

**"When you assume negative intent, you're angry. If you take away that anger and assume positive intent, you will be amazed."**

**»Indra Nooyi**

## What's in a Name?



During a recent restaurant visit, the waitperson impressed us with how personable she was.

Some folks make you feel like a chore. Some make you feel like a guest.

She was the latter.

After dinner, she returned my credit card and receipt, wished us a nice evening and said, "Thank you, Mr. Martin."

When I signed the bill a few moments later, I found that the young woman had also written, "Thank you, Mr. Martin!" on it.

Like most folks, it would be hard to estimate how many receipts I get handed on a yearly basis. Most have nothing personal written on them.

Small percentages have a "Thank you" or "Have a nice day" or a smiley face or something scribbled on them. That's nice.

## Got It Covered



I'm a fan of the band Foo Fighters. I love both their music and the self-effacing sense of humor they have about what they get to do for a living.

In a recent interview, Foo drummer Taylor Hawkins was asked what advice he would give young people trying to make it in the music industry.

Hawkins recommended that aspiring musicians either find or form a cover band to play other bands' songs.

The thing is, talented and ambitious musicians often cringe or look down their noses at the idea of playing in cover bands.

They want to perform their material. They want to be stars!

And you can't become a star playing other bands' songs!

Well, not overnight.

Few ever take the few extra seconds to read your name on the card and personalize the “thank you”. And sure, that’s just a simple gesture.

However, addressing a person by his or her name is one of the most impactful gestures we can make.

Ideally, it is done as early as possible when interacting with a customer. In this particular case, the young woman had not met us before and didn’t learn my name until I handed her my credit card.

Yet, her modest gesture registered and even had me commenting to my wife, “She’s really good at her job.”

Moreover, her gesture was good business.

JD Power research found a 40% increase in customer satisfaction scores when we address a customer by name.

Think about that for a moment.

One of the regular requests I receive from bank leaders when speaking to their teams is that I share ideas and practices to help them improve customer experience scores.

Well, there are few single practices that have more influence on customer experience scores than simply addressing a customer by name.

Respectfully addressing a customer by his or her name also helps to remind us that we are helping an individual and not just handling a transaction or performing a rote task.

Hawkins pointed out that iconic bands from the Beatles to Van Halen began as cover bands.

He explained that covering great songs of other musicians “puts you inside” those songs. You learn how iconic songs are structured and what it feels like to play one.

More importantly, he pointed out that good cover bands get gigs because people want to hear songs they know.

I loved that nod to customer service.

It’s not about you. Give customers what they want and play what they want to hear!

Because of that, cover band musicians get opportunities to regularly get up on stage and play.

Go figure. Musicians who actually get on stage and grind out sets develop into better musicians.

Many think that talent is what creates stars.

But talent isn’t rare.

The work ethic, patience, and resilience to fully develop the talents we possess, however, are.

Hawkins’ words reminded me of one of my favorite points to make to groups.

Many of us have a tendency to see very talented and successful people and surmise their success was inevitable.

When interacting with your regular customers, it's pretty easy.

When interacting with infrequent or new customers, it's...well, let's face it...still pretty easy.

We're not exactly talking deep-dive research here.

An improved customer experience has a name. Actually, it has many.

Strive to use them.

However, we are seeing the polished person. We aren't considering the work it took to produce what we see.

Whether our jobs involve getting on a stage... or selling a product...or leading a team, we become better and more polished through work and perseverance – usually far outside the spotlight.

As often as not, it is seemingly mundane tasks and things we simply grind through that are polishing us into the people we become.

Are you putting in the time and effort needed to become a star in your own right this week?

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**"Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work."**

**»Stephen King**

*Dave Martin, author of [The In-Store Advantage](#), has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

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