

# OIL CHANGING

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T I M E S

## 2009 AOCA CONVENTION & FAST LUBE EXPO

MAY 27 - 29 • ATLANTA

Jeff Morwatt will conduct a special fast lube owners' session entitled "The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®" at AOCA's Convention on Wednesday, May 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Pre-registration and separate registration fee apply.

### Boosting Your Business in a Slow Economy

An Influence with Ease® Column

By Jeff Morwatt

**Q**uestion: What are two words that will become increasingly important to customers over the next decade? The answer, according to marketing guru Frank Luntz, is "hassle free." Customers are fed up with being forced to jump through hoops. Yet bizarrely, even in a slow economy, companies are actually becoming more difficult for customers to do business with - before, during and after purchases. To see if your organization is creating these unnecessary hassles for your customers, take this mini-quiz. Then consider using the accompanying tips I talk about in my customer service seminars and speeches.

#### WHEN CUSTOMERS ARRIVE EARLY

Do you force your customers to wait outside your establishment until the minute you *officially* open? Worse, do you rush them out the door or bar them from entering as closing time approaches? Ever seen customers standing outside a business pointing at their wrists to store employees, trying to compare whose watch is right?

the other presenter was Roly Morris, CEO of Krispy Kreme operations in Canada. Roly explained they have a practice called *10 before 10 after...* meaning they are open for business (and answering phones) 10 minutes *before* they say they are open, and they remain open (and answering phones) 10 minutes *after* posted closing. Of course, you have to pay employees for the staggered times, but the good will and extra revenues you'll generate make this a worthwhile investment.

#### WHEN MAKING BUYING DECISIONS

Are your customers faced with too many choices? It's fine to have a large selection to attract customers, but forcing customers to make too many decisions creates stress and buying resistance. As products and services become more complex, customers are increasingly afraid of making the wrong decision. Fortunately, your employees can reduce this customer stress while boosting your revenues using the *rule of 3*. Here's how it works.

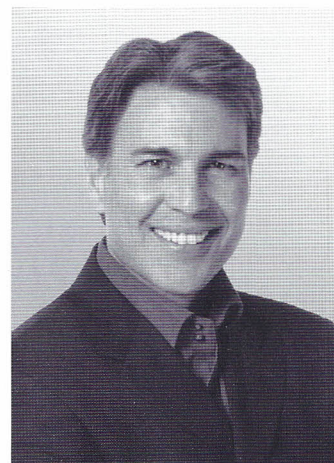
If you offer your customers only two choices, they may

narrow them to the top three most suitable for that customer. Interestingly, if you offer three choices from least to most expensive, customers will typically choose the middle option. That means that offering three choices not only helps your customer make easier buying decisions - it also helps steer them away from choosing the cheapest item. Less hassle, more buying. Everyone wins.

#### WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM

Can your customers return products to your location, or are they expected to have kept the original packaging and ship it to the manufacturer? Do they face a huge waiting line at the 'customer service' desk that's understaffed and overgrumped? Do you give customers any compensation or even an apology for the inconvenience of having to return a defective product?

Some managers appear to believe that making dissatisfied customers run a gauntlet discourages product returns. Actually, it discourages your customers from returning. If you plan on keeping customers over the long term, you know that sooner or later they're



So how did your company do in this quiz? For most organizations there are at least some opportunities to reduce the hassle factor for customers. The good news is these types of adjustments to customer service are simple. They reduce complexity and bureaucracy. Our corporate clients report that the payoff is worth it in terms of strengthened customer loyalty, increased spending per customer, and enhanced team spirit. Not bad for simply making the customers' buying experience hassle free. ●

This article is based on the bestselling book, **Becoming a Service Icon in 90 Minutes a Month** by customer service strategist and certified professional speaker Jeff Morwatt. To obtain your own copy of