

## It's only great if the customer says it is...

At the end of last year **KiwiHost** released their preliminary findings of their first "Perceptions of Customer Service in NZ" annual survey. The results revealed only 30% of New Zealanders who responded are satisfied their customer needs are being met.

Most businesses I know think they're great at customer service. It's like asking someone behind the car wheel if they think they're a good driver – 99% believe they're Greg Murphy! If you want a genuine response – ask the passengers. And obviously, in a business situation, it's the customers who hold the key. It's only great service if the customer says (or thinks) it is.

In the KiwiHost survey a massive 70% are NOT satisfied. There will be varying reasons for their response, customers like their purchasing experience just right. They like individual attention, they like businesses to understand their needs. They like speed – and when inevitable delays occur – they like communication. As customers we're a fickle bunch of consumers but basically we all want to be treated well when we're spending our hard earned money.

But the interesting thought this month is – did the services/businesses/retailers – whoever they were – did they KNOW their customers weren't happy? Or did they think they were doing everything well?

Making it more personal – imagine if these respondents had been a customer in your service today – do you know they're happy campers? Or do you put yourself in the 30% of great service providers? When was the last time you stood on the shop floor and discreetly watched your salespeople in action? When did you last sit in your waiting room and have a good look (and listen) to the surroundings? When was the last time you asked your customers what they thought of your services?

Interesting to me, a group of people I spoke to recently listed their top five pet peeves when being served by a shop assistant. To reverse the negatives, these were the top five things you can do to impress your customers this year:

1. Be clean and brush your hair.
1. Smile and remember your manners.
1. Listen to what I'm saying and don't butt in.
1. Look at me when you're speaking to me.
1. Don't chew gum.

Best of all – they won't cost you a cent to implement!

### Did you know...?

- While New Zealand boasts 20 sheep per person, the Falkland Isles has over 700,000 sheep to 2,000 people – 350 per person!
- Based on an average life span of 11 years, the cost of owning a dog is apparently \$13,350
- New Zealand contains more bookstores and golf courses per head of population than any other country.

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Welcome to the New Year – we hope you had a good break and have come back to the coalface refreshed and ready for action in 2008! We look forward to supporting your business again this year.

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