booze in it! You can imagine how full they were on those nights!

And remember that your ideas are perhaps the currency, but you don't create a loyalty revolution if your team don't own them and if you don't make it easy for them don't implement. Go out and do what you need to do. Be innovative. Be patient. Persevere. And persist. Your reward will definitely come. **SR**





Staycold launches new hinge door freezer

Staycold International are officially launching a half door freezer into their range, the HD580F. This was developed by Staycold because of a need from the market for a low footprint display freezer for checkout isles in supermarkets.

This impulse buy freezer is manufactured in Staycold's ISO9001:2015 approved factory in Parys with full safety approval and is now ready for dispatch in South Africa and abroad.

The HD580F by Staycold was initially showcased at HOSTEX early this year to test the market. Currently there is no other company in South Africa that provides a half door freezer solution, so Staycold used the event to gauge feedback from the market. The response to this unit was positive from both corporate end users as well as ice cream manufacturers, so Staycold began the commercialisation of the unit.

Staycold was approached by a Trade Asset Manager from Dairymaid, one of South Africa's leading ice cream manufacturers. He commented that they had a request for a particular freezer from one of the big retailers in South Africa.



This freezer drives sales in the hotspot of the store and fits in with the look and feel, so it was very important for them to develop this locally and as an environmentally friendly product.

Having liaised extensively, the R&D team at Staycold set about redesigning their single door HD580 fridge, already available in the market, to operate as a half door freezer. They had to be mindful of developing a space saving, low footprint freezer that could maintain the required temperature for storage of ice cream. The units also had to be aesthetically pleasing, as they are mostly placed at checkout areas as ice creams are impulse purchases, especially during the warmer summer months in Africa.

Dairymaid was satisfied that the product delivered on all the intended benefits, is complimentary to the look and feel of the store, delivered

the required temperature of -18°C to -25°C and is complimentary to the intended sales drive.

Besides the lower footprint than other conventional ice cream freezers, this freezer also operates frost free, maintains temperature below -20°C , has LED lighting, a heated glass door, uses eco-friendly refrigerant and has an optional left-hand hinge door operation.

Lena le Roux, Managing Director at Staycold

for twenty six years, has the following to say:

"We were pleasantly surprised at how this freezer drew the attention of the delegates at our stand at Hostex. It seems to meet the demands of retailers as a small footprint item that they can place at their checkout points. We are pleased to now offer the HD580 model in both fridge and freezer forms to the market."

Staycold has been manufacturing self-contained commercial fridges and freezers in South Africa for 40 years. They pride themselves in making energy efficient, durable and reliable fridges and freezers and providing more cost-effective units over their lifetime.

For more information on Staycold's new HD580F half door freezer as well as their complete hinge door range, contact them on 056 819 8097, 087 505 0951 or visit their website on www.staycold.co.za or LinkedIn page on <https://www.linkedin.com/company/staycold-international-pty-ltd/>





**JUST
LAUNCHED**



NEW HIGH PERFORMANCE IMPULSE FREEZER

Ideal for checkout isles

Other Benefits

- Low footprint
- Operates frost free
- Maintains temperature below -20 degrees Celsius
- LED lighting
- Heated glass door
- Uses eco-friendly refrigerant
- Energy saving
- Optional left-hand hinge door operation

*Manufactured in
South Africa,
Staycold is a trusted
brand with over
40 years' of experience*

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