

By Bill Guertin

The 800-Pound Gorilla

THE “GOLF TEST”... COULD YOUR SMALL BUSINESS PASS?

The game of golf looks easy. Just grab a club, put the ball up on the tee, and swing away. Easy!

Those of us who play the game would beg to differ.

All of us have at least seen someone swing a golf club before. But there are several people who have never even held a golf club in their hands, much less played a round.

How much sense would it make to give a golf club to a non-golfer and say, “Here you go ... good luck”?

Yet that's just what we're doing every day when we hire new people and don't train them in Customer Service.

Many employers assume that since new employees have seen others give good service, they should automatically know how to do it. Customer service training time is cut back or eliminated, and employers wonder why customers are treated poorly and don't return.

The next time you're meeting with your staff, try this exercise to illustrate how important this is.

Bring a golf club to your next meeting, and start by asking someone who's never played golf before to come to the front of the room. (For the sake of demonstration, let's assume it is a female.) Hand her the golf club. Then ask the golfers in the room to help coach her to properly swing the club. How should she hold the club? How far apart should she have her feet? How far away from the ball should she stand? How far back should the club go? Where should the shoulders be? The hands? The head? There's a lot to think about.

Now that our new golfer has had all these instructions, have her go ahead and try a practice swing.

How do you suppose that swing will look?

Certainly this employee has seen others play the game plenty of times. So why does her swing look so ugly? It's because she never had to think about swinging the club herself until that very moment. It's one thing to watch others; it's very different when you have to do the job yourself.

You must take the time to train the very basic of basics to each employee. Things like how to present themselves to others without being offensive, how to greet a customer when they enter the store, how to ask the right questions to uncover what they're looking for, and dozens of other important skills. Each employee may have seen it a hundred times or more, but they may never have had to do it themselves until now.

Great customer service doesn't just happen magically. It requires training. Tiger Woods, widely considered the best player in the game of golf today, has 3 different trainers he works with constantly. He understands the value of training. Do you?

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