

THE SIMPLE TRUTHS OF SERVICE

INSPIRED BY
JOHNNY THE BAGGER



KEN BLANCHARD
AND **BARBARA A. GLANZ**

simple  truths[®]
small books. BIG IMPACT.

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INTRODUCTION

By Ken Blanchard

Years ago you could abuse customers and they had no choice. There was nobody else doing your business. Today, things are very different. If you don't take care of your customers, somebody is waiting, ready and willing to do it.

Today, your competitive advantage is not the quality of your product or service. If you don't have a high quality product or service, you're not even in the game. Your competitive edge today cannot be your price, because someone can always undercut your price. What you need is a fair price. The real competitive edge you have today is how you treat your customers. The one thing your competition can't take away from you is the relationship your people have with your customers.

That's why I fell in love with Barbara Glanz's story of

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Johnny the Bagger. With her blessing, I've shared the story of Johnny the Bagger over and over again, everywhere I go, to illustrate that every person can make a difference for their customers.

Let me give you an example of the impact this story has had. Our training and consulting company was asked to develop a customer service training program for all the frontline employees involved in the opening of the new San Diego Padres stadium, Petco Park. Since the building of the park had been a controversial proposition, the top managers wanted the fans to have a very special experience in the new park. As we helped them set the customer service vision for the park, they decided they were in the Major League memory business. Every night, every employee—whether in food service, maintenance, security, or what have you—was expected to focus their energy on creating good fan memories.

As part of the training, I made a short video, telling the story of Johnny. I ended the video looking into the camera and saying directly to every park employee, "*Are you going to be a Johnny tonight?*" This video was

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shown to everyone, no matter whether they were part-time or full-time.

A number of the department managers told me that every night before the gates opened, they would ask their people, "Are you going to be a Johnny tonight?" The first summer Petco Park was in business, they got 7,500 unsolicited notes and letters from fans telling stories of how they had been blown away by the service they had received from someone in the park.

For example, a customer ordered two fish tacos at one of the concession stands. When he got back to his seat, he took a bite and discovered they had given him chicken tacos. Since he was yearning for fish tacos, he returned to the concession stand to exchange them. When he told the counter person what had happened, the young man's initial response was, "Let me talk to my supervisor." A more experienced worker next to him heard the conversation and said, "You don't have to ask the supervisor. This man did not get what he wanted, so give him two fish tacos. We work for him."

Another sports fan brought her baby to the game

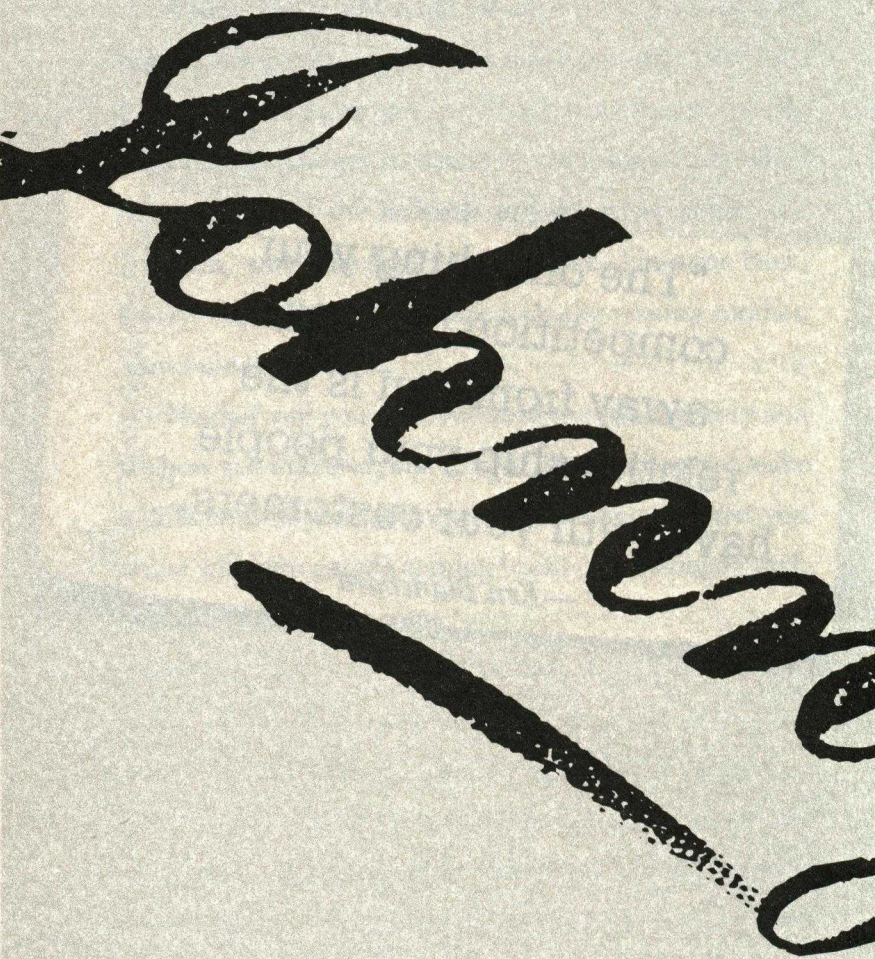
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one night and ran out of milk. She went to one of the concession stands and asked for some milk. A young man behind the counter said, “We don’t sell milk here, but I know where I can get it. What’s your seat number?” This young man got someone to cover his station while he raced out of the ballpark and down the street to a 7-Eleven, where he bought some milk. He came back, heated the milk up, and took it to the waiting mother. She couldn’t believe it.

Neither will you after you read the Johnny story and see how you and everyone in your organization can make a difference in your customers’ lives. The memories you create will keep people coming back—and bringing their friends—for years to come.

“The one thing your
competition can't take
away from you is the
relationship your people
have with your customers.”

—*Ken Blanchard*



JOHNNY THE BAGGER®

By Barbara Glanz

As an author and professional speaker, I travel all over the world and speak to groups about one of my favorite topics: building customer loyalty. A few years ago I was leading a customer service session for a large supermarket chain, where I had the opportunity to speak to a crowd of three thousand frontline service people—truck drivers, cashiers, baggers, produce people, stockers, floral specialists, bakers, and others.

During the course of my presentation, I said, “Every one of you can make a difference and create meaningful memories for your customers that will motivate them to come back. How?”

Put your **personal signature** on the job.



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“Go home tonight and think about something you can do for your customers to make them feel special—a memory that will make them want to come back and shop at your store again.”

I then directed the audience’s attention to one of my personal signatures: the nearly one hundred bright-colored, handmade posters lining the walls, printed with all kinds of quotations.

Whether I’m speaking to thirty or three thousand people, I always line the walls of the room or ballroom with these posters, because they change the feeling in the room by adding color, inspiration, and fun. They take a lot of extra time to put up, and they’re bulky to lug around the country. But they make me stand out as a speaker and provide a wonderful memory for audiences, so they are well worth the extra effort.

There are lots of ways you can give your own personal signature to your work. For example, I know a baggage attendant who decided his personal signature would be to collect all the luggage tags that fell off customers’ suitcases. In the past, the tags had been simply tossed into the garbage.

The attendant decided that in his free time he would send the tags back to their owners with a note that read,

“Thank you for flying with us.”

I met a graphic artist who always encloses a piece of sugarless gum in everything he sends his customers, so they never throw away anything from him. I heard of a senior manager who uses stickers and tissues as his personal signature. When the news is something he knows they won't like very much, he staples a piece of Kleenex to the corner of the memo.

But whenever he sends a memo
with good news, he attaches a
smiley face sticker. 😊

I always leave my telephone number and email address with audiences, encouraging them to call me if they have questions or want to share a success story they

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experience by adding a personal signature to their work. About a month after I had spoken to the supermarket folks, I received a call from a frontline customer contact person, a nineteen-year-old bagger named Johnny.

The caller, who proudly informed me that he was a young man with Down syndrome, *told me his story.*

“Barbara, I liked what you talked about!”

Johnny said excitedly.

“But I didn’t think I could do anything special for our customers.

After all, I’m just a bagger.

Then I had an idea.”

