

Bazyn Communications

Making the Impossible Possible

Newsletter

Winter 2017

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“True Vision with Insight”

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Letter from the editor

Dear readers,

In this season of holidays, I'm thankful for all the friends, colleagues, and family members I have. I wish all my readers a wonderful and blessed season. Lately, I have spoken to more groups of persons recently losing their sight. I've been asked how to move beyond the fear. It made me stop and think about my life and the situations where I was struggling. I said "I just do it, even if I'm not comfortable." Life places us in many uncomfortable situations-travelling in unsafe locations, making a career choice, moving to a new area, setting goals we don't know we can reach. However, not making changes means we are left at home, left in a business or home we don't like, left to worry.

I offer a free consultation. Do you need help developing your strategies for the future? Are you considering retirement, deciding on whether to become an entrepreneur, or more fully develop your business with a new marketing or business plan? Please give me a call and we can discuss whether I can motivate you to move forward.

www.bazyncommunications.com

This year, my travels have included Lawton, OK; Las Vegas, NV; Washington, DC; Anaheim, CA; Long Beach, CA; Woodland Hills, CA; Sacramento, CA Baton Rouge and New Orleans, LA; Denver, CO; Paso Robles, CA; Reno, NV; Pittsburgh, PA; Sioux Falls, SD; St. Cloud, MN; Lancaster, PA; and Portland and Coos Bay, OR. In the next few months, I'll be flying to Sacramento, CA twice; Denver, CO twice; Sioux Falls, SD; Las Vegas, NV; Washington, DC; Long Beach, CA; St. Louis, MO. To give organizations and corporations discounted speaking fees, I try to coordinate events and trainings. Please let me know about events or possible speaking opportunities in these and other areas, since I'm always adding cities to my itinerary.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Ardis Bazyn

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Employee Handbook Tips

By: Ardis Bazyn, Bazyn Communications

(Reprinted from "The Vendorscope Magazine" Summer 2017)

Employers often use employee handbooks. If you decide to create one, several elements should be considered. Some inclusions to consider are: extensive job descriptions, an outline of wage policies, commissions (if any), benefits, and firing or disengagement procedures. Your handbook doesn't have to cover every possible situation but the most relevant topics should be addressed.

Each new employee should sign a statement after reading the handbook, verifying the fact that it was read and understood. Include the date with the signature when it's signed. Place an annotation saying the handbook may be updated from time to time to more accurately reflect the needs of the business. Each time the handbook is revised, each employee should be expected to sign the new one. Since an employee signs off on it, it allows the employer to refer future complaints to this booklet. It also gives the employee written confirmation of policies and procedures.

Here are some key points to remember when compiling your employee handbook:

- Job descriptions should be written carefully. For cross training purposes, include all possible job duties. A statement at the end of this description should also contain the wording "and other duties as assigned by the person in charge".
- If much lifting is required, the amount and type should be mentioned.
- When you cover wage increases, word your statements carefully. Guidelines should be framed in a way to help the employee understand that raises are at the employer's discretion and not mandatory. Address the issue of profit and even though an employee may be doing exemplary work, a wage increase may not be feasible at a particular time. Other incentives may be used to compensate for these restrictions.
- Benefits your company offers should be specified. Insurance coverage, if any, should be addressed. Depending on state and federal law regarding whether or not you are required to pay for health insurance, you may offer a policy that the employees could join but the premium must be paid by the employee. You may agree to subtract this amount from the pay period. If you cover part or all of an insurance policy premium, define it as single coverage and other family members would be an additional fee. Opportunities for employees to choose between different insurance plans might also be beneficial.
- Mention vacation time and how it is accumulated. State how long an employee must work before vacations are allowed. Consider partial days for part-time employees. An employee might accumulate a half day each month.
- Explanations of sick leave accrual are needed. Perhaps, a half-day each month would be accumulated. Most employers require a doctor's excuse if an employee is absent for three or more days. An employee should be given a home phone number and the time by which you need to be notified if he/she isn't coming in to

work. An employee must be informed calling in when sick as soon as possible is vital once they realize they will be unable to work on their next shift so you can find a replacement.

- Another employee benefit might be holiday pay for major holidays. Some businesses allow a personal day now and then, such as on your birthday. Some employers only allow holiday pay if the employee is working the day before and after the holiday. Others restrict the number of holidays. The federal and state government include some holidays. If your business deals with many government facilities, you may not be able to get much accomplished on those days anyway.
- Other aspects, which are often covered in an employee handbook, are appropriate behavior and dress. Sexual harassment and workplace harassment in general should be addressed. Often, employees don't realize vulgar language or suggestive terminology is considered sexual or workplace harassment. Employees should be given a list of inappropriate behavior.
- Dress codes should be spelled out carefully. List what clothes are appropriate and list what is not. If blue jeans or shorts are prohibited, remember to say that specifically. Some employees may not realize what the terms formal, semi-formal, business, business casual, and casual mean. Employees should not wear low cut tops, low hung pants or extremely tight outfits. Stating your expectations will alleviate many problems. Uniforms are an easier alternative. You may choose to provide one or a limited number of them and require employees to purchase extras.
- Behavior expectations also should be clear. No one should be allowed to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If an employee comes to work under the influence, a written warning must be prepared immediately and the employee sent home.
- Specify what reasons would cause his/her release from employment. Possibilities are: falsifying documents, removing property without permission, gossiping about the employer or the policies of the job, excessive absences or late arrivals, ignoring policies, and damaging property. Add insubordination will not be tolerated.
- Disputes may arise on the job between employees or with customers. Clearly stating how to manage disputes is key. Employees should bring any employee disagreement to the management if not immediately solved. Arguments should not occur in front of customers. Most businesses follow the policy "the customer is always right".
- Overtime policies should also be clear. If you wish employees to work overtime at busier times of the year, this should be stated when the employee is hired and in the handbook. Clarify how overtime is determined. For example, you may want to arrange overtime in advance or let employees know as the need occurs. Advance notice is usually preferable particularly if the employee normally doesn't work overtime. You may also want to have a policy stating an employee may not work overtime automatically without prior approval. This will keep employees from mismanaging their time in order to claim overtime.
- Any employer can choose to offer other perks. Many possibilities are available depending on your business. Some could be written in the handbook but others

may not be available all the time. If you manage a food service, you may allow free snacks or meals while the employee is on the job. You may offer discounts of your merchandise. You may allow a charge account with no interest for employees. Creative values for your employees give you more latitude in compensation and show employees you appreciate their services. It's better not to mention some perks you may give on a rare occasion.

- It is critical for the employer to have a statement, which notes if the employee doesn't follow the criteria set forth in the handbook, the employee could lose the job.

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(Other tips and helpful business resources can be found in Ardis's book
"BUILDING BLOCKS

TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers and Motivate Employees?" Order online at www.bazyncommunications.com)

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Excellent Customer Service

By Ardis Bazyn, Bazyn Communications

What is the true definition of customer service? For some customers, it may simply be the pleasant greeting or friendly assistance when needed. However, these simple examples are merely the beginning of an extensive customer service plan. The general attitude of the business toward all customer relationships serves a key role. It carries through the sale until far after the initial purchase.

If you own a restaurant, you may provide local businesses or offices nearby with up-to-date menus from your establishment. If you have daily or weekly specials, you may wish to provide this as well. You may offer sign-ups to an email list or liking your Facebook page to local businesses or office personnel nearby. Tell them you promote specials or discounts this way. This is customer service, but it is a marketing strategy too.

Most companies offer warranties of some type. Even if no explicit guarantee is specified, customers usually expect they will get a refund or exchange if a product is defective or doesn't do what it claims it should. It is wise to have a policy regarding returns. Packages and documentation should state your policy for exchange or refund.

State and federal laws prohibit returns of packaged or bottled prescriptions, food, drinks, and health products that have been opened. Your policy should state whether other purchases could be exchanged for another purchase or whether money will be refunded if purchases are returned within a specified number of days after the purchase. Policies with ten to thirty days return after the original purchase date are the norm for most stores or companies.

Good customer service adds value and promotes your credibility and reliability. Even if a customer has initial problems with one of your products, your actions or reactions in solving any concerns are very important. Creative problem solving is often an integral part of customer service.

All staff members should assume the customer is always right. Obviously, there may be a rare instance where a customer cannot be satisfied. Difficult people may be encountered from time to time. However, employees should be trained to call a manager if there is any conflict or disagreement with a customer. Courtesy in every transaction is necessary to maintain repeat customers.

Customers should have opportunities to rate employees on friendliness, level of assistance, and attitude over all. Often restaurants have a brief survey for customers to fill out. Hotels often send a follow-up questionnaire to those staying at their facility for a few days. Airlines, repair services, call centers, and banks also use email or phone surveys to check their employees' level of helpfulness.

Many additional services could be classified as customer service: documentation for computer software, complete directions for taking products such as prescriptions or over the counter supplements, and instructions for gadgets or appliances. When products are sold, employees should recommend appropriate accessories necessary to properly perform the function of the appliance or other product purchased. For example, a customer buying a printer, copier, or fax machine would need batteries, ink, paper, cables, and extension cords, not included in the package. A dryer may not include the necessary extension cord.

Training seminars or workshops could be offered for customers to learn how to use expensive products. Videotapes or cassette training courses could be provided as well. Other assistance such as set-up, delivery, or installation should be available as soon as possible after any purchase is made with these requirements.

Customer service also relates to other activities you offer to customers. When arranging an event at a public place, it is beneficial to visit it first. It is necessary to communicate with the management of any facility and state upfront the needs of your business such as audio or visual equipment or microphones. A date and time for your upcoming event should be chosen wisely considering everyone's transportation needs (public transportation or parking for any one taking a personal vehicle).

The cost of any function should also be considered. Events should be planned in various locations if you serve a large geographic area. Possible participants should be able to attend at least some of your activities. Different types of functions should be arranged taking into consideration the varying interests of your customers. Mixer starters or games should be initiated at workshops or seminars so first-timers will meet current customers and be interested in attending another seminar or workshop. Always prepare a packet of information for participants to take home. Coupons, free offers, price lists, and order forms are vital to return business. Enough information should be provided to interest them in a future purchase.

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(Other tips and helpful business resources can be found in Ardis's book "BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers and Motivate Employees?" Order online at www.bazyncommunications.com)

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Updates

By Ardis Bazyn

To order books or seminars, check out www.bazyncommunications.com or call 818-238-9321. Checks, money orders, and Visa or MasterCard through Paypal are accepted.

All my books are available for purchase on my website: www.bazyncommunications.com in several formats. You can receive a discounted print copy of my third book by ordering it on my publisher's website: www.xlibris.com. BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers and Motivate Employees?

Go to the author page and look for Ardis Bazyn or go to the book page and look for "Building Blocks to Success".

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Products and Services

Bazyn Communications offers specialty products – large print calendar planners and large tote bags – and continues to offer inspirational and motivational speaking, business coaching, and writing. A free consultation by phone or in person is available upon request. For a list of speaking or coaching topics, visit

www.bazyncommunications.com.

We're also available for a variety of writing projects, business plans, marketing plans, articles, and copy for most types of media for small businesses and nonprofits. Small Braille transcription projects including greeting cards or business cards are offered at reasonable prices. Contact us for pricing.

If you wish to receive a text version of this newsletter or receive any past issues, please email: abazyn@bazyncommunications.com or call (818) 238-9321.

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Contributions Accepted

If you wish to contribute an article to a future newsletter, or make any suggestions, please send an email to abazyn@bazyncommunications.com. Each

article received will be read and will be printed if it meets the newsletter criteria.

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Links

Check out the links of organizations in which I participate:

American Council of the Blind	www.acb.org
Burbank activities	www.burbank.com
Burbank Business Network International	www.bniburbank.com
Burbank Chamber of Commerce	www.burbankchamber.com
California Council of the Blind	www.ccbnet.org
California Voter Empowerment Circle	www.CALVEC.org
Coaching and Speaking Internationally	www.247coaching.com
Democracy Live Accessible Voting	www.democracylive.com
Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs	www.ivie-acb.org
Randolph Sheppard Vendors of America	www.randolph-sheppard.org
Speaker Match	www.speakersmatch.com
Success Simplified	www.successsimplified.com
Xlibris Publishing	www.xlibris.com

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Favorite Quotes

“I'm convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance” –Steve Jobs

“You can have everything you want by helping enough other

people” “The right idea with no follow-through is dead on arrival”

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