

Progressions Inc.

Sales Training & Consulting



V.I.P. Service or Not?

My mother is 93 and lives in an Assisted Living home.

Taking her shopping is very difficult so I recently ordered her about 12 items from Christopher Banks online. The package came with multiple vests and Christmas tops and Mom felt thrilled to be able to try them on comfortably in her home and decide which items she wanted to keep. She wanted all but three and was thrilled. I was too!

Our local Christopher Banks store has a simply delightful manager. She runs her store like a pro. Each customer that comes in feels like a V.I.P.. She and I have developed a friendship and I sometimes stop by just to say hello! The evening I made the return she wasn't there. Only 2 employees were working. When I approached I smiled and said that I had an online return. The look on the representative's face was enough to send anyone running.

"Oh darn she said, we have to call all those in and check every item, our system has changed" she scowled at me.

"I'm sorry" I said and proceeded to try and lighten things up by telling her how much my mother enjoyed most all of the items. "Well I'll have to call" she said grabbing the box and turned her back to me. So I stood at the counter hearing her conversation and feeling a bit like a convict.

"Just how did she pay for this?" she asked. At this point in the store, another customer was waiting behind me also wanting to make a return and the other store representative was hanging up clothes. This customer asked if the other store representative could help her and was told she had to wait.

From my trained eye I couldn't for a minute understand why hanging clothes trumped customer service?

I felt even worse now making this woman behind me wait. She was clearly impatient with my lengthy order. At this



Lynn Giuliani · Progressions, Inc.
P.O. Box 28172 · Bellingham, WA 98228
www.progressionsinc.net · (360) 733-6557

point I spoke up and said “let me tell you how I paid for it...I know!” The woman helping me finally came back and began complaining about their changes in the company’s system. She did thank me for waiting but I did not feel any warmth. She was choked and I felt it. My transaction finally concluded and the woman behind me was helped.

The other representative never stopped hanging those oh so important clothes!

What is the learning here? Oh my...

The company’s computer changes should never impose on the customer! This should be transparent to any customer service experience. I felt punished for shopping there and at one point questioned myself if I would do so again. Regardless of what goes on behind the scenes cheerful, courteous service is paramount. Smile, greet the customer with sincerity and appreciation. They are the reason you have a job!

Side work such as clothes hanging (or other office work) should never take priority over the customer. Especially if the customer can see you!

While this is a clothing store all these behaviors, including the manager’s outstanding service can be related to your business too. I hope you make the comparisons and make sure your customer’s experience is always like a V.I.P.

Lynn Giuliani



Lynn Giuliani · Progressions, Inc.
P.O. Box 28172 · Bellingham, WA 98228
www.progressionsinc.net · (360) 733-6557