



What it takes to pamper clients

Clients are becoming more astute and clear on what they want in service standards.

This is evident from the complaints highlighted in the media and a survey finding by the Singapore Management University that customer satisfaction has dropped for the third successive year in Singapore.

In the search for "why", the blame was put on the poor work attitude of service staff and the lack of involvement of company honchos.

Good service is the minimum that clients expect because they pay our salary and rental at the end of the month. It is more than that big smile (especially after you have visited your dentist during the weekend). It is also more than a cheerful "Good Morning, sir!" How often have you patronised an outlet and had to wave an arm and a leg to get attention?

Veronica Chia, a consultant in Service Management, puts it very simply – "Clients want to be treated like human beings. They want to be noticed. They do not want to be a statistic or contact number in your company system."

For a company to grow in a competitive business environment, she suggests pampering clients. This is not spoiling them to the point when they expect us to meet their unreasonable demands. It is about giving them a reason to stay with you.

Customer satisfaction drops again

THE STRAITS TIMES WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 2009

Retail, education and tourism are poorest performers in survey

By Liu Wei CHIAN

MILLIONS of dollars have been poured into helping Singapore's service sectors go the extra mile. But if anything, they seem to be going backwards, as customers, both here and overseas, voice growing unhappiness with the products and services they are getting.

LESS SATISFIED

The survey of 10,699 households was done between April and August

Sector	2008	2009	Change
Transportation and logistics	60.7	58.7	0
Food & beverage	65.4	65	▼0.4
Info-comm	67.2	66.4	▼0.8
Education	69.8	68.4	▼1.4
Tourism	68.5	67.1	▼1.4
Retail	68.1	65.8	▼2.3

Source: Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore

Veronica defines pampering the clients as treating them with excessive care or attention, so as to get to the touch point that counts – "tugging at their heartstrings".

Regardless of whether you are the doctor or his receptionist, so long as you are servicing a patient, you have the opportunity to create an experience that the patient will remember and he will not go to another clinic when he next needs to visit a doctor.

Imagine sending your clothes to a laundry. Upon collection your expectation is met - your clothes are clean, well-pressed, nice smelling and neatly bagged. It helps if the counter person gives you a smile, addresses you by your name, thanks you and invites you to please come back again. That is good service.

But how would you react when you return home to find that the missing button on your favourite shirt was sewn on by the laundry, without informing you. It is a Wow, but Veronica says this is going the extra mile for your client, not pampering.

Then there is this client who returned from a holiday with her family and realised that she had lost the house keys. Who did she call? Aardwolf Pestkare.

Said a delighted operations director Patrick Chong, "That was her vote of confidence in us." He ferried over a locksmith who opened the main door and replaced the lock, all done within 1 hour. To Veronica this is truly pampering your client.

One unusual question was popped: "Will a German cockroach survive micro-wave radiation in our kitchen?"

This clearly stunned John Ho from Aardwolf Pestkare, who conducted the session on Pest Management. In all his 29 years in the profession, he has not come across this one.

When confronted, technical manager Tan Eng Kooi was equally puzzled. Being the scientist that he is, he soon had the answer from his mentor Professor Lee Chow Yang at Universiti Sains Malaysia. A paper on "Effect of microwave radiation on *Blattella germanica*" by Dr Khadri Shahar and Dr Lee Han Lim at the Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur, confirmed that complete adult mortality was achieved when the German cockroach was exposed to microwave radiation (2450 MHz) for 15 seconds. The experiment also showed that the irradiated male German cockroaches that survived less than 5 seconds exposure, when allowed to mate with virgin females at a ratio of 1:1, were responsible for fewer oothecae (egg casings), thus indicating the sterilisation effects on male. No experiment was, however, conducted on men.



Advanced Food Hygiene Course



The Professional & Adult Continuing Education (PACE) Academy, Singapore Polytechnic has embarked on a programme to raise the standard of food hygiene through a course "Advanced Food Hygiene".

The participants were into House Lizards (or *Cicaks*, in Malay) and the use of biopesticides to control pests.