



The Seven Rules of Service Leadership

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This article is an exclusive excerpt from Ron's upcoming book:

[Uplifting Service - The Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues & Everyone Else You Meet.](#)

In my experience working with leaders of many of the world's outstanding service organizations, I've discovered seven essential rules these leaders always follow. Some leverage the power of one rule more than another, and you may do the same. But, each of these rules are essential to lead your team to success.

Rule #1: Declare Service a Top Priority

Declaring service a top priority means senior leaders understand that focusing on service improvement leads to commercial results. Profit is the applause you get for serving your customers well.

You can declare service a top priority by putting it first on the agenda. You can declare service as a top priority to your customers and your colleagues, in your speaking, writing, meetings, advertising, websites, newsletters, blog posts, video clips, workshops, and in your daily actions.

Rule #2: Be a Great Role Model

Leaders are the people who others choose to follow, not those who simply tell other people what to do. By their own example, leaders inspire others to want to do what they do, too.

Your team members notice every consistency and every contradiction. You can't ask your team to respond quickly to customers if your own meetings never start on time. You can't ask for great organization and housekeeping if your own office is a mess. You can't ask your

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people to be polite and gracious if you swear with impunity behind closed doors. You can't ask your team to provide uplifting service if you don't serve them with passion as an uplifting service leader.

Rule #3: Promote a Common Service Language

Everyone talks about better service from a perspective that makes perfect sense to them. What's missing is a common language to enable listening and understanding; clear distinctions to appreciate what other people want and value. To build a culture of uplifting service throughout an organization, leaders must promote a *common service language* everyone can apply.

Asking your team to upgrade service without enabling language is unwise and insufficient. Giving them a common service language but not using it yourself would be foolish. If you want everyone on your team to deliver uplifting service, you must speak fluently and frequently about it. "Walking the talk" and "talking the talk" go hand in hand together.

Rule #4: Measure What Really Matters

Many people get confused when it comes to measuring service. This is understandable, because you can measure so many things. A service leader cuts through this confusion to measure what really matters.

Too many executives closely follow the ultimate objectives and wonder how to get better results. Uplifting service leaders are closer to the action; they know the bulls-eye to hit and the needle to move are where their people are working with customers and colleagues each day. They measure what really matters from the bottom up: new learning about service, new ideas to serve other people better, new actions to create greater value.

Rule #5: Empower Your Team



Empowerment is a buzzword in business, and many leaders and employees seem to fear it. What they really fear is someone who is empowered making a bad decision. If a leader is not confident in her people, she doesn't want to empower them with authority or budget. If an employee is not confident in his abilities and decisions, he often does not want the responsibility of being empowered.

In both cases, what's missing is not empowerment, but the coaching, mentoring, and encouraging that must go with it. If you knew your people would make good decisions, you would be glad to give them the authority to do so. And if they are confident that they will make good decisions, they will be eager to have this freedom. Empowering others cannot and should not be decoupled from the responsibility to properly enable those you empower.

Rule #6: Remove the Roadblocks to Better Service

Most frontline staff members are taught to follow policies and procedures. Often they are hesitant to "break the rules." Yet some rules should be broken, changed, or at least seriously bent from time to time.

What roadblocks to better service lurk inside your organization? What gets in your people's way? What slows them down? What prevents them from taking better care of your customers? What stops them from helping their colleagues? Service leaders ask these questions and remove the roadblocks they uncover.

Rule #7: Sustain Focus and Enthusiasm

It's not difficult to declare service as a top priority, what's challenging is keeping service top of mind when other issues clamor for attention.

Sustaining focus and enthusiasm for service is vital when building an uplifting service culture, and the world leaders seize every opportunity. Sustaining focus and enthusiasm is



critical—in business, in life, and in service. This is not something leaders should view as a softer-rule, or one that can be delegated to others.

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