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**"You cannot tailor-make the situations in life, but you can tailor-make the attitudes to fit those situations." » Zig Ziglar**

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## Grounded Customer Service

Out of the six flights I took recently, four were delayed by over an hour, and one was cancelled altogether.

The go-to excuses these days seem to be "waiting on arriving crew" and "equipment issues."

Whether or not the excuses given are honest, (few industries are less trustable these days), it's not their operational struggles that bother me most.

Rather, it's the widespread indifference now displayed by many airlines' "customer service" personnel.

I know I might sound like the old man on the corner reminiscing about the good old days, but there was a time when carriers seemingly put customer service first.

No kidding. I witnessed it.

I believe a major factor in the deterioration of their customer service is that as their industry has become more dependent on pushing everything to their mobile apps, the human element has dwindled in significance to them.

People are now more akin to cargo to be transported than customers to be served.

While waiting on one of the recently delayed flights, the young lady at the counter took it

## Grace Periods

I was reminded this week of something I know I wrote about years ago.

The realization that it could have been 5 years... or 25 years ago underscores just how long I've been at this.

At the time, I had seriously thrown my back out, although I don't recall the circumstances.

I'll pretend I did it during some cool athletic feat, instead of tying my shoes or getting out of bed.

I do remember the utter misery and irritability I felt for many days.

Every task, no matter how minor, was a discomfort, leaving me mentally and physically strained.

I recall my mood being so sour that even I didn't want to spend time with me.

That led me to pontificate a bit about how none of us wants to be judged on our worse days.

Sometimes, the behavior or attitude we see in the moment isn't a fair representation of a person.

That episode came back to me last week when I found myself confined to bed and a recliner for the better part of three days.

upon herself to begin encouraging people with tight connections in Chicago to go to their app and try to rebook themselves on a later flight.

She was alone at the counter, with about 75 customers to rebook.

I had already done so, as I've learned over the years not to blindly trust the app. You must click over to the "where is my plane coming from" and "where is my plane now" sections.

If the plane coming to get you is obviously going to be very late, your flight will be, as well. Yet, the airlines will show your flight "on schedule" far longer than they should.

To the young lady's credit, she knew this and told customers not to believe the "on time" message on their app.

Her actions likely saved a few dozen people an unplanned stay that evening in Chicago.

She was a breath of fresh air and reminded me of the power of even one competent, caring employee in the face of chaos.

She communicated frequently, apologized several times, and worked her tail off helping as many customers as she could.

I later made a point to tell her how well she did her job as we finally boarded.

She seemed genuinely surprised and grateful to hear that.

Modern technology offers us powerful tools.

Yet, they remain just that – tools. It's caring and competent individuals who create relationship-building experiences.

Be a builder today.

I didn't bring back any official souvenirs from my recent Wisconsin trip, but a stomach virus was my unofficial one.

Between headaches, fatigue, fever, body aches, and stomach issues, I was far from the picture of cheer and goodwill.

After my wife asked me if I needed anything for what felt like the 17th time one morning (though it might've been just twice, I wasn't keeping count), my response was not as pleasant and appreciative as it should have been.

Thankfully, she's been married to me for more of her life than she hasn't, so she gracefully refrained from mirroring my mood.

She kidded, "Hey...if you have any business or sales calls today...you may just want to reschedule. You're not exactly Mr. Charisma today, buddy."

It was then that I was reminded of why we shouldn't be branding anyone – whether customer, coworker, subordinate, or supervisor – on their bad moments (or days.)

And no, it's not always possible to know if someone exhibiting less than ingratiating behavior has a legitimate excuse for it.

But what's the downside of assuming that they do?

We all tend to be a bit more understanding and empathetic to people we know are having a rough day (or stretch).

That alone almost always helps improve their days... and ours, as well.

Give them the grace all of us need from time to time.

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**"Patience is the companion of wisdom."**

» **Saint Augustine**

*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.*

*For more info about having Dave or an FSI Consultant speak to your group, email Tina Coleman, [tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com](mailto:tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com) or call 800-992-4978.*



Financial Supermarkets, Inc. • [fsi@supermarketbank.com](mailto:fsi@supermarketbank.com)

383 Clarkesville Street • PO Box 1450 • Cornelia, GA 30531 • (800) 992-4978

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