

It's been an interesting month this month. I've dented my new car, had 20 candy floss filled crazed kids wreck havoc on my house, chased Milo the dog down the street about 15 times, made a new friend, chatted to the neighbour in my pyjamas whilst hanging out washing and enjoyed five yes five birthday cakes!

It hasn't been all happy days blowing out candles and eating copious amounts of chocolate cake though, this month (to be honest) has been disgustingly busy and full of surprises.

And, it's the first surprise at the beginning of the month that I'm going to talk to you about today. Probably because it was a pretty big surprise and probably because it was the thing that really, really bugged me in more ways than one.

You see, I get my hair cut in a bit of a fancy pants hair salon on the shore. My hairdresser Al is a really nice guy, he cuts my hair, tells me about his latest TV jobs and feeds me my favourite hot chocolate drink with two chocolates on the side and chocolate sprinkles on the top (he knows I like chocolate!). I consider Al to be my friend and confidant. I mean, how many males can you talk to about colouring and cutting your hair and what suits you best without them quietly falling asleep?!

Problem is, is that the other day I rang my favourite salon to book a hair cut with my favourite hairdresser, looking forward to my favourite chocolate treats when the receptionist on the other end of the phone line said "Oh, I'm sorry Emma, Al's left to work in TV" (he cut for NZ Top Model you see).

"What?" I screamed down the line..."But, but, but...but what about my hair? What about my chocolate drink? What about our discussions about his girlfriend, my naughty dog and all that Top Model gossip? Did it mean nothing, nothing??!!!"

I think she thought I was mad and replied "Er...you can always have Sarah?"

Me - *"Is that the blonde one?"*

Her - *"Um, yes"*

Me - *"No, I don't want her!"*

Her - *"What about Christina?"*

Me - *"Is that the short one with the strange hair?"*

Her - *"yes"*

Me - *"No, no, definitely not her! I'll call you back"*

And I never did – and you're not surprised are you?

Problem is, is that I've been going to this same salon since I returned from London six years ago. I guess you could have called me a very satisfied customer. And, now after that little experience you could call me a very dissatisfied EX customer!

And, do you know what they should have done? (And I'm going to get on my high horse here). All they had to do was something that involved a piece of paper, some writing on it, a letter and a stamp. It's called COMMUNICATION and funnily enough, it works wonders for your customers!

All this salon had to do was write me a little letter telling me that Al was leaving and giving me Al's suggestion for another stylist. This would have kept me informed, made me feel an important part of their business and kept me coming back. Clearly a little bit of communication was beyond them, clearly they felt that when I chose to call them to utilize their services that an abrupt reply via young receptionist was enough to keep me satisfied – how wrong they were. Humpfh!

So, I've dumped my old salon and I've gone with a new one. I love them. My new hairdresser is very cool. She cuts my hair just lovely and the chocolates she gives me are much better than theirs anyway!

So, what I want to know this month is – how are you at keeping your customers informed? Many of your customers will feel that they are an important part of your business and that they deserve to be kept in the loop no matter how small the changes are that you make.

Basically, if any changes you make within your business affect your customers then please, pleeeeeeaaasseeee inform them. It is often an overlooked form of marketing and communication but not only will your customers be happy that you took the time to let them know, you will also make them feel important and valued.

This does of course also include bad news. Don't just feed them the good stuff and think you're doing them a favour. If your prices are going up and this directly affects your customers, you better be telling them so!

Of course, if you are struggling with communicating effectively and efficiently you could always ask me to help. I am well versed at imparting all sorts of news on customers and could save you lots of time and money! Contact me today if you want to chat, my details are below.

Till next time.

I keep your details strictly private a confidential and do not pass them on to any third party, stag party, birthday party or any party!

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