The Simple Truths of Service

Inspired by Johnny the Bagger

By Ken Blanchard & Barbara Glanz
# Table of Contents

Introduction by Ken Blanchard ........................................ 8
Johnny the Bagger by Barbara Glanz ............................... 12
The Simple Truths of Great Service ................................. 41
The Final Truth .............................................................. 70
INTRODUCTION

By Ken Blanchard

Years ago you could abuse customers and they had no choice. There was nobody else doing your business. Today things are very different. If you don’t take care of your customers, somebody is waiting, ready and willing to do it.

Today your competitive advantage is not the quality of your product or service. If you don’t have a high quality product or service, you’re not even in the game. Your competitive edge today cannot be your price, because someone can always undercut your price. What you need is a fair price. The real competitive edge you have today is how you treat your customers. The one thing your competition can’t take away from you is the relationship your people have with your customers.

That’s why I fell in love with Barbara Glanz’s story of Johnny the Bagger. With her blessing, I’ve shared the story of Johnny the Bagger over and over again, everywhere I go, to illustrate that every person can make a difference for his or her customers.

Let me give you an example of the impact this story has had. Our training and consulting company was asked to develop a customer service training program for all the frontline employees involved in the opening of the new San Diego Padres Stadium, Petco Park. Since the building of the park was a controversial proposition, the top managers wanted the fans to have a very special experience in the new park. As we helped them set the customer service vision for the park, they decided that they were in the Major League memory business. Every night, every employee—whether they were in food service, maintenance, security, or what have you—was expected to focus his or her energy on creating good fan memories.
As part of the training, I made a short video telling the story of Johnny. I ended the video looking into the camera and saying directly to every park employee, “Are you going to be a Johnny tonight?” This video was shown to everyone, no matter whether they were part-time or full-time.

A number of the department managers told me that every night before the gates opened, they would ask their people, “Are you going to be a Johnny tonight?” The first summer that Pete’s Park was in business, they got 7500 unsolicited notes and letters from fans telling stories of how they had been blown away by the service they had received from someone in the park.

For example, a friend of ours ordered two fish tacos at one of the concession stands. When he got back to his seat, he took a bite and discovered that they had given him chicken tacos. Since he was yearning for fish tacos, he returned to the concession stand to exchange them. When he told the counterperson what had happened, the young man’s initial response was, “Let me talk to my supervisor.” A more experienced worker next to him heard the conversation and said, “You don’t have to ask the supervisor. This man did not get what he wanted, so give him two fish tacos. We work for him.”

Another person told me his wife brought their little baby to the game one night and ran out of milk. She went to one of the concession stands and asked for some milk. A young man behind the counter said, “We don’t sell milk here, but I know where I can get it. What’s your seat number?” This young man got someone to cover his station while he raced out of the ballpark and down the street to a 7-11, where he bought some milk. He came back, heated the milk up, and took it to the waiting mother. She couldn’t believe it.

Neither will you after you read the Johnny story and see how you and everyone in your organization can make a difference in your customers’ lives. The memories you create will keep people coming back—and bringing their friends—for years to come.