

A book review and recommendation by Dan Beaulieu

Be Your Customer's Hero: Real World Tips and Techniques for the Service Front Lines

by Adam Toporek

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Price: \$17.95 • 244 pages with index

A much needed new book on customer service!

Even though there are plenty of books on customer service these days, I find this one to be particularly ground-breaking because the author, Adam Toporek, gets right to the heart of the problem. And yes, he does it openly and honestly. No, the customer is not always right, he admits, while teaching us how to get our point across while making the customer feel that he *is* right.

In fact, in chapter 10, called “All Customers Are Irrational,” he points out that most of the time, customers don’t really know what they want. He notes that even though yes, customers are irrational, they are predictably irrational. It is up to us, those who sell to them, to figure out their individual needs and meet them.

Another section I found helpful was chapter 39 where he talks about being your customers’ detective. Whatever a customer wants, find it for him or her. No matter what it is, whether you sell it or not, find it. Remember that your job is to provide your customers with what they need at all times. Remember that story about Nordstrom’s taking back a set of snow tires even though, of course, the store did not sell tires? Man, I hope that story is true! But the point is that we are still telling that story. I have read that story in many books and articles, and it makes the point, doesn’t it?



And finally, one great example from the book, and probably the most important, is in chapter 40 where Mr. Toporek advises us to never talk badly about customers ... to customers. I say a big giant “amen” to that. And I’ll add that you should never ever talk badly about your customers period, never mind just for other customers.

This leads me to the most important advice in the entire book — that customer service starts at the top. It starts with the owner and goes all the way through the organization. As a company leader, the last thing you want to do is talk badly about a customer. Because you are the leader in your firm, everything you say is multiplied by 10. So if you start knocking your customers, you are giving all of your associates tacit approval to follow your lead to join in the “we hate the customers” dance. That’s the last thing you want. Customer service is not just the responsibility of your customer service people, but rather it belongs to everyone in the company ... everyone.

This is a great subject and a great book. Read it and learn.

*Dan Beaulieu is the president and founder of D.B. Management L.L.C., a consulting firm specializing in all aspects of sales, marketing and branding with a focus on rep-principal relationships. His latest book is **The PCB 101 Handbook** which can be purchased online by emailing danbeaulieu@aol.com. Dan is also the author of “It’s Only Common Sense,” a weekly sales column appearing at pcb007.com. Dan can be reached at 207-649-0879.*

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