



WALLOWA COUNTY
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March 2010

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MYSTERY SHOP YOUR BUSINESS!

"WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE IS SO IMPORTANT?"

This spring will be the third anniversary of the Red Carpet program. The Chamber has mystery shopped over 250 membership businesses since May of 2007 and 28 businesses were recognized for their excellent customer service. Why does the Chamber believe customer service is so important?

There is plenty of information discussing the impacts of poor customer service on a business. The Harvard Business Review reports that if you can prevent 5% of your customers from leaving you, you can increase your bottom line profit by 25 – 95%.

Upon further investigation, the US News and World Report completed a study revealing that the average American business loses 15% of its customer base each year. From this number, 82% of these customers stop buying from one business and go to another because of poor or indifferent service. Another 14% leave because they are displeased with prices and ~5% go elsewhere based on recommendations.

So, with the Harvard Business Review saying that you can increase your bottom line profit by 25% - 95% if you can prevent 5% of your customers from leaving, and U.S. News and World Reports says 82% of customers leave one business and go to another because of customer service issues...then it becomes clear how serious customer service is to a business. One other detail pointed out in these studies is the sad fact that most of these customers don't bother to complain.

It's been shown time and time again that getting new customers into your store is one of the most expensive things you can do to grow your business. Once we have them, we simply can't afford to lose them.

We can argue that rural areas should not be compared to metro economies. This may be true. Nevertheless, the forces that drive customer behaviors are fairly universal. Exceptional service includes: trustworthy relationships, clerks and employees attentive and courteous to your customers, and the willingness to go the extra mile — proactive service (page 4). We live in an age of Internet, Wal-Mart's, Costco's and catalogues. You may or may not lose a customer to another local merchant; instead you might lose them to the Internet. "Shop local" and "customer service" are intertwined and both must be present in order to keep our local business community alive and thriving.

Do you know what customers think when they enter your business? How are customers treated in your business when you are not there? Are your employees knowledgeable on how to deliver great customer service? Or are you possibly losing customers (that 15%) due to poor service or even no service?

The Chamber offers a mystery shopper service to membership businesses to find the answers to these questions. To maintain a pool of sharp mystery shoppers; there is a fee of \$100 to the business. For your \$100 you purchase: (1) three visits by a mystery shopper, (2) three detailed reports on each visit, and (3) consultation with the committee chair about the reports.

Another great benefit, "What if your employees are "caught in the act" of providing great service?" This information is documented. What great news to hear! This is crucial information for every owner to know about their business.

If you would like to review the format of the reports and know more about our mystery shopper program please contact the Chamber. We will be happy to answer your questions.

Who should buy Buckskin Bucks?

Everyone can buy Buckskin Bucks! Residents, businesses, organizations, nonprofits, "everyone" can purchase Buckskin Bucks to give to employees or volunteers as incentives or end of the year bonuses. These Bucks are great for **birthdays, secretary or boss day, goal achievements, safety awards, door prizes, holiday gifts, weddings, and anniversaries...**



Why should you we all buy Buckskin Bucks?

To keep our dollars in Wallowa County. To Support and strengthen locally owned businesses. And To encourage consumers to spend locally and visit Wallowa County businesses!

**Buy Buckskin Bucks
\$10 & \$25 Bills
Wallowa County
Chamber of Commerce Office**

Social Networking Workshop A Huge Success

More than 25 people, representing small businesses and community organizations attended the Chamber Sponsored Social Networking workshop on Thursday, February 25th.

Art Hill, VP, Economic Development for Blue Mountain Community College, with the help of local facilitators Stacy Green (Stacy Green Marketing), Joe Whittle and Moses Frederick (Mojo Marketing) and Janis Carper (Second Chance Productions) provided the participants with over four hours of instruction in the art of Facebook and Twitter. Workshop participants also learned how to build a simple business/organization blogsite.

The energy of the room was fantastic and it is clear that more opportunities to learn about Social Networking is in order for Wallowa County. Special thanks go to workshop committee team members Pam Frolander, Katie Thompson, Linda Childers, Susan Gilstrap, Marc Stauffer and Chris Geyer.

Finally, without the support of the ESD District, NEOEDD, the Wallowa County Health Care District, Susan F. Gilstrap, CPA, Inc, the Lower Valley Economic Development Team, Lear's Pub and Grill and the Wallowa County Chamber this incredible event could not have happened.

For more information on future workshops, please contact the Chamber at 541-426-4622.



Visitor Center Report



Where did visitors get info:

Other/Friend	10
Sunset	0
Triple A Via Magazine	2
Oregon Travel Guide	0
Oregonian	0
NW Travel	1
Brochures	3
EOVA	1
Travel Articles	0
Telephone Directory	15
Internet (0) Letters 0)	60
Conference/Reunion/wed	3
Other Chambers	9
Oregon Business	0
Other (labels)	900

CENTRALIZED COUNTYWIDE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Do you want a calendar where you can check on local dates for meetings & events? The Chamber has started such a calendar. The more local information we receive; the more useful this calendar becomes for everyone. Check it out!

WWW.WALLOWACOUNTYCHAMBER.COM, CLICK COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Info. Requests	February 2010	January 2010	YTD	February 2009
Walk-In's Visitors/Bus.	145	264	409	161
Visitor Packets Sent	906	818	1724	106
Incoming phone/email contacts	182	357	539	256
Relocation packets	1	0	1	3
Total Contacts	1215	1439	2654	526
Member Referrals Made	290	539	829	1620
JOSEPH INFORMATION BOOTH CONTACTS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**CREATING A STRONG ECONOMY TOGETHER
THE WALLOWA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TEAM
PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS TO THE CHAMBER**

June's Local Market

Owner: June Colony
67597 Lostine River Road
Lostine, OR 97857
(541) 569-2388
Email: grassjune@hotmail.com
Description: June's local market offers a collection of locally made gifts and locally grown produce and baked goods.

Creekside Country Haven B&B

Owners: Nancy & Dan Holub
83326 Joseph Hwy.
Joseph, OR 97846
(541) 432-2703
www.creeksidecountryhaven.com
Description: Pet Friendly! Relax creekside setting with big views, just 2 miles from Joseph. Full breakfast, 50" flat screen TV/blue ray dvd/wifi. Kennel available.



Quality Information, Informed Choices
Labor Market Information

State of Oregon • Employment Department • www.QualityInfo.org

WALLOWA COUNTY	December 2009	December 2008	December 2007
Civilian Labor Force	3,625	3,538	3,518
-- Employed	3,128	3,107	3,253
-- Unemployed	497	431	265
--County Non-seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate	13.7%	12.2%	7.5%
-- State Non-seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate	10.8%	8.8%	5.3%
Population – estimated 7-09 Portland State University, Population Research Center	July 2009 7,100	Census 2000 7,226	July 2007 7,130
Average Pay per Job:	<u>Wallowa 2008</u> \$26,750	<u>Oregon 2008</u> \$40,486	<u>Wallowa 2007</u> \$25,829

December Notes: 84 percent of Oregon employment is found within the private sector compared to 71 percent of Wallowa County employment (2008 annual average from Oregon Covered Employment and Wage records).

Gains and Losses:

- Over-the-year gains:
 - ◊ Financial Activities: +30
 - ◊ Educational and Health Services: +30
- Selected net, over-the-year (private sector) job losses:
 - ◊ Construction: -50
 - ◊ Professional and business services: -20

For additional detailed information: <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/BIC> or

The *Eastern Oregon Labor Trends* publication: <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/PubReader?itemid=00000046>

Annette.I.Shelton-Tiderman@state.or.us Workforce Analyst, Oregon Employment Dept.; 541-519-0315 (cell)

Proactive Customer Service

The key ingredients of the Wow experience are:

- Seamless Service
- Trustworthy Service
- Attentiveness
- Resourcefulness
- Courtesy
- Pro-active Service

Seamless Service means providing everything the customer needs, not just what is required to meet the minimum standards. It's about making sure that they don't have to wait and wonder. Customers will appreciate a smooth, seamless process for addressing their needs. If there are several steps needed to take care of their concerns, keep them in the loop – update them by email or with a quick phone call so that they know you are working on the situation and progress is being made. By keeping them abreast of what is going on, you are letting them know you haven't forgotten about them and that you understand their concerns – reassurance and communication are powerful customer service tools.

Trustworthy Service is essential to retaining customers. Promising a customer anything and delivering nothing is the surest way to not only lose a customer, but get the kind of "word of mouth" bad press that can ruin you. Under promise and over deliver – If you promise a satisfactory solution and then go the extra mile to not only satisfy the customer, but gain their appreciation and "Wow" them, you will get word of mouth that will bring new customers to you.

Attentive Service means paying attention during and after the initial contact. How many times have you contacted customer service and been subjected to an obviously scripted response from the customer service representative? Does it give you the feeling they aren't really listening, but just trying to get to the end of their canned presentation?

Attentiveness should run through every customer service experience, from listening carefully to the customer's concerns to following up after the exchange is over to make sure their needs have been met. Listening isn't just about hearing – it is about understanding what is really being said. The words are just the beginning – what about the customer's tone of voice? Her mood? Is she disappointed, angry or frustrated? Keying in to the customer's mood and responding appropriately is essential, and it means not following a script.

Resourcefulness means finding solutions when there appear to be none. Many companies have iron-clad policies that must be followed whenever a problem arises; however, sometimes a customer won't be satisfied by the "company line" approach. Resourceful customer service representatives know that there is always a way to move beyond the standard procedures in order to make a customer happy. Resourcefulness involves finding a solution when a solution isn't apparent. This may mean moving up the chain of command before the customer demands to talk to your superior. Companies with excellent customer service also give their representatives some leeway so that they can come up with creative solutions on their own. When a customer senses that you are going beyond the norm to help them, they will feel valued and respected.

Courtesy is a commodity that is becoming rarer every day. It takes so little to be polite but it is becoming a lost art. Say please when you ask a customer a question, thank them for their information and take your time talking to them. Nothing makes a customer feel more devalued than being treated like a number. Use the person's name, make requests rather than demands and know when to apologize. When something goes wrong for a customer, they want to hear that you understand their frustration and that you are genuinely sorry that they are being inconvenienced. It takes nothing to say, "I'm so sorry you aren't satisfied and I hope we can do something to correct this."

Pro-Active Service means not waiting for the customer to come up with a solution that you simply follow through on. A proactive customer service representative anticipates the needs of the customer and follows through. Don't wait for the customer to ask you what you are willing to do – anticipate the question and answer it before they can ask. If they call and say they aren't satisfied, apologize and immediately suggest some solutions. Customers want you to take the lead – acknowledge their unhappiness, offer a solution or solutions and explain to them how you are going to follow through. Pro-Active service means taking the lead, which will reassure your customers that you know what you are doing and that you will follow through.

If you keep these six keys in mind – seamless service, trustworthiness, attentiveness, resourcefulness, courtesy and proactive service – you will be able to offer every customer the Wow Customer Service Experience that inspires loyalty and keeps customers coming back for more.

Reprinted article: author Robert Moment



Growing Business :: Strengthening Communities

February 19, 2010

For Immediate Release

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Marketing on a Shoestring Comes to NE Oregon

Have you been wondering how effective your marketing is? Are you reaching the people you need to reach? What is your market, anyway? A marketing workshop offered by the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) and the Oregon MicroEnterprise Network (OMEN) will address these questions and more! The workshop will teach participants about how to direct your marketing so that it best reaches your target market, effectively and economically.

Michael Gurton and Ryan McLaughlin from OMEN will also introduce a program called MarketLink that offers free, customized market research for NEOEDD clients. MarketLink has access to the same market research tools that are used by Fortune 500 companies and can provide you with:

- Sophisticated market research
- Sales lead generation
- Industry trend analysis
- Social media marketing strategies
- Ways to build relationships within the community and engage your customers

Take advantage of this opportunity to discover how to expand your marketing – using the same or smaller budget! The workshop will be offered three times around NE Oregon:

Baker City:

Monday, March 8th

6:00pm – 8:30pm

BMCC Armory

1640 Campbell St

Room 209

Enterprise:

Monday, March 8th

6:00pm – 8:30pm

Prairie Creek Center

104 Litch St.

La Grande:

Tuesday, March 9th

8:00am – 10:30am

La Grande Public Library

2006 Fourth St.

To register or to learn about other opportunities for small businesses, contact Annie Thompson at: anniethompson@neoedd.org or 541 426-3598



PO Box 427
Enterprise, OR 97828

www.wallowacountychamber.com

Who should buy Buckskin Bucks?

Everyone! Bucks are great for birthdays, secretary or boss day, goal achievements, safety awards, door prizes, holiday gifts, weddings, anniversaries...everything!

Can be purchased at the Chamber Office



Wallowa County Business Facilitation

Free and Confidential Business Coaching!

Every new business idea — no matter how good — faces serious challenges.

The mission of Business Facilitation is to support Wallowa County citizens in bringing their business dreams to reality.

- ◆ If you have a good idea for a new business, but don't know where to begin or
- ◆ If you have an existing business that you would like to expand or fine tune, but don't know how to find the right resources or
- ◆ If your existing business struggling?

Wallowa County Business Facilitation may be your answer. The service is free. Our business facilitator Myron Kirkpatrick helps businesses thrive through sound principles, creativity, and innovation.

Contact Myron Kirkpatrick for free and confidential business assistance:
Myron Kirkpatrick, Business Facilitator, PO Box 995, Joseph, OR 97846

Phone 541 426-5858 or myronk@eoni.com

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