



**Are you living the  
life of a Customer  
Servant?**

**WAV GROUP**

Marilyn Wilson  
Founding Partner

August 20, 2014

[www.WAVGroup.com](http://www.WAVGroup.com)

## Are you living the life of a Customer Servant?

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Are you living the life of a Customer Servant?

## **Are you living the life of a Customer Servant?**

We all know that our businesses are dependent on our customers, yet we don't always live the dream of providing amazing customer service.

It's easy when you get tired to say "I'll get up early and do it tomorrow". When the phone rings and we don't answer it we might justify it by saying I need to focus on this CMA I am building. Or worse yet, the phone might ring and we ignore it because we're talking to one of our friends or having a cup of coffee.

While we're all human and we have our moments of weakness, customer service is fundamental to what we provide in the real estate industry. After all that is what we're really selling at the end of the day – Expertise, Local Knowledge and Service. At the end of a day if a client doesn't feel like you care about them, you're not going to get very far. Certainly you won't be able to create a lifetime experience with them.

I would like all of us to ask ourselves a fundamental question through a little exercise I have created. Do you truly have the heart of a servant? Do you LOVE to help your clients achieve their goals? Do you get up in the morning thinking about how you can delight one or more of your customers today?

As a brokerage do you inspire your teams to live the life of a servant to their clients? As an MLS do you encourage and incentivize every one in the company to do whatever it takes to help your subscribers be successful, addressing their needs quickly and completely? Do you proactively provide them tools, training and service that will go above and beyond what your members would even ask you for? Do you celebrate service excellence regularly? Do you review areas of customer dissatisfaction and proactively train on ways to eliminate it for the future? Do you have processes in place to objectively measure Customer Service Satisfaction?

We just spent a week at the Omni Hotel in Rancho Mirage. They were living the dream of amazing customer service. Every one on their staff was plugged into our needs. It was like they almost knew what we were thinking before we did! We asked one of their staff about it and she showed us a card that every employee carries with them outlining their key goals for delighting customers. Every week

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they review one of their tenets, and then review the customer satisfaction scores for the week. They brainstorm ways to provide even more amazing service. They LIVE it!

I would like to invite you to go through the exercise I have attached to help you reflect on where you are strongest and to help you identify your areas of weakness that you need to focus on.

The first question to answer for yourself....Do you belong in a role that requires you to provide excellent customer service all day, every day? Some people are better in a role that are not directly customer-facing. They may have some internal customers, but as long as they complete their tasks on time, they can get by. In an industry as high profile as real estate, there is no place to hide. Either you provide amazing service or you don't survive. What do most top producers have in common? They have a great attitude surrounded by amazing people and processes that do whatever it takes to make their customers happy.

If you don't feel a passion to serve the needs of your clients then you may be in the wrong position – whether it's selling real estate, managing an office, leading an MLS organization or even serving on the board of directors or a committee of an Association. If you're constantly thinking "What's in it for me" and not focused on what your paying customers or fellow REALTORS® need from you, then you may need to re-think your career choices or volunteer involvement.

I believe that most of us in real estate do have a passion, but sometimes we lose our way. Sometimes we take on a client simply because we have to pay the bills. We may avoid a client that is a little more high maintenance than we would like them to be. Other times we may simply lose our discipline and focus and get distracted. Whatever the case is I believe we can all be amazing client servants, but we need to constantly evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. I have developed a matrix for evaluating your strengths and weaknesses. This exercise can be used to evaluate your individual focus on customer service and it can be used for a group to evaluate an organization's commitment to customer service excellence.

Let me explain each tenet of the exercise.

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## **Put the Needs of my Clients Above my Own**

In this section, you are evaluating your commitment to your client's Needs. In order to give yourself a high score for this this you will Need to genuinely and passionately believe that you love to go above and beyond to solve the needs of your customers even when it's not convenient or comfortable.

## **Open-Minded; Willing to Try new Things**

This one is asking you to evaluate how much you truly embrace new ways to do your job better. Are you truly willing to get out of your comfort zone and try a new approach to serve the needs of your clients better? Do you embrace new customer-facing technologies brought to you by your brokerage or MLS organization?

Does your organization's culture support innovation and new ideas or does it systematically and passive/aggressively kill them off before they start? Do you inspire and incentivize your staff to try new things and forgive them if they make a few mistakes along the way?

## **Resourceful; Know how to get things done!**

We all know that the best REALTORS® and best leaders don't let adversity stop them. They always figure it out somehow!

Do you know how to bend a few rules or network with the right people to get it done no matter what? Can you get creative when you hit a wall and find a way to solve your customer's challenges using some creative thinking?

## **Responsive; Get back to my clients immediately**

This one is a BIGGEE. In every bit of research that we do with consumers, we ALWAYS here that the biggest weakness of our industry is responsiveness. Homebuyers and sellers reach out to us and we don't pick up the phone; we don't answer their question quickly or completely enough; bottom-line, some clients think that we don't care about them.

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How committed are you to picking up the phone live every time? How quickly do you answer emails and texts? Do you have processes in place to send you alerts when someone has reached out to you via your website, phone or facebook?

### **Proactive; Always looking for ways to serve my clients better**

It's easy to get comfortable with the way we do business every day. We fall into a daily routine – some of which is very productive and some of which we all know is a waste of time, yet we do it anyway.

How much time do you spend thinking about better ways to serve the needs of your clients? How many times do you ask them how they're feeling about the service you're providing? What tangible changes or new approaches can you point to that you have tried in the past month or so?

### **Brave; Willing to go against the grain and try new things**

This is one of the hardest ones to live up to. It can be very scary to be the first one to try something new. You can be subject to ridicule or even dismissal. Think about some of our most amazing genius minds throughout history. Most of them were not appreciated by their own generation. Are there things that you believe should change in real estate? Are there better ways to serve clients that nobody has tried before. Is there a better model for service that you could adopt as a broker? How much do you truly believe that you are willing to take a risk and follow your gut?

### **Smart; Know how to maximize the effectiveness of my time and energy**

This evaluation is all about time management. Have you looked to work smarter, not harder? Have you learned how to leverage technology to simplify the process of closing a transaction, for example? Have you found resources to off-load the less profitable portions of your business or hired someone to do all of the types of

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work that you know that you are not good at?

## **Prepared; Take training and learn about new things regularly**

To quote Stephen Covey, one of the “7 habits of highly successful people” is to “sharpen the saw” regularly. In other words, successful people take the time to continue to learn and grow. They read books, they take training classes, they attend webinars. They do what it takes to continue to expand their perspective.

This section asks you to be honest with yourself about how willing you are to take the time to continue to grow. How many classes have you taken in the last month or so? How many articles have you read? How many webinars have you attended? How much time have you taken away from day to day activities to invest in yourself and your career?

## **Professional;**

This concept is not referring to professional standards as we normally define them although following the code of ethics is certainly one tangible way to demonstrate professionalism. This idea goes well beyond that, though. How professionally and appropriately do you dress when you are working? If you're driving clients in your car, is it clean and tidy? Do you keep your mood in check when you're in the office and not your daily stresses become the issues of everyone that works for you? Do you take the time to complete transaction documents accurately, checking typing, grammar and the accuracy of the information?

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## Disciplined/Regimented

This last evaluation makes everyone of the other tenets outlined above work. Do you have the inner fortitude and discipline to stick to your goals and priorities every day? Do you create healthy and productive habits and stick with things even when they're hard or do you fall into old habits easily? Have you evaluated what makes you lose your discipline? Are you focused on taking care of yourself getting enough sleep, exercising and eating healthy foods?

With these guides in mind, go through the following spreadsheet and give yourself a 1 to 5 for every element outlined.

If your score is between 40 and 80, you probably need to do some serious thinking about whether you want to be a service professional or not. If your score is between 81 and 120 you may have what it takes to be a strong customer servant, but may need more training or focus to do what it takes to be successful. If you're between 121 and 160 you may be doing the right thing but continue to focus on smoothing out the rough edges in your service process. If you gave yourself lots of 5's and your score was 161 to 200, one of two things is happening. Either you truly are doing amazing things and your clients likely completely LOVE you or you are fooling yourself. You believe you are providing amazing customer service, but the truth is you haven't truly reflected on your strengths and weaknesses. Only you can answer that question.

My goal? To help every one of you along with myself continue to become a better customer servant. There are tons of trainers and coaches out there that can help you create become a better service professional and help you re-ignite your passion on those days when you really need it – you know the days that I mean – we all have them. We just have to get back on the horse and try again. There are tons of trainers and coaches out there. Here's a [list](#) of few of them from our partners at RE Technology.com to get you started.



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## **About WAV Group**

WAV Group is the leader in providing research and thought leadership to the MLS industry seeking to create a wave of positive change with every subject that it tackles. The firm is comprised of corporate executives with a depth of expertise in the real estate industry proven to catalyze new approaches leading to more customer-centricity and business success.

For more information or to register to receive report releases and newsletters please contact Victor Lund at 805-473-9119 or [Victor@WAVgroup.com](mailto:Victor@WAVgroup.com)

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