



UNTANGLING

Problem Solving for Student Businesses

Dear Hiring Committee,

Do you think your product is the most important aspect of your business?

Maybe it is.

But maybe it's not.

Your customer may come in to get copies because they want to patronize a student business. Or they may come to have an ice cream because it is convenient and just downstairs in the residence hall. **Will they return?** Often it is the quality of service that you provide that excites your customers into returning to your student business.

As the hiring committee, you have some tools to insure that your new comanagers are able to provide good customer service. **Include a question in your interview that tries to sort out students who like pleasing customers from potential comanagers who would rather be playing games or listening to their i-Pod. Ask them to give an example of a time when they did something to please a customer or gave particular good service. How did they feel? How did they know it was good service?**

Just wait and listen carefully to the response. It should be very evident who has a history of caring for and pleasing others and who's faking. An alternative is for them to give an example of when they received good customer service and what that felt like to them.

Getting the munchies or refueling at lunchtime may be the primary reason that your customers pay you a visit the first time. However the quality of service is the main determinant as to whether they will return, how often they will return, how loyal they will be and, most importantly, how many other people they will tell about your service.

The survival of your business depends on repeat business to succeed. It is critical that all comanagers are efficient, friendly and genuinely caring about the quality of the customer's experience. This guarantees turning first-time guests into repeat customers who will be inclined to visit you again and again.

So if your hiring committee works hard to sort out people who like people, who sincerely like serving people and pleasing them, and who will think about the customer first, that is a recipe for your business's success.