

The 10-4 Rule

Any time you're within 10 feet of a customer make solid eye contact and smile, and when you're within 4 feet, greet them verbally. The expectation is that we are acknowledging our customers 100% of the time.

The details:

This rule applies to customers entering the store:

When anyone comes within ten feet of you, make eye contact and smile; at four feet, verbally greet them; ask them if you can help them find any products. When used well, the 10-4 Rule helps create a positive welcoming environment, the kind of space where the best people want to work, shop or be!

The rule applies throughout the building:

There is no cap on how many of us can—and should—implement the 10-4 Rule with a single person. There is no quota that applies to happy, heartfelt greetings! Particularly in the case of a customer, this might seem counter-intuitive. *It is common to think that if you are not the person who is directly serving a customer, the best thing to do is to avoid making eye contact with the customer so you are not at risk of distracting (or detracting!) from the work that one of your colleagues is already doing.* **In truth, everyone who gets within ten feet of a customer should be making eye contact, and at four feet, offering a greeting. Sure, it adds up to a lot of greetings but it's the polite, and professional thing to do.**

Pretending that someone is invisible is rude, sends a negative message and leads to missed connections with customers and a rather impersonal overall service experience.

The rule applies to customers on their way out:

This aspect is easy to forget - even when you have a ton of experience in customer service. The rule still applies when your customer or co-worker is headed towards the door. If we don't make eye contact and acknowledge folks even when they are leaving, we miss a free opportunity to have them leave feeling like we cared about them. We might miss our last chance to discover that something during their visit unintentionally alienated them. Over the years, we've experienced hundreds of "moments of truth" simply because a staff member near the door interacted with the guest as they were leaving, and then, either through direct customer comments or through reading body language and tone of voice, was able to identify a problem and take last-minute action before we lost that customer for life.

The rule applies all the time:

The rule applies to a 360-degree field of view. While not all of us are able to grow eyes on the back of our heads, recognizing that the rule applies all the time means you maintain awareness of your field of view. For example, when you're working in a retail environment, stand in a position that makes it easy for you to see the customers - particularly those that might need help. When you are stocking a shelf or sweeping the floor maintain awareness of the people around you.

The rule applies to everyone:

Your customers, your co-workers, your vendors, the person who delivers your lunch, or your mail. Everyone!

The rule applies through glass

This means that that customer who is standing outside, waiting for you to unlock the door, appreciates eye contact, a smile and the acknowledgment that you know they are there.

The rule applies at the counter

When you are working behind a counter; Meat, Deli, Customer Service or Wellness it is important to acknowledge all customers in a friendly and positive manner. It is important to remember that you are on stage and everyone is watching you, waiting for your assistance. Make sure that you are aware of your surroundings and acknowledging our customers.