

**CULTIVATE REVENUE
THROUGH
EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE**

For

**Agri-tourism: Cultivating Farm Revenue Conference
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Developing the *AgriCultural* Tourism Experience

First, understand what Customers want

- **The basics:** a place to eat, place to sleep, place to tour, place to shop (shopping is the number one activity for all domestic travelers)
- **The incentive:** a reason to leave home, to plan a getaway
- **The experience:** educational, entertaining, interactive, engaging and/or inspirational
- **The value-added:** something unexpected or an enhancement that makes the visit personal, rewarding. Usually includes visitor connecting with the host or place.
- **The take-away:** a token to remember the trip by (photograph, souvenir, food product, work of art)

Starts with Hospitality

Hospitality: (HOS-PI-TAL-I-TY) Receiving and entertaining guests or strangers in a friendly and gracious fashion.

- Welcome our visitors as our guest
- Show them a good time
- Meet their needs – and give something extra

Who is that Customer visiting your farm?

A customer is:

- The most important person every to walk or drive through your gate—in person, on the telephone, by mail or by email
- Not dependent on us—we are dependent on him or her
- Not an interruption of our work—but the purpose of it
- Not an outside to our business—but a part of it
- Not someone to argue or match wits with

A customer is a person who brings us his or her wants!!!

5 Steps to Treating Customers Like Guests

- 1. Welcome them**
- 2. Use their name**
- 3. Take care of their needs**
- 4. Thank them**
- 5. Invite them back**

Hospitality begins with a proper Attitude

ATTITUDE

Attitude is everything! The many ways in which you relate to others begins with your attitude. Your style of connecting with others, your way of communicating your respect of others, and your behavior toward others are all reflections of your attitude. Your attitude and your professional image help form the first impression others have of you.

And you never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

- Every encounter is an opportunity to enhance the experience of our guests.
- **There are only 2 wrong answers...”No!” and “I don’t know.”**
- **The power of positive phrases comes from turning a negative situation into a positive one.**

Customers form lasting impressions within the first few minutes about:

- **You**
- **Your business**
- **Your attitude**

Your attitude is contagious and your customers catch your attitude, good or bad.

Customers respond to warmth, helpfulness, a smile, calmness, kindness, understanding, interest in their needs, in short “Being nice, just like you do.”

Attitudes Are Contagious

Is yours worth catching?

Change the Unhappy Customer into a Happy, Satisfied Customer

- Never argue with the customer; show respect
- Don't take it personal
- Don't interrupt; listen closely
- Don't make excuses
- Be patient
- Don't quote policies and rules
- Remain calm; don't lose your temper
- When appropriate, call you supervisor
- Follow through—Follow up!

Use these responses when appropriate:

- I understand
- I'll correct that right away
- I'm sorry that happened
- You have a right to feel that way

“Last Approach” with a customer with a problem:

Listen

Apologize

Solve

Thank them for their business

Which wins? Nice or Price!

How are you going to present your message or story?

Engage the Senses by focusing on.....

WHAT VISITORS SEE:

- Use color to liven up the presentation – or the site.
- Ask local artists to create visual elements (murals, three-dimensional objects, yard art) that enhance the written work or pictures
- Focus on little enhancements as well as the big picture. Is there something new to see around every corner? At the cash register?

WHAT VISITORS HEAR:

- Create sounds that are different than the ones your visitors are normally acquainted with.
- Noise is not always the answer. If visitors travel from urban centers, then “quiet” or “silence” is often the best sound of all.
- Consider partnering with local artists to provide music to enhance special events or create a specific “mood”

WHAT VISITORS CAN TOUCH:

- Nothing brings a photo to life like touch. Think of how to involve your visitors in the experience. Provide a tangible experience they can't get from reading a book, or looking at a brochure.
- Have them pet the goat, touch the wool, feel the hay...the varied textures which bring the tour to life.
- Encourage visitors to touch various items by posting positive “Please touch” signs around the site, or creating a specific exhibit area with demonstrations that entice the customer to use their hands.

WHAT VISITORS CAN TASTE:

- Samples of your products encourage customers to purchase.
- If you don't offer food products for sale, then consider partnering with a local salsa maker, jam and jelly producer or other local food producer than can provide this "added value."
- Complimentary water, cider or soft drinks on site instill a "linger longer" attitude.

WHAT VISITORS CAN SMELL:

- Having bread baking if you mill your own flour, or serve up an enticing aroma from locally produced goods to infuse the nose.
- Locate distinguishable scents located around the site with signs encouraging visitors to smell various aspects of the farm (flowers, grasses, wood, hay, feed, etc.)
- Don't be afraid to share *authentic* smells of the farm—fragrant and otherwise.

Source: The HandMade Institute for the Creative Economies

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE

1. Keep skid chains on your tongue. Sometimes it's best to say less than you think. Cultivate a low persuasive voice. Often it's not what you say, but how you say it.
2. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.
3. Never let an opportunity pass to say a kind and encouraging word to somebody. Praise good work, regardless of who did it. If criticism is needed, criticize helpfully, privately, but never spitefully.
4. Be interested in others such as their pursuits, their work, their homes and their families. Make merry with those who rejoice and with those who weep, mourn.
5. Be cheerful. Don't burden or depress those around you by dwelling on your own aches, pains and disappointments. Remember, everyone is carrying some kind of load.
6. Keep an open mind. Discuss but don't argue. It is a mark of a superior mind to be able to disagree without being disagreeable.
7. Be careful of other's feelings. Wit and humor at the expense of another person are rarely worth it and may hurt when least expected.
8. Let your virtues speak for themselves. Refuse to talk of other's vices. Discourage gossip. It is a waste of valuable time and can be extremely destructive.
9. Pay no attention to ill-natured remarks about you. Simply live so that nobody will believe them.
10. Don't be too anxious about the credit due you. Do your best and be patient.

5 STEPS TO TREATING CUSTOMERS LIKE GUESTS:

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SO GOD MADE A FARMER

Surveying the world He had made, God looked down one day and said, “I need somebody down there to be caretaker of my kingdom.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who will set up all night with a newborn colt, watch it die and be able to say, “Maybe we’ll get an even better one next year.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who can eat dirt, smell manure, listen for thunder claps, taste bugs in his teeth and still feel good all over.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who can get up before dawn, milk cows, work in the field all day, mild cows again, eat supper and then go into town and stay there till 2 a.m. at a school board meetings.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody with arms strong enough to wrestle a big calf, to give him shots, but a heart gently enough to cry when his first grandchild is born.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who waits all year to harvest a crop, but will stop in midfield and run to help when he sees smoke coming up from the neighbor’s place.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who can call hogs, cuss at ornery, cantankerous old machinery, bark orders to the hired man and then come home and whisper to his wife that she’s the same pretty girl he married 15 years ago.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who can wait patiently for his afternoon lunch until his wife is done feeding all the ladies at her cosmetics party, and then tell them all to come back soon.”

So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody who will smile, then laugh and then cry when his son says he wants to spend the rest of his life doing just what Dad does.”

So God made a farmer.