



5 Star Service Bonus Chapters

Here are the additional chapters that didn't make it into the original Five Star Service - One Star Budget. Enjoy!

ESP Service

'It was as though she could read minds', said one enthusiastic shopper when we interviewed her after her experience with Margaret.

Margaret has an amazing ability - not to read people's minds but to read people's needs.

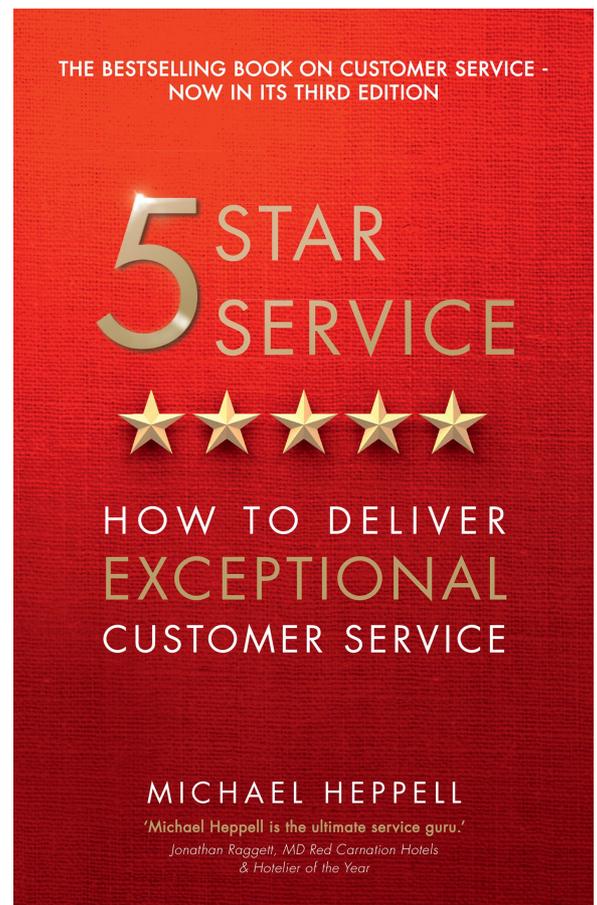
After observing Margaret at work for over an hour it was time to ask her how she did it. As with most service super stars she was very modest and it took some persuasive questioning to get her to really think about what she did and how she did it.

I'll explain the how in a moment but first of all we need to go back a few years to find out the 'why'?

After successfully getting two sons through primary school Margaret had worked in retail for 15 years, for the first 10 she had worked in the local chemists as a shop assistant.

Life was simple in those days (the 90's!), she would work with the Pharmacist looking after the customers and basically serving them. But, as Margaret pointed out, that was the problem, she was BASICALLY serving them. No sophistication, no deep understanding of customers' needs, just taking the money, running it through the till, taking her breaks when she was due them and enjoying the highlight of her year, two weeks in the sun every summer.

Then it happened - the unthinkable. A new chemist opened in the town and this one was 5 metres closer to the Doctors Surgery. Within a few weeks the owner/pharmacist was worried. Takings were already down and action was needed. The solution? Bitch and moan to all our remaining customers, and anyone else who would listen, about how terrible it is that they should dare to open.



They closed 6 months later.

Margaret was bitter and full of blame, so much so that when she needed a prescription she drove a 15 mile round trip so she wouldn't have to go to the competition who 'took her job'. She got a new job working in an estate agent but she didn't get on with the other staff and when she was 'let go' she was relieved.

Two days later she met her old boss the Pharmacist and couldn't help but notice how well he looked. He was working as a locum covering holidays, sickness etc and had never been happier. He wished he'd done it years ago. 'If I knew then what I know now, Maggie', he said. And that was the moment when it all changed for Margaret.

I do know, she thought. I've worked in retail for 10 years and I do know - I just don't show it. She applied for 5 jobs, was interviewed for 4 and offered 3. She chose the one with the most opportunity to work closely with customers and build loyalty.

She told me how she made a conscious decision on day one. Rather than holding her thoughts inside, she would share them with her customers and predict their needs before they said them or even thought them. Her thinking was simple, customers don't tell you what they want unless you ask.

If you ask with some care and some suggestions you can find out needs pretty quickly, meet their true needs and they buy more. Do this every year for 5 years and you get to be pretty good at it.

Margaret's 'ESP' came from:

- 1) A need to change
- 2) A desire to avoid the pain of the past
- 3) Genuine care for her customers
- 4) Confidence to go for it
- 5) Doing it consistently over time

'I get the odd customer who doesn't want my thoughts or suggestions but it's funny how I pick that up very quickly these days. Thankfully it's often before I open my mouth!'

I asked Margaret for one final tip for her 'ESP way of thinking' and after a little pondering she came up with a gem. "I sometimes visualise looking at myself through the customers eyes and ask the question, 'What would I like to hear from me next', sometimes it's nothing, sometimes it's very specific detail which if I'd been thinking from my own mind I would never have guessed."

I just loved the bit about, '...if I'd been thinking from my own mind I would never have guessed'. 15 minutes later and £200 lighter I left Margaret - ooh she's good!

Service Physiology

So if only 7% of what we say is the words and around 40% is the way we say it, what's the other 50+%?

Physiology; the way we stand, breathe, look etc. So how important is the fizzy stuff? Well here's something to think about. You're in a queue waiting patiently and when it's your turn the person who you are waiting to see rolls their eyes back, rubs their hand down their face, taps their fingers on the table and then asks, 'How may I help you?' You're thinking 'YOU CAN'T HELP ME!'

The words were right, the physiology was wrong. Now that's a very obvious one to demonstrate a point but what about the less obvious physiological gestures? What about the three that you do which you don't even know about!

Here are 5 ideas to give yourself a five star physiology:

Spend 5 minutes looking in a full length mirror every day for the next week. Yes it's vain but it's a great way to become accustomed to the body you have and how you use it.

1) Sit up straight. Dr Fiona Ellis my Osteopath suggested to me that we weren't designed to sit down. Wow if that's the case then when we do sit we should take some advice on how to do it. So without trying to sound like a mum, don't slouch.

2) Eyes up, shoulders back. There I go again (looks like some of this Mum advice was good) with the obvious stuff. Imagine a line attached to your chest running up at a 45 degree angle to a point far away. Now imagine that line is being pulled. That's the place to have your chest.

3) Fine tune your facials. The difference between a frown and a look of inquisitive interest is only a few muscles. Take time to check out yours.

4) Breathing. Practice it. Breathing BEFORE you enter a potentially stressful situation will give you confidence and calmness. Most people practice their breathing AFTER, be proactive.

5) Take time over the next few weeks to observe other people's physiology and notice what you like or dislike in others. Chances are others are thinking the same about you!

How to be a Five Star Customer

For most of Five Star Service One Star Budget I focused on giving amazing service to our customers. Whether they are internal or external, big or small, easy or difficult it's all been about giving them a brilliant customer experience.

With a bit of luck the next time you get some customer service it will be from someone who has read the book and wants to test ideas out on you! However, the fact is many won't but you still want to get amazing service.

Obvious Statement - People who are liked by those who are serving them get better service.

Some people believe that by complaining and causing problems they'll get better service. Actually what you'll find in most cases is that they are getting the minimum of service that will just shut them up. If you want to get brilliant Five Star service then there are some things you can do which will make doing some extras for you a pleasure.

Being a 5 star customer is a Karma thing to. If you believe 'what goes around, comes around' then it makes sense to be a Five Star customer so that hopefully you'll attract some Five Star customers too.

How to get upgraded on a flight

Well you could always pay 6 times more than everyone else and fly first class or you could study this seven step guide and stand a better chance than most of having a most pleasurable flight.

The number one reason why people get upgraded is because the economy section of the plane has been oversold and some people need to be upgraded to make extra space. Sometimes people have friends at the airline or they have flown so many miles that their loyalty cards are bursting. You'll never get ahead in the queue against those people but they aren't always there, airlines still upgrade and you could be in the right place at the right time when this happens but here's a couple of things to remember, 1) Bad News - It's happening less and less, 2) Good News - It will be a human who'll make the final decision on who gets to 'sit up front'.

Before you do anything take a few moments to mentally rehearse getting upgraded. See in your mind's eye everyone connecting with you and the reward for your understanding and customer friendly attitude is you get your upgrade - see yourself with your glass of champagne!

Then follow these seven steps.

- Step One** Be on time. There's very little chance of getting upgraded if you arrive late for a long haul flight, the idea of arriving late and all of the coach class seats being taken doesn't happen (with my research) at all.
- Step Two** Look like you are a business or first class traveller. If you arrive wearing a pair of tracksuit bottoms and tee-shirt your chances of an upgrade have effectively dropped to nil. You don't have to turn up in a suit but it is one of the single biggest factors that will help you in your quest for an upgrade.
- Step Three** Be an absolute pleasure to check in. Whilst it's not often the check in staff who make the decision, airline staff all talk; make sure they are talking about what a pleasure you are to deal with.
- Step Four** Ask, but do it in a classy way. A cheeky wink with, 'Any upgrades going, sweetheart?' won't increase your chances as much as. 'I was wondering if you needed any volunteers to be upgraded for this flight?' Warm smile, raise of the eyebrows. 'I fly with you a lot and always hope that my loyalty would be remembered if you were looking for someone to free up a place in economy'. This may seem crazy but in the days when I travelled in economy a lot I would ask this and on most occasions got an 'I'll see what I can do' and also on several occasions I was upgraded.
- Step Five** Follow any instructions you get to the letter. For example they may say. 'We may need to free up a couple of seats so can I suggest you go to the gate and ask for Rita Potts, she's responsible for boarding the flight. Ask her.' Ask if you can use their name then rush off to the gate. When you get there play back exactly what they said, don't exaggerate, just smile and report for duty.
- Step Six** Mentally rehearse again being a world class passenger who they just have to upgrade. Remain calm and sit within sight of the person who is responsible for boarding the flight.
- Step Seven** Even if you don't get upgraded before you board don't give up! Enter the plane with a big smile and when you are greeted give them a big smile, eye contact and respond.

If it doesn't work what have you lost? If it does work what have you gained!

How to get amazing service in a restaurant

Popular restaurants can see upwards of 100 customers a night. In most cases staff aren't working for a tip, they have a lot to do and they are rushed off their feet. Getting great service starts well before you even arrive. Here's a 7 step guide to getting 5 star service in most reasonable to high quality restaurants.

Step One Be flexible when you book ahead. When you make your booking ask them when they would like you to arrive. This seems strange but it does 2 things. Firstly in 90% of cases it makes no difference and they will tell you so. However, you will have made an impression on the person answering the phone and the chances are high that that person will be serving at the time you arrive.

The other option is that they will advise you of a good time to arrive. If they have lots of bookings at 9.00pm they may suggest you arrive at 8.00 if you want a more attentive service you may just take that advice.

Step Two When you have agreed the time tell whoever is taking the details that you are 'celebrating' that night. In most cases they won't ask what you are celebrating but if they do make sure you have something up your sleeve. 'Some recent successes', 'Seeing some very special friends' or 'It's an anniversary' are all cool. If you have a big celebration such as a wedding anniversary or birthday, make sure they know.

Step Three Arrive on time. No it's not cool to be late. If a restaurant is running a tight ship they'll thank you for being on time. When you arrive wait until you are asked for your name and then, smile, say it clearly with the time of your booking and remember to say thank you.

Step Four Be understanding. I was once out for a meal with my good friend Jeremy Taylor. The waitress was being rushed all over the place, there obviously wasn't enough staff on duty and she looked flustered. When she came to ask for our drinks an arrogant pillock on a distant table started waving his hands around gesturing for her to come over. Jeremy smiled at her and said, 'You look like you're having a really busy night. Why don't you go and see him and then come back to us when you get a minute'. You could have knocked her down with a feather. After a brief pause she said thank you and served Mr Obnoxious.

When she returned I guarantee we couldn't have had a more attentive waitress. Even when the restaurant appeared to burst at the seams we didn't have to wait or ask for anything, she was on autopilot.

Step Five Ask for recommendations and listen carefully to the advice. Ask a couple of genuine questions and take an interest in the response. A simple but great question to ask is, 'What would you have from the menu?'

If there is anything you don't like tell them in a nice way. A sharp, 'And I don't like peas', will be taken in a completely different way than, 'Oh, there's one more thing. I have a bit of a challenge with peas, they don't agree with me, so I'd be grateful if you would let the chef know. Thank you'.

Step Six Say please and thank you at every opportunity. Next time you're in a restaurant observe how many people don't say 'thank you' when their food arrives or don't say please when they ask for something.

Step Seven If you have had great service, tell them. Compliment the chef and ask to meet him or her. If you have had particularly good service ask to see the manager, introduce yourself and let them know. Ask if they train their staff and if they commend them and let them know it's working.

Wee WOW

Learn the names of the people who are looking after you and use them. Most waiting staff are known as 'Excuse me' or 'Hey' for most of their careers.

More from Captain Denny

You may remember me talking about the brilliant Captain Denny Flanagan. Capt. Denny (as he likes to be referred) is a pilot for United Airlines in the US and his customer service ethos is second to none. Every day he goes that extra mile (and beyond) to give his passengers a wonderful five star experience.

I could have dedicated several chapters to Capt. Denny but in the spirit of brevity I kept it to just one. However, there is one other brilliant idea that blew my mind that I promised I'd share with you and here it is.

If a passenger is travelling with an animal it's shown on his manifest. As you can imagine if your cat or dog was down in the hold you'd be worried. You can see how passengers could be concerned over the welfare of their animals. Is there oxygen down there could they freeze to death! Those are just a couple of the regular worries.

Here's where Capt Denny came up with a brilliant idea. If someone is flying with a pet in the hold, during the flight he goes down and takes a picture of their furry friend. Then he finds where they are sitting and shows them the digital snap he's just taken! Reassuring the customer and making their flight even more enjoyable and it only takes a couple of minutes.

You've got to love Captain Denny!

Thank you for requesting these bonus chapters.

Be Brilliant!

Michael Heppell

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