




THE 7 MISTAKES BUSINESSES MAKE WHEN AIMING TO CREATE A CULTURE OF SERVICE EXCELLENCE

**"NOTHING SELLS AND NOTHING SATISFIES
LIKE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE"**

- CATE SCHRECK -



“It doesn’t matter what industry you work in and your trailer load of qualifications count for little if you don’t possess the skills of communication and engagement. Cate Schreck’s training style and mode of delivery assist people to develop both and understand how to use them to the best of their abilities. Cate’s visit to our school has allowed staff to better understand their own strengths and how to work better as a cohesive team. “Princess Fiona” as we now refer to Cate, will certainly be invited back because trainers and facilitators with high levels of emotional intelligence and a very full bag of ideas and strategies are very hard to find.”

- Brian Howley - Careers Manager Victoria





INTRODUCTION

The role of educating and motivating staff to work together in harmony and provide consistently excellent customer service can be challenging in every industry.

With 30+ years of experience managing, training and working in organisations across Australia and New Zealand, Service Excellence Coach and Director of Lightbulb Training Solutions - Cate Schreck, regularly sees business make some or all of the 7 Mistakes.

These mistakes ultimately cost a business time and money and leave the business owner or manager feeling out of control, frustrated and exhausted. If you want more customers, less complaints, happier staff and a reputation for service excellence, read on for the 7 Mistakes you must not make.

MISTAKE #1 | RELYING ON A "HOPEFUL RECRUITMENT" PROCESS

Attracting and hiring staff is costly in terms of time, money and effort. A poor recruitment process can leave you crossing your fingers and hoping that you make the right decisions because you know if you get it wrong, it can cause disharmony in the team and jeopardise the level of service your customers receive.

Identifying and matching the skills and attributes required to succeed in a customer service role is not always easy. The good news is, there are key things you can do to reduce anxiety and increase the possibility of attracting and hiring a perfect match for your team and your customers.

SOLUTIONS

Talk to your customers. Ask what they consider as excellent service and seek to hire people who have the skills to meet or exceed those expectations.

Advertise clearly. Confirm that you are seeking Customer Service Professionals – people with a genuine passion for helping others and the desire to keep improving.

Set the stage. Create an interview environment that is welcoming and allows time for an informal chat with the candidate/s ie: "Let's make a tea/coffee or get some water before we start". General chat will help to reduce the nerves of the candidate/s as well as give you an insight into how they communicate.

Dig Deep. Ask questions that require a candidate to elaborate on their service success stories i.e. "Tell me about a time you exceeded a customer's expectation."

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP

We will help you identify Customer Service Professionals with the use of DISC Advanced® behavioural profiling assessments. We train you in the fundamentals of the DISC model and provide you with reports that identify a candidates' natural customer service strengths and the value they would bring to your team. Along with the DISC Advanced® reports, we can help you select the best candidate/s to interview and provide you with interview questions to uncover their customer service skills and attitudes.

"Cate and the Lightbulb Training Solutions team are a pleasure to work with. Cate listens to the needs of the business and has helped shift the mindset of how we manage and work with others. The knowledge and use of practical tools such as the DISC model, enabled individuals to gain greater levels of self-awareness and help them adapt their working and communication style to suit others."

- Aine Murphy - HR Manager MAB Corporation

MISTAKE #2 - NO CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPONENT IN THE INDUCTION PROCESS

Often induction processes consist of a tour of the workplace, a focus on the hard skills (technical skills) required in the role and time to read policies and procedures. This leaves out a vital component of onboarding a new employee; your customer service standards, which should include reference to soft skills (people skills).

The soft skills of your team are what customers assess to determine if the business provides excellent service. New employees need an induction process that confirms the customer service standards of the business, the soft skills required and the support options in place to help them achieve those goals.

SOLUTIONS

Put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. Have clear customer service standards that are written down and relevant to the role.

Provide a mentor/buddy for your new employee. Someone they can go to with questions when you are unavailable.

Schedule regular Service Excellence Conversations. Dedicate time for a new recruit to ask questions and for you to assess their customer service skills and knowledge. As little as 15 minutes once a week will help keep them customer service focused.

Hard before Soft. If possible, allow new recruits to learn the hard skills of a role before they interact with customers. Once they are familiar with technology/equipment/processes, they will find it much easier to concentrate on their soft skills (people skills) when interacting with customers.

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP



Our Service Excellence Packages provide you with a range of customer service specific training programs and resources that you can include in your induction process. You can be sure that all the skills and attitudes required to delight your customers will be addressed and any learning gaps identified early. At a minimum, we can provide you with copies of Cate's Schreck's book; "The A – Z of Service Excellence - The Essential Guide to becoming a Customer Service Professional".

"Lightbulb Training Solutions have provided over 25 fun and interactive workshops for our administrative and clinical staff across Australia. Cate goes to great lengths to understand a business and has the passion, skills and knowledge to deliver customer service skills training in a way that staff at all levels can relate to."

***Craig Pritchard - National Field Development Manager /
Back In Motion Health Group***

MISTAKE #3 - ONLY PROVIDING TRAINING WHEN THERE IS A PROBLEM

Too often businesses wait until one or more of the following takes place before training is considered:

- *Staff members not getting along or morale is low*
- *Customer complaints are on the rise*
- *Staff have become complacent about providing consistently excellent service*

This gives staff the impression that training is only provided when they are performing poorly or doing things wrong. It's difficult to achieve positive engagement or a change in behaviours when employees enter a training environment with a negative perception of why they are there.

SOLUTIONS

Change the conversation. Think and talk about workplace training as CPD – Continuous Professional Development, an ongoing process that every employee at every level accomplishes.

Mix it up. Incorporate a range of learning options under the heading of CPD ie:

1. Volunteering in the community helps improve social awareness
2. Industry conferences/events provide the opportunity to learn from peers
3. Value the external and informal learning your staff undertake i.e. coaching a sports team, position on a committee, household management
4. Create a library of relevant books/resources for staff to access and share

Be available. Provide confidential meeting options so employees are comfortable advising both work and non-work related issues that are making it difficult for them to achieve customer service standards.

Enquire. Ask your staff what skills they would like to develop – simple but effective.

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP



Once you have completed our FREE 30-minute Customer Service Analysis, we will create a Service Excellence Package for your consideration. Your package will be customised to suit your business and your team and we will recommend a 12-month delivery strategy that maintains your team of Customer Service Professionals. If necessary, we can provide you with referrals to our range of support partners i.e. Employee Assistance Program Providers, Customer Survey Services, Career Counsellors and HR Support Specialists.

"Having interviewed Cate on my radio program about her training that aims to empower customer service providers, I can say you will not get a more passionate and committed advocate for the benefits of a healthy approach to helping individuals enjoy workplace interactions. "

***- Dr Linda Wilson - Stress Management Specialist /
Corporate Wellness Consultant***

MISTAKE #4 - TRYING TO MANAGE, LEAD AND TRAIN YOUR STAFF

As well meaning as this seems, this is a recipe for burn out. Managing and leading a team is complicated enough but to also try and educate employees on how to provide consistently excellent customer service and keep them motivated all day every day, well that is putting a lot on your "to-do" list.

To be an effective workplace trainer, you need the skills to;

- Conduct a customer service training needs analysis
- Design training that is considerate of individual learning and behavioural styles
- Encourage participation and address negativity

Having to balance training activities with the day to day management and leadership of a team can make you feel both conflicted and exhausted. Staff may also find it uncomfortable or confronting to be managed, lead and trained by the same person.

SOLUTIONS

Look within the team. Is there someone who is skilled, willing and available to provide internal customer service training?

Beware the one size fits all approach. Seek training providers who can customise training to suit your staff, your business and your customers. True customisation is not just adding your logo to the training materials.

Consider accredited and non-accredited training. They both have value - for accredited training options go to www.training.gov.au

Remember. If you must train your staff, encourage questions and whilst they are learning, allow them to make mistakes and give them opportunities to practise and seek feedback.

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP



We are a team of highly experienced and passionate workplace trainers and facilitators who hold a range of business, training and assessment qualifications. But more importantly, all of our team have a minimum of 10 years' experience designing and delivering workplace training programs across a range of industries. Our Service Excellence Packages contain all the resources and support you need to apply the right training at the right time which leaves you free to manage and lead.

"Cate originally designed and delivered a 'first class customer service' training session for our Vic/Tas Franchisee's which was really well received. Since then, Lightbulb Training Solutions has delivered further service skills training programs for our growing teams, including those in New Zealand."

- Ross Morley - Managing Director GJ Gardner Homes Vic/Tas

MISTAKE #5 - NOT ENGAGING EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDERS

If you haven't had a negative past experience with an external training provider, you probably know someone who has.

Perhaps....

- The trainer was inexperienced or simply boring
- The time and money spent didn't achieve the desired outcome
- A poor level of service was given by the provider.

You're not alone as we often hear of these and other unsatisfactory experiences that have left businesses untrusting of training organisations. Rest assured though that there are many professional and competent external training providers ready and waiting to help you.

SOLUTIONS

First step. Before engaging an external training provider, be clear on what outcomes you are seeking and ask the provider how they would address your need, rather than tell them what you want. This will give you an insight as to whether they use a "one size fits all" process or if they seek to learn about your business and offer customised solutions.

Ask training providers 3 questions;

1. What workplace experience do your trainers have in the chosen topics?
2. What businesses have you worked with and how did you help them?
3. How will you learn about our business, our staff and our customers?

Speak to the trainer. It is not unusual for the person who takes your information and arranges the training program to be different to the person who turns up on the day.

Contact your governing or industry body. They should be able to recommend reliable and professional training providers.

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP



We will repair your confidence. Our 6 Step ACTION process has you involved every step of the way with the development of your team of Customer Service Professionals. We have a growing list of delighted customers who are happy to speak with you and you can watch us in action via the videos on our website. Your allocated trainer will work with you to design and deliver your programs and will be your go-to person every step of the way.

“Cate designed and delivered a professional behaviours session for our team that was compelling, contemporary and highly relevant. Staff came to me with unsolicited positive feedback and I too was left feeling confident and motivated. Cate has a genuine passion for people working together in harmony in the workplace and her positive attitude is infectious.”

Anita Roseblade - General Manager Accounting Practice

MISTAKE #6 - NO BUDGET OR TIME ALLOCATED FOR SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

Unlike hard skills training such as operating a cash register, driving a forklift, using a computer program or ordering stock, soft skills training is more difficult to measure in terms of return on the investment.

Customer Service Professionals are made, not born and soft skills training is how you make them. Spending money on soft skills training is investing in your most important asset – your staff.

SOLUTIONS

It can be free. You don't always have to spend money to provide soft skills training for your staff – use the CPD examples in Mistake # 3

Show what you know. How you interact with customers gives your staff an indication of how they should interact with customers.

Inspect what you expect – Watch, listen and provide constructive feedback on service interactions. Feedback should be regular and balanced with compliments and suggestions on how to improve.

Remember that your time is money. For every co-worker disagreement or customer complaint, consider the amount of time you have to spend addressing the issue and multiply that by your hourly rate – this is money that could be spent on the soft skills training that empowers your staff to self-manage those situations.

HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP



By completing our FREE 30-minute Customer Service Analysis, we will learn about your business, your customers and your staff and from there we put together your customised, comprehensive and flexible Service Excellence Package. Your package can include access to a range of on-site and on-line training options that will give you an insight into not only how your staff feel about customer interactions, but what you can do to refresh the attitudes and skills of long term customer service employees.

“Cate is a forward thinking developer of skills and initiatives within the customer service arena and she imparts this knowledge with passionate enthusiasm. I have learnt much from Cate in relation to her determination to change the way we traditionally view the implementation of customer service skills and how she empowers employees to know their value in the workplace.”

- Maryanne Gardiner - Manager Education Design

MISTAKE #7 - IGNORING POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE ATTITUDES OR BEHAVIORS

People over the age of 18 are considered adults. If you have staff 18 or over, you may have at times found yourself wondering;

- *Shouldn't adults be able to get along or disagree professionally?*
- *Shouldn't adults know how to be polite and respectful?*
- *Why do I have to keep reminding adults how important it is to provide consistently excellent customer service?*

Your employees will have their own unique set of core values and customer service skills and attributes so it's not uncommon for 2 or more employees to have different opinions and different ways of providing service to your customers. These differences can upset a team and create negative customer feedback and although it can be difficult to address behavioural issues, if you ignore them or simply hope that they go away, you are setting yourself up for an even bigger problem down the track.

SOLUTIONS

Lead by example. Every team leader/supervisor or manager in your business needs to agree with and be willing to demonstrate the behaviours you want staff to adopt.

Don't wait. Address behavioural or attitude issues as soon as possible. The longer you leave it the greater the chance of it becoming acceptable and your customers feeling the effect.

Respect your team. Address concerns with relevant staff in private, allow them to share their insights, agree on achievable improvement actions and don't forget to follow up.

Record and review. All customer complaints are valuable information. Keep records so you can easily identify behavioural issues that need attention.



HOW LIGHTBULB TRAINING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP

To maintain a culture of service excellence, team leaders need the skills to professionally address co-worker disagreements and customer complaints. Your Service Excellence Package can include training specifically for workplace leaders as well as Individual DISC ADVANCED® assessments of your team. The assessments can identify potential employee stress or conflict so you can address issues before they cause co-worker or customer upset.

“Cate is a one of a kind customer service trainer. Her passion for giving individuals and teams the skills to provide consistently superior levels of customer service shows in both her preparation and delivery of service excellence training programs. If you want more customers, less customer complaints and happier staff then I highly recommend Lightbulb Training Solutions.”

- Paul Steed - Managing Director apd Australia

ABOUT US



Lightbulb Training Solutions (LTS) commenced in 2010 with a clear and passionate goal; to design and deliver workplace training programs that provide businesses with everything they need to create and sustain a culture of service excellence.

Founders Steve and Cate Schreck combined their expertise, skills and knowledge to build LTS to what is now a team of highly experienced and passionate workplace trainers and facilitators who love what they do and they do it so well, they are considered the best.

OUR VISION

Our vision is for workplaces to become environments where employees can expect to not only earn, but to also learn.

- To learn the skills to work together in harmony and provide consistently excellent customer service.
- To learn the skills to interact with people from all walks of life, with confidence and respect.
- To learn the value of diversity at work and in the world

Our vision is to populate workplaces with Customer Service Professionals.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide businesses across Australia and New Zealand with our 6 Step ACTION process that will help them;

- Grow through developing a culture and reputation of service excellence
 - Recruit and retain staff with high level customer service skills
- Save time and make money by creating a team of Customer Service Professionals



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***"Service Excellence is not treating customers how you want to be treated.
Service Excellence is treating customers how they want to be treated'.***

- Cate Schreck -