

Power of Good Manners

Growing up, no doubt your parent taught you the importance of good manners. You were taught to say please and thank you, not to talk with your mouth full, not to interrupt others when they are speaking, say sorry when you make a mistake, and so on. What you wouldn't have realize, those same good manners that your parents taught you, are also key ingredients in operating a successful hot dog cart business. Right now we are going to focus on three aspects of good manners that are imperative in the successful operating of your hot dog cart business: 1) saying thank you, 2) being a good listener and 3) saying I'm sorry. We will consider these one at a time.

The power of thank you

“Kind words are short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” – Mother Teresa

People have a basic need to feel appreciate and accepted. Your customers and any employees you have are no different. A sincere thank you can go along away to showing appreciation.

We are going to begin by considering expressing thanks towards your customers. No doubt you realize that if you didn't have any customer you wouldn't be able to operate a successful hot dog cart business. In a sense it is your customers that pay your salary. So reflecting on this fact should give you easy motivation in desiring to thank them. So at the end don't forget to thank them for coming and make sure you train your employees to do the same.

To add to the sincerity and power of the thank you, set the goal of learning the names of your regular customer. Not only can you use their names in greeting them, but you can use their names in thanking them This will display a personal interest, and over time they will even start to view you as a friend.

Along with saying by words, look for ways to show it by action. From time to time you may be able to reward regular customers by picking a slow day of the week to have a customer appreciation sale. Or you may come up with a customer incentive program. For example you may come up with a hot dog and/or sausage card. For example if they buy 9 hot dogs they get the tenth free. Not only does this encourage them to return regularly, but it gives you the opportunity to thank them for the previous nine transactions.

Now let us focus on saying and showing thanks to any employees you may have. You would to well to reflect on the fact that in sense your employees are spokes people for your hot dog cart business. So if they do good job representing your business you should show your appreciation by warmly commending them and thanking them.

Another good reason why to want to display a thankful attitude towards your employees is because you are going to be leading by example. More often than not, they are going to treat your customers the way you treat them.

Just like if your customers just don't say thanks with your words, but display it by your actions. Look for ways to reward a good job and to offer incentives for good customer service. This will continue to motivate your employees to want to do a good job and provide exceptional customer service.

Be a good listener

By showing personal interest in your customers you will encourage them to keep coming back. It is also good to note that we just don't listen with our ears, but with our eyes. We want to maintain appropriate eye contact and make sure they know that what they say is truly important to us.

Being a good listener will also help with we have an upset customer. We don't want to interrupt our customers. Give them the opportunity to voice their concerns. Also connecting with the previous point, thank them for giving us the opportunity to address their concern and then we can invite them to tell us what steps we can take to address his concerns. Then we can show we are truly listening by taking action to address his concerns.

Another way to listen to our customers is by inviting them to leave feedback. One way we can do this is by making available comment cards and having a customer feedback box. Of course it may not always be feasible to put into practice every last suggestion for improvement. But when we are able to use the feedback to make adjustments this will show to our customers that we are listening to them. If the customer feels we value their feedback they will keep coming back.

Sorry really is the magic word!

We have all heard the cliché that sorry is the magic word, but it is the truth. But we also may have heard the other cliché that sorry is the hardest word. It may not always be easy to apologize, but it does have a powerful effect when we are able to do so.

One of the most common situations where we may have to say I'm sorry is when we are confronted with a customer complaint. Even if we don't feel we did something wrong, we at least want to apologise for the fact that the customer isn't happy. But if we are honest with ourselves, the chances are that if a customer complains there is probably at least some legitimacy to their concerns. So we shouldn't be afraid to admit that we are wrong and acknowledge our error. It is amazing how a simple I'm sorry can go along way in diffusing a situation.

Just like with thank you, we just don't want to say it with words, but we want to show it by actions. So we can do this by taking appropriate action to address their concerns. So

this of course would require that we are a good listener. So we can see how these three points work together.

Also we shouldn't be afraid to say sorry in front of or to any of our employees. Hopefully if we go out of way to express our appreciation to our employees and to treat them with respect we aren't going to have a need to apologise. But as human we are prone to err in judgment from time to time. So if we do say or do something that upsets our employees don't be afraid to apologise. It is good to remember that a disgruntled employee equals disgruntled customers.

So we see that by saying thank you, being a good listener and by saying I'm sorry goes along way to ensuring the success of your hot dog cart business. So make sure you thank your parents for teaching you the importance of good manners and apologise for taking so long to do so.