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Customers make or break business

Imogen Crispe | 10th March 2011

Rotorua business people recently learned how great customer service is important because people remember bad service experiences.

The annual Trust Power customer service seminar was on Monday at the Distinction Hotel, organised by Rotorua Chamber of Commerce.

Twenty-five people from businesses around Rotorua attended the seminar where presentations were made by Kathy Hughes from The Hughes Group, Richard Preest from Trust Power and Peter Duncan from The Wedding Guy.



A Little TLC: Graeme Purchase (left), Kathy Hughes, Richard Preest and Peter Duncan talked at the recent customer service seminar in Rotorua. Photo / Photo/Andrew Warner 080311aw 1

The seminar began with an introduction from Trust Power's Graeme Purchase who gave an example of how customers remember bad customer service.

He talked about a friend who remembered bad service from a car salesman many years after it happened.

The first speaker was Kathy Hughes from Auckland who talked about how important customer service is for ensuring repeat business.

"Every customer can be made happy in one way or another," she said.

She said if people to work together, they will do better.

She demonstrated this by getting everyone to find as many words as they could from the word "customer".

Individually, the participants got about eight or nine each, but together they were able to find 49 words.

"You always do better in a group than individually," Ms Hughes said.

She then talked about how patrons remember bad service.

She said 68 per cent of customers who do not return to a business do not return because they received poor service.

She also said 98 per cent of dissatisfied shoppers don't complain, they just leave, and 85per cent of those unhappy people tell an average of 10 people about their poor experience.

"You can have the best product on earth but if you don't look after [the customers] they will go away," Ms Hughes said.

Lastly, she discussed what makes a consumer want to return: top-notch service.

"Excellent service is when a customer gets more than what they expected," she said.

The next speaker was Richard Preest from Trust Power, who has worked as a team leader and trainer in the organisation's call centre.

His focus was how to take care of customers.

"If we don't take care of our customers, someone else will," he said.

He stressed that businesses need to gather information from their patrons to find out how to improve.

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It's all about listening to your customer and encouraging them to give feedback."

He suggested businesses give out comment cards and respond to the feedback they get. There's no use in seeking feedback if the cards would be ignored.

The last speaker was Rotorua's Peter Duncan.

With his experience working for The Wedding Guy and winning the Westpac Rotorua Business Excellence Award's customer service category twice, Mr Duncan talked about how people need to care about their customers.

"People want to know you give a rats' about

them."

He explained that workers need to like what they do so they can give their best and have a positive attitude

"If not, ask yourself if you're in the right occupation."

Mr Duncan said those who succeed in their occupation are those who find it is their "calling" and have the determination to do well.



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