

## Not Lean ... but shows Leadership

*I am one of those people that always takes the time to complete surveys and comment cards. In my humble mind, I feel that I am contributing to enhancing the service and experience for others. I can honestly say in 99.999 of the circumstances either good or bad do I seldom get a response ... or if I do it is an automated generic one ... probably to satisfy some sort of ISO policy.*

*So imagine my surprise as this dialogue unfolded ... hope you enjoy the message thread and learn something by someone taking charge. What is even more impressive is that this guy is not even the owner ... would you love to have this guy on staff? I would ... Read on and enjoy !!*

Hello Mr.Kunst

I'm sending you this email in response to the comment card you left for us on Monday Feb-16. I wondered if you could spare a few minutes to elaborate on your comment about the bartender as I believe it to be a very serious one and would like to follow up with him so this does not happen in the future.

Thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Kris Ruppel, G.M.  
Blackshop Restaurant and Lounge

Hello Kris;

I travel a lot in support of our business ... usually over 180 nights per year. I was fully aware that you had relocated into your new premises and enjoyed visiting the old one frequently (although I must admit when I finally get home I enjoy a break away from restaurant food and like to bond with my BBQ and other implements of destruction in the kitchen).

A few weeks ago Jeff Flynn from Bennett Chev. Olds introduced us to the bar section of your restaurant. We had great service and a wonderful meal. This week the Resident Love Goddess is in California and I found myself home alone. Not feeling like cooking I decided to enjoy a meal at your establishment.

Just remember ... I really appreciate excellent food, good establishments and good service. The folks work very hard in the kitchen to make for a taste experience ... so it is bad when a server just disappoints the experience.

I entered the bar. The bar tender came over to ask what I wanted ... a glass of house red. This was promptly served. I was not offered a menu ... so I requested one. He made no mention of the specials ... but knowing that you usually have some which are always excellent and difficult to select from I enquired. He did not know them ... had to go find them and then could hardly read the script or pronounce the compositions. The food was excellent (spring rolls and veal chop) when I was ready to cash-out I could not get his attention ...

*"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."*

Ronald. E. Osborn

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

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so I put on my coat and asked another wait staff if she could process my check. Finally he returned with my bill and I was able to pay.

I feel sorry for you ... you have invested so much in your business and it is quite good ... but I will not be back in the bar area for another meal. Burger King is cheaper and they smile.

Kris, I must complement that you care and have taken the time to gain clarity ... I hope this helps.

Mr.Kunst,

I very much appreciate the time you took out of your day to elaborate on your last experience at our bar. It is comments and constructive criticisms like yours that help to improve the superior service, food and overall guest experience we strive to give here at the Blackshop.

I would like to personally apologize for your experience on Monday evening. I believe that our service is one of our strongest attributes and unfortunately you were not a witness to that. It is not that the bartender Cristian is a bad guy or unpersonable, but quite possibly overlooked by myself in the training process. I take full responsibility for his actions that evening as he perhaps did not know the consequences of his service, or lack thereof. I will be having a one on one meeting with Cristian this week to go over the importance of guest service and potential expectations that each person has when they come to a restaurant like the Blackshop.

I would like to thank you again for bringing this to my attention so I can prevent such undesired experiences in the future. If I could ask one more favour of you Mr.Kunst; I wondered if you could send me your mailing address as I would like to send you Gift Certificate and personal invitation for a return visit. I assure you that your next visit to the bar, or any area of the restaurant will exceed your previous expectations.

Good afternoon Kris;

I admire the concern and commitment you have invested to root cause this issue. I admire your professional approach on how to improve your training methodologies and not to seek disciplinary actions. Our company provides manufacturing and other organizations on how to adopt and leverage several tools inherent with the Toyota Production System. We build the tools around 3 pillars;

Inspired, Motivated and engaged employees -- cultural  
Robust Processes -- physical attributes  
Lean Operations -- how we will run our business

From the cultural perspective, a favourite book of mine is Raving Fans written by Ken Blanchard .. it is fun, light and has some excellent customer service tools. I also post the following notice below frequently with my clients ... and even I need to be reminded about it at times. Maybe you will also find it useful. Origin is unknown, other than I stole one day wandering through a plant .

**Some additional notes ...** the Blackshop recently relocated from across town to their new digs. Our Trim Carpenter (who looks like Bart Simpson) did all of the wood interior trim ... and I followed the detailed and agonizing journey of building the interior of the restaurant since the owners very specific and detailed about how the interior was to look with imported wood and grain alignment ... the opening was delayed for several months because the owners wanted it just right !!! So I was already intensely aware that this was not the kind of dining experience the owners wanted their guests to experience .

Jeff Flinn is our local GM Sales Manager and his commissions are plummeting so he is now always looking for a free lunch ... but we still have fun with stimulating dialogue. You can reach him at [jflinn@bennettgm.com](mailto:jflinn@bennettgm.com) just to harass him. He is Lean Enterprise junkie also but from a sales and service perspective.

**Richard Kunst**

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## What is a Customer?

A CUSTOMER is the most important person to “enter” the office... whether in person, by mail, or by telephone.

A CUSTOMER is not dependent upon us...we are dependent upon them.

A CUSTOMER is not an interruption of our work...they are the purpose of it. We are not doing them a favour by serving them...they are doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do so.

A CUSTOMER is not an outsider to our business; they are a part of it.

A CUSTOMER is not a cold statistic... they are flesh-and-blood human beings with feelings and emotions like your own, and with biases and prejudices.

A CUSTOMER is not someone to argue or match wits with. Nobody ever won an argument with a customer.

A CUSTOMER is a person who brings us their wants. It is our job to handle them profitably for them and ourselves

Hope the training and coaching works well. And Thank you for taking the time ... since you care I feel comfortable in making this investment of my time to help you improve your business. See you soon ... but without Jeff .. who thinks he is getting a free lunch again. Next visit will be with the Resident Love Goddess for her birthday, probably this weekend.

Hello Kris;

Today we received your gift certificate along with your kind note. Thank you very much ... my bigger reward is that in my humble way I was able to improve your training and better your service. Curious how your training session went with your bar tender

Mr.Kunst,

I believe the training session has went well so far with Cristian however I'm not done with him just yet as I do like to give them time to take in each step before I move on to the next...which in this case will be a heavy session of going over our steps of service with him step by step, move by move, and actually physically coach him into being the best bartender we have. I certainly have my work cut out for me as I have great expectations of not only him but each staff member here, and I will not quit until they are met. I look forward to you using the gift certificate, and please let me know when you plan on coming in. Not so I can personally make sure your evening is flawless, but so I can meet you, and thank you in person.

Until then,

Kris Ruppel, G.M.  
Blackshop Restaurant and Lounge

This is enough to make me fill out comment cards forever ... pleasing customers and improving process ... what an awesome concept ... how can we apply this teaching today to our respective environments?

Lean Thoughts