

5 STAR PHENOMENAL: VOLUME 1

THE FIVE STAR MINDSET

THE SECRET SCIENCE OF SERVING

REVIEWS ARE THE NEW CURRENCY

THE SECRET SCIENCE OF SERVING

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About the Author:

Brian Keith is a Husband, Father and Business Owner. A veteran 'Business to Consumer' practitioner with 30 years of firsthand knowledge, ranging from hospitals to hospitality, from restaurants to retail and from executive transportation to entrepreneurship. He has amassed multiple Five Star Reviews, for his personal and business brands, four hundred reviews and counting.

He is uniquely qualified with experience in multiple retail environments and product categories.

Brian Keith has a unique 'Consumer Services' voice, based on experiences beyond the hypothetical. He is available for Keynotes, Seminars, 1 on 1 Coaching, Webinars, Workshops, Masterclasses and for Corporate Training.

Beyond the years of experience, the relationships formed and the financial successes, the biggest achievement for Brian has been in the ability to find his purpose, through the service of others.

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The Five Star Mindset

If we pay attention to our surroundings, we are always in a state of producing or consuming something and no matter who you are or where you are, there will be people. When you consider that more than half of all communication is body language and facial expressions (55%). Then it is safe to say, that even when you are not speaking, an opinion of you is being formed. For a moment let us consider you a business of one and any person that you communicate with verbally or non verbally is your consumer. At the height of your best self and the depth of your ignobility are consumers. Your character becomes your product and your reputation becomes your brand. What would your rating be with those consumers?

A more specific question is, how different would things be if you were a Five Star Business? Would life be enhanced if you were a Five Star Spouse, Parent, Sibling or Friend? What do the people that are directly consuming your talents, gifts and abilities think?

Are they consuming something that is Five Star or is it One Star and grossly overpriced? The goal is to become Five Star with the creator, Five Star with Family and Five Star in Business. Do you have a 5 Star Mindset?

What can you learn from this Series:

- How to take Average Service to Phenomenal
- How to Create Consumer Loyalty
- How to Build Rapport
- How to Create Brand Evangelists
- How to be Competition Free
- How to Build & Improve your Reputation
- How to Leverage for Premium Rates
- How to Create Word of Mouth Buzz
- How to Reduce Advertising Costs
- How to transition from a Generalist to Specialist
- How to become Transformative vs Transactional
- How to Shift Momentum in your Organization

What are Reviews and Why are they important?

1. They are snapshots of your Business
2. They are what the market thinks of your Brand
3. They are Currency that gives you leverage
4. They are Word of Mouth advertising on steroids
5. They are the distinction from your competitors

The 'New' Service Gap

The modern consumer demands the ability to access your service how they choose and when they choose, any business that refuses loses.

Service has always been changed by innovation, as traditional selling cycles are automated, there will be new winners and new losers.

The consumer has options, literally in hand. To the service providers, that execute best will go the spoils. The best widget and best widget service are important however, it is the entire experience that matters. It is about saving the consumer time: The first level is not Wasting time, the second level is to Save time and highest level is to SELL time.

Today's service providers must be: Accessible, Adjustable, Speedy, Effortless, Convenient, Payment Friendly, Responsive, In Real Time, Digital, Accurate, Simple, Safe, Guaranteed, Transparent and Flexible.

The New Service Paradigm:

What & Why

The modern consumer demands more, what you sell or what you do are only part of the sales service experience. Not only is there a what, but a why, when, where, how and who.

What (This is your main product, service or system)

Why (The reason for your product, service or system)

When (The management of the consumers time)

Where (The convenience of use)

How (The overall way the consumer feels)

Who (The demographics of the target consumer)

The **What** of the New Services Paradigm is about the quality, craftsmanship, presentation and consistency. The most important thing is being consistent. Consistency builds trust.

The **Why** is about the specific problem the consumer is looking to for you to solve. Always solve the problem and you will be relevant. The connective tissue to every aspect of service must point directly to the consumer's problem and your solution. Did the consumer's question get answered? Was a solution found that was reasonable, affordable and timely?

A New Service Paradigm:

The When, Where, How & Who

The **When** is all about respecting the consumer's time. It is the one commodity that cannot be replaced and their most valuable asset. What could the consumer be doing instead of waiting or on hold?

The **Where** is about serving the consumer in their preferred environment and using their preferred form of communication: Online, on the phone, in a retail environment or at the consumer's home. This includes access via text messaging, email, social media or direct message applications.

The **How** is about measuring the overall experience. How did the interaction from beginning to end make the consumer feel? How important did each person view their roles in solving the overall problem? How do you handle a complaint? How is a consumer treated that is not ready to buy or has a return?

Who is your target consumer's demographics? How old are they, what is their gender, income, education level, marital status and what are their political leanings? The more you understand your preferred consumers, the better the services provided.

What is Service?

Service is the delivery of a product, a service rendered or a system, it encompasses every aspect of the business to consumer interaction.

Serving is yielding to the will of another. Service is a noun, a verb and a privilege to express. If business is a game, then service must be played offensively and defensively.

Service is the first skill you must learn and the hardest to master. Why? In order, to serve others well, you must be secure in who you are, serving is not for the easily offended.

Service is the lowest and highest common denominator of every business, every transaction and every human interaction. Every relationship is based on the premise of one serving another. Service involves all the components of the consumer's experience.

The branding, the marketing, the advertising, the presentation, the access, the quality, the merchandising, the transaction, the seamless payment options, the delivery, the return and the future marketing are all encompassed into service.

The Science of Serving

Service is about simplicity, making your product simple to access and easy to pay for. It is about empathy over sympathy, placing yourself in your consumer's shoes and then walking with them.

People are fueled by acceptance, affirmation and a sense of community, this is precisely why rejection, detachment, and abandonment are so devastating. As a service provider, your success depends heavily on an environment of acceptance, genuine ways to affirm others & the ability to create a community of belonging.

There is a balance between what the consumer wants and what your audience needs. It is found in shifting from the best for you, to the best for them. Using what the consumer wants to open the door to provide what the consumer needs.

When you are able to serve a need, your value shifts from accessory to necessity.

The Anatomy of Serving

When considering people who have changed the trajectory of humanity through service. Four people come to mind Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. Each served mankind to the fullest and by most standards are considered great, without wealth, intimidation or the internet.

From them, a powerful set of serving core values can be drawn: faith, compassion, peace and forgiveness.

King's faith was indomitable, Mother Teresa's compassion had no bounds, Gandhi was dedicated to peace and Mandela proved that forgiveness was more powerful than fear.

Service is a transforming power that can transcend time, language, culture and religions. If you want to have an impact on business, then understanding what service truly means is key.

Once we have mastered service with the right product, then the money and financial rewards are the due byproducts.

The 12 Attributes of Serving + 1

1. Your Word is your Bond - Do what you say, period.
2. Be on Time & On Task - Arrive Early & Ready
3. Respect - Create a Culture of Honor
4. Empathy - See things from the Consumer's View
5. Consideration - Be Cogitate and Aware of others
6. Humility - You do not know everything
7. Kindness - Treat people well
8. Conviction - Stand for something
9. Strong Work Ethic - You must have a Standard
10. Poise, Image & Body Language - Look the Part
11. A Sense of Urgency - Move Quickly & Accurately
12. Be Coachable - Listen, Learn to take Criticism
13. Strategic Instinct - Get a Plan & Trust your Gut

The Nuance of Serving

1. Adapt, let the consumer control the environment
2. Engage the consumer on their terms, their timing.
3. Perception is reality, truth can be relative.
4. Earn the right to serve, serving is a privilege.

Consideration is Communication.

Communicate often and early, consideration is a down payment toward the consumer's trust. Be sure to protect the consumers most valuable resource, their time. The one true nonrenewable commodity is time. Save the consumer time and business will thrive, sell the consumer time and the business will thrive.

Compliments, Considerations & Concerns

Where there is no relationship, there is no influence and starting a relationship requires communication. One of the easiest ways to start a conversation, even in a hostile environment is to authentically compliment a person, show consideration for a person or show concern for a person. People are people each of us having joy with sorrows, highs, and lows. When you find common ground, whether it be parenting, in music or in sports. You will be viewed in a new light. When you can identify with a person's challenge or shortcoming, a bond of influence is created.

Serve Genuinely

Make every consumer a god and then worship them. Block out all distractions and be 100% in that moment. Allow the consumer to play the leading role in a mini-movie, you are the director: lights, camera, action.

The Luxury of Choice

People have the option of choosing when and where they will spend money. There are many large companies that have become obsolete or lost market share, by taking the consumers choices for granted. The illusion of loyalty was disguised in the lack of consumer choices. When the consumer finds a viable alternative, disruption comes. Consider our recent history, we once made it a 'Blockbuster Night' now the common vernacular is, 'Netflix and Chill'.

The same could be observed in the shift in market share and profitability from McDonald's vs Chick-fil-A, MySpace vs Facebook and Walmart vs Amazon. In each situation, the latter companies entered the market with a major competitor and executed service better to gain dominance.

The 10 C's of Customer Service

1. Be Conscientious. Always evaluate the consumer's viewpoint. Be sensitive to the environment, the generation and to the culture.
2. Be Confident. If you have mastered your craft, then it will show.
3. Be Competent. Can you produce in a less than ideal condition and still deliver.
4. Have Character. Can you do the right thing even when the right thing does not benefit you personally? Can you put the customer's best interest, first?
5. Give Clarity. Is the solution, that you provide clear from A to Z. The costs and the outcomes.
6. Be Courteous. A yes ma'am and a no sir still have a value. A Mr. or Mrs. before a name works wonders.
7. Be Cooperative. Get into a rhythm with the customer. Solve the problem and create no more.
8. Be Consistent. Do exactly what you say and exactly when you say it. When you are consistent you are predictable and predictability has value.
9. Be Charismatic. A smile goes miles. High energy & being inviting makes consumers feel comfortable.
10. Communication is key. Are you running late? Is the product on backorder? If you tell the consumer in advance, then it is an explanation, but if you tell the customer after, it is now an excuse.

Market Minded

Despite how great you think that your product or service is or how masterful you are at your talent, gift or ability. Ultimately it is the market that determines the good and the bad. The market has the right to change its mind, what the market likes one day it may hate on another. It can change its mind, but the market is never wrong.

Perceptions are Real

How you are perceived is determined by more than what you say and more by what you do. Online activities have been the downfall of many service providers. Be sure that your vibe does not clash with your vision and that your passion is not conflicting with your purpose.

When Win

Many are in a competition with the consumer, especially when your expertise or knowledge is questioned. This mindset leads to a winner and a loser, a transaction can only be GOOD if both are mutually satisfied. The consumer is supposed to win, that is part of the job description. You are being compensated to submit your talents, gifts and abilities toward finding the best solution for the consumer. This is advocacy.

Batman Vs Superman

Are you Batman or are you Superman?

Your superpowers are not in question here, but rather how you view those powers. Batman's power and performance was connected to what he put on, the mask and the suit.

However, Superman's powers were innate and he needed nothing to perform. The mask and suit were removed to reveal the fullness of who he was. For many, the public you and private you are very different. Outside of the performance and services environment, you are not the same.

When serving you can be caring, witty, polite and even charismatic. However, outside of the marketplace and away from the public, a very different person emerges.

This is called acting, you are performing a role and not executing on who you actually are. It is precisely the type of behavior that will erode consumer confidence. Specifically, confidence in you and your business.

Trust Matters

The true goal is to earn the consumers trust not their sale. When you are trusted, sales and repeat business come without effort.

Explanation vs Excuses

Setting an expectation, painting a realistic outcome beforehand or articulating a service limitation in advance, is considered an explanation. After, a less than desirable outcome becomes a reality any attempt to describe the situation will be considered an excuse. Managing expectations is a critical part of the overall services experience. Many bad interactions and subsequent bad reviews are based on the differences between expectation and reality, and not an actual deficiency. Disappointing the consumer could have been avoided if the appropriate time and effort was taken to explain.

Give 100%

The difficulty of the last consumer or how hard your day has been, cannot interfere with the current consumer interaction. Each consumer expects your best and should have it. The consumer deserves 100% effort each service time. If the service output is down 20%. Would it be fair if the consumer paid 20% less?

A Strength Inverted is a Weakness

As an expert, the more you know the higher the accountability. The curse of expertise is that our strengths can become weaknesses by relying on them too heavily.

An extensive knowledge is only as good to the consumer as it relates to solving a problem.

Any authority can be humbled, it is better to operate masterfully from a place of humility than to ruin your credibility based on arrogance. Arrogance has a way of alienating people that is hard to overlook and possibly to forgive.

Rapport Building

My favorite subject and your favorite subject are the same, ourselves. We both enjoy discussing any topic that includes our passion, interests, and pursuits.

Give the consumer every chance to talk about their interests. The more the consumer speaks regarding a beloved pastime or family member, the more comfortable they will become. If this is your first time meeting, the pleasure associated with the topic will be connected to the memory of meeting you.

Mastery

Money cannot be more valuable than the people that make it. The money is an icon, it represents the ideas and efforts of the consumer. Your effort must be equal or greater than the consumer's effort to obtain the money. Earning more business is a byproduct of mastering serving, not mastering selling.

You Better Call Tyron

Work to humanize your consumer interactions by becoming a person and not merely a product or service provider. Be certain to paint a complete portrait of who you are. People do not normally remember John Doe or Jane Doe, but they will remember Tyron Doe.

Expert's say that if ever kidnapped, be sure to humanize yourself. A kidnapper will be less likely to harm you are if you are, seen as a person. It is advised, to use your name and indicate that you have a family. When discussing your family, mention your children, your likes, passions and your dreams. Why? It is imperative in any negotiation to humanize who you are, this will distinguish you from the competition.

Reputations are Built

Your reputation precedes you, but it may not follow. You must earn your ratings over and over again. Are your actions honorable or disgraceful? When no one is watching, do you make the right decisions?

A Five Star rating is hard to get and easy to lose. Losing is learning, taken in perspective. Certainly, there are perpetually angry people, but even the most insatiable consumer can enhance your service performance. They can do so by shedding light on a weak spot.

Can you filter out the nastiness and disrespect? Can you overcome your own ego and insecurities?

Those that can find an ounce of truth, just a small percentage, can become the benefactors of even the angriest patrons. Anger is an emotion that frees us from political correctness and pseudo politeness.

Truth is freedom, conversely, lies and half-truths keep us bound. Bound to old patterns and paradigms of what is best for the consumer. Disruption comes when the consumer experience is diminished for more profit and higher returns.

20/20 Vision

The consumer's perception is seen with 20/20 vision, be sure to see their way. The consumer may have the wrong information and come to the wrong conclusion, but how they feel is NEVER wrong.

Are you the Brand?

When you are able to provide a solution to a problem that has not been articulated, you are the first to market and become synonymous with the problem itself. So anytime a vacuum cleaner is mentioned, people will think, Hoover.

Some will use the word Hoover as a verb, "Hoover the carpets" versus vacuuming the carpet. The brand name is so well known that the product and function are intertwined.

Other examples are the use of Linoleum when referring to vinyl flooring or Coke when referring to a soft drink.

Always Remember

The more you remember about each consumer, you have, the better. If you can just recall a small aspect of a previous transaction, even a small morsel of information. It can catapult your value in the consumer's eyes to new heights.

Do Not Fight

My experience is that it is best not to fight a One Star review, because when you are Five Star person, eventually, the truth will come out. What you can and should do is to respond, intelligently and honestly, but also with empathy. "I apologize that my service did not meet your standards and there is no excuse." "We did notice in the notes that stated that you wanted X and your signature confirms receiving X. We would like to compensate you for any frustrations caused." "I would like to remedy the situation as you see fit and offer a 50% off coupon. When you have a moment. Please contact me directly, Brian Keith."

The idea is simple, remove every barrier to reconciliation and provide the consumer a means to become whole based on time and/or money. Once the issue of recouping the lost resources are guaranteed, the real issue can be discussed.

Your Role is Clear

The consumer can be unprofessional, undignified, condescending and disrespectful, your role is to respond professionally, dignified, uplifting and with respect. Be secure enough in who you are, not to allow the actions of others to consume your worth.

Serve the Soul

Many consumers need more than service, they may need support or an attentive ear. Service combined with attentiveness, compassion, and understanding can create loyalty beyond measure. There is a solution for what the consumer wants and there is another solution that the consumer needs. Genuine service comes from the soul. When you lay down your wants, desires, and comfort to enhance the wants, desires, and comfort of others.

Protect your Investment

Never take your consumer rapport for granted, no matter how long you have known the consumer. No matter how many times you have been to the consumers home or how many different transactions you have had together. Never take their business for granted, always go the extra mile. Never get too comfortable with the consumer by presuming, that your rapport, excuses fully-fledged service.

Don't Lose It

When you lose your cool, you lose much more. This is true for the service provider, but also for the consumer. The societal pressure of being composed always will work in your favor, I cannot count the times, that calmness under pressure was ultimately rewarded by kudos. The kudos would come many times from the consumer/offender, once cooler heads prevailed. It may take moments or months, but eventually many would apologize. Another interesting occurrence would be the affirmation from bystanders, people that observed my decorum under a challenging situation.

Is your brand sexy?

Do your consumers receive al high from doing business with you? Have you ever heard a debate between two car enthusiasts or two opposing electronics brand enthusiasts? The passion expressed in some of these interactions can rival that of the most heated political pundits. Each has a personal preference, but the advantages of each brand are minuscule, objectively speaking. Yet, many a debate has ended in knock down drag out fights. Are people passionate about your brand, are your consumers excited about what you do?

Relationship Symbiosis

The highest relationship dynamic is when both parties benefit mutually. This is known as mutualism. There are at least two other relationships types, parasitism and commensalism. Parasitism is when one benefits and one is harmed. Commensalism is when one benefits and one is unaffected.

When this is applied to the service paradigm, it sets a standard for balancing the roles between service providers and consumers. When a transaction harms the consumer, then they usually return the favor by harming your reputation. In the situation where the interaction is uneventful, then the consumer has no reason to spread the word. For the aforementioned reasons, mutualism or parity is a critical part of the “The New Service Paradigm”

Did you leave something?

Have you considered leaving your consumers better than you found them? What if you left them with more than what they wanted? Could your consumers need an affirming kind word, a smile or an engaging conversation? Compete for the consumer’s heart and not their wallets.

Camera Work

Smile you are on Candid Camera, as technology advances, cameras are everywhere. Be certain you are found doing the right thing. The technology is here, accessible and cheap, so you must passionately embrace it. Work in such a way, that whoever is watching, does not matter. Raise your standard so high that 'The Right Way' is executed anytime and every time.

Special Occasions

It may be a just a job or just another transaction for you, but for your consumer it is everything. The product or service you are providing can be a token of the esteem your client has for a treasured relationship. This could be a milestone, anniversary or significant Birthday and the consumer has come to partner with oi in expressing that love.

Protect your Name

IYour name, your personal brand, your integrity, your character are more important than money. A good name can get more money, but more money cannot create a good name. My name is invaluable. Always protect your name, your character and your purpose.. Your greatest asset is your name.

The Five Fingers of Death + 1

What is your kryptonite? Are you aware of the triggers that may provoke irrational behaviors? This is referred to as a 'blow up' or a 'meltdown', causing the best of us to behave poorly.

***External Triggers.**

1. Targeted Disrespect. It is one thing to be rude, but to be targeted w/o the ability to respond, can be hard for any service provider.
2. Blatant Dishonesty. This is when a substantive effort has been made to demean your character or competency.
3. Physical Threat. When an actual threat or implied threat has been made to harm you or your loved ones.

***Internal Triggers.**

1. Physical attraction or sexual arousal is natural. However, dating or flirting with a co-worker, vendor or a consumer can have disastrous outcomes and can create hostile environments.
2. Deep emotional wounds. Hurt people hurt people. There are a number of areas where sensitivity is a must culture, gender, religion, sports, politics, money, crime and/or abuse. One off-collar remark can have disastrous outcomes.

Know your audience?

***Body Language**

The head nod is an accepted gesture for greeting someone. If the person is older and you desire to acknowledge them with reverence, the nod is down. (Good Day Sir). If the person is younger or has a younger vibe, then the head nod is up. (What is up, Man) Each salutation has the same general message, but two very different meanings or situational appropriateness. Not knowing how to address an audience, can draw unwanted scrutiny toward the messenger and draw away from the message.

***Code Switching**

When your cultural, political, religious or socio economic background and experiences are different. It is imperative that you are well versed in the customs, the language and the 'modus operandi' of your target audience. There is a vernacular that serves me well on MLK Boulevard and Malcom X Dr. Nevertheless, the same verbiage, while equally as authentic, will alienate me on Main St. and it will completely disqualify me on Wall St.

Listen to the Bad

A consumer complaint is pure unfiltered advice on how you can improve. Listen with your ears and not your heart. The pressure of not being mean or rude can create the false sense that your service levels are adequate, those that are willing to help you see a blind spot are rare and can be very useful. Think deeply about the critique, even the smallest of truths can be helpful.

Let go my Ego

An ego is a self-preserving figment of your imagination, it is fueled by pride and cognitive dissonance. A bruised ego can be very costly and is the cause of many failures. It is critical in the service of others to choose humility over ego. In the times I chose my ego over service, there was a high cost, my credibility.

Are you are Faking it?

For many, there is a disconnect between your business card and the business you are providing. Your character is always reflected in the execution. The dirty little secret is we demand more than we are willing to give. People literally are offended and refuse to accept the same measure of service they have become accustomed to providing.

Learning vs Earning for Profit

Be sure not to confuse a personal opportunity with a business opportunity. Each scenario may not be designed to get the sale, earn the commission or to make money. The benefit of many interactions is in the relationship and the ability to establish a rapport. The old adage has power, it is not what you know but who you know. Could an overzealousness or aggressive sales mindset be misconstrued as desperation?

The Controllable: Operating above Offense

You cannot control the actions of another person, but you are 100% in control of your response. Many are upset for the sake of being upset, they are looking for a place to vent. Let them vent.

Transformative vs Transactional

Approaching consumers as a sale gets you a sale, but approaching them as people (mother, husband, son) you get much more. A parent has a different outlook, then a single person or a newlywed. Find where your pursuits align, with your consumers, then solve the problem as an advocate. Being solution based, allows you to be helpful and get the sale.