

Making a Memorable Impression on Employees and Customers for All the Right Reasons

You've probably heard the phrase, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." While it's easy to discard advice of this nature as simplistic or cliché, it is important to remember that your customers make these assessments every time they visit your business.

Presented by Mystery Shopper Services

Introduction:

While a first impression entails everything from the way you speak, shake hands and engage physically it also includes things that are barely perceptible: the tilt of your head, your tone of voice and even the way you explain things.

Don't Let This Happen to You

Imagine, if you will, a chance encounter with a potential long-term client. If your weekends entail frequent outings, late nights and arriving at work on Monday with a less than upbeat attitude, you may unintentionally be sending the message to both your customers and your staff that you don't have time to discuss their concerns.

If you appear uninterested (even if what you really are is just dog-tired), the message you put out will be one of negativity. At best, your staff might shrug it off and chalk it up to a rough weekend; at worst, they may get the impression that it is pointless to offer input or insight and just withdraw from taking an active role in the business. Probably not at all what you're hoping for.

Best Practices for Best Results

Unless you've resigned yourself to the belief that your business can't be improved upon, then the following advice will go a long way toward enhancing your public interactions. Honestly, it is not that difficult to implement. Here are some proven steps to help you and your staff make better first impressions (and to keep those customers coming back.)

- Shake hands authentically – The rules governing a proper handshake are simple. Be firm. But not overzealous and don't prolong the activity. Holding on too long can be misconstrued and shaking without a firm grip can portray you as weak or disinterested. Try practicing with a coworker or a friend, so that you'll know how much pressure to use and when to let go.
- Make and maintain eye contact – This is a touch one for some people, but if a person is speaking to you and you are looking around the room or at your phone, then you will seem distracted. Even worse, you might come off as arrogant, thinking only of yourself. It is important to look into someone's eyes to reassure him or her that you are listening and engaged with the conversation. Just remember to blink occasionally. It's not a staring contest after all.
- Maintain a respectful distance – Have you ever had someone stand too close to you while you were talking, eating or just waiting in line? Everyone has a comfort zone and maintaining an appropriate distance can help your customers or employees feel more at ease in your presence. A good rule of thumb is three feet. Just think about how it feels to have someone else's breath on your face. If you can feel it you are definitely too close.
- Remember your posture – As a final piece of advice, this is possibly the most important of all. Good posture is akin to good manners. Standing still or sitting up straight is perceived as a form of confidence, while slouching or slumping in your chair makes you appear lazy, disrespectful or uninterested. The way you carry yourself is a sign of who you are. Stand tall and you will always receive more respect.