

People buy people first.

The Authority on Approachability shares principles and practices for frontline success!

Inside you will learn...

- Making the mundane memorable
- Phrases That Payses
- Unforgettable first impressions
- What customers (don't) want to hear

...and more!

Scott Ginsberg is the only person in the world who wears a nametag 24-7 to make people friendlier. He is the author of seven books, a professional speaker and an entrepreneur who teaches businesspeople about approachability.

Scott lives in St. Louis where he often talks to strangers.

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Scott Ginsberg

The Approachable Frontline

AS SEEN ON


NametagTV.com



17 Daily Practices for Delivering Unforgettable Service

by Scott Ginsberg
That Guy with the Nametag

People
buy
people
first

If you work on the frontline, you **ARE** the company!

As such, it's important to
remember a few things:

1. People buy people first.
2. People like to do business with their friends.
3. People don't trust companies; they trust people.
4. People aren't loyal to companies, they're loyal to people.
5. People only do business with you for three reasons: they've heard you, they've heard OF you, or someone they TRUST has heard of you.
6. The more we meet and interact with people, the more likely we are to become friends with them.
7. People either check you on or check you off.
8. Lead with your person; follow with your profession. Values before vocation. Individuality before industry. Humanity before statistics. Personality before position.
9. AND REMEMBER: if they like you as a person, they MIGHT hire you. But if they don't like you as a person, they DEFINITELY won't buy from you.
10. Friendly always wins.

**This book is
NOT about
“customer
service.”**

**This book
is about
approachable
service.**

The Approachable Frontline

17 Daily Practices for Delivering
Unforgettable Service

by Scott Ginsberg
(That Guy with the Nametag)

We all work in the **people business.**

It doesn't matter
what you sell.

It doesn't matter
what you create.

It doesn't matter
what your job
title says.

It doesn't matter
what service you
provide.

You work in the People Business.

The Approachable Frontline

Scott Ginsberg

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Why approachability?

Because it puts customers at ease.

Because it encourages engaging communication.

Because it uncovers problems and delivers solutions.

Because it gives customers a reason to come back again and again.

And, because it achieves the most important goal of every interaction: comfort.

That's why approachability is essential for frontline success.

Now, how do I know this?

Well, let's take it from the top...

My name is Scott Ginsberg.

Since November 2, 2000, I've spent every waking hour of my life practicing approachability.

See, I wear a nametag 24-7.

Yes, 24-7.

It all started out as an experiment. Just to see how people would react.

But over time, it evolved into somewhat of a phenomenon.

And over (more) time, it evolved into a career!

I now run a company called HELLO, my name is Scott! My books, training materials, consulting programs, speaking events and online learning tools teach businesspeople around the world about approachability. My work has been recognized in *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Cosmopolitan* and *20/20*, to name a few.

And all this from wearing a nametag!

Since 2003, I've had the opportunity to work with a variety of clients in the hospitality and service industries. I've trained thousands of service representatives across the country – from hotels to Convention/Visitors Bureaus to landscaping organizations.

And in my experience, here's what I've learned:

**Approachability is the essential philosophy
that fuels frontline success.**

Of course, it's not just about the philosophy.

It's about the words. The actions. The re-actions.

And that's exactly what you're going to learn in this book: practical ideas you can use tomorrow.

Not a seven-step process.

Not a bunch of vague platitudes.

Not a saccharine collection of touching stories.

Just the meat. The nuts and bolts. Killer ideas. Solid suggestions. Tried and true tips guaranteed to boost your (and your company's) approachability.

So, if that's cool with you, turn the page and let's begin!

Scott Ginsberg: August, '07

**Oh, and while you're
studying this book,
don't forget to tune in to...**



NametagTV was founded on (and is driven by) the principle of approachability.

Stick yourself out there; get them to come to you.

HELLO, my name is Scott & NametagTV give you practical advice so you can make a name for yourself – one conversation at a time!

- **NametagTV teaches approaches that get noticed, get remembered and get business.**
- **NametagTV delivers concise, engaging and educational video modules you can watch, download and share.**
- **NametagTV promises information, tips, techniques and ideas you can put to use TODAY!**

Log on to www.nametagTV.com NOW and transform The Approachable Frontline into a multimedia learning experience!



Make the mundane memorable.

Wearing a nametag 24/7/365 for eight years represents a simple, yet powerful business idea:

Make **the mundane memorable.**

I'm still surprised that more organizations don't embrace this. *It's not our corporate policy. It violates our company's handbook. We don't want to do anything risky.*

Come on. That's garbage!

Businesses NEED to be doing this stuff. Because when companies can find ways to make the mundane memorable, five things happen:

1. Customers start talking.
2. Employees have more fun.
3. The brand lives and breathes in a new way.
4. Uniqueness shines through.
5. Customer loyalty insistence increases.

QuikTrip is the perfect example of this. I fill up at QuikTrip whenever possible (ahem, loyalty), just to hear the cashier say, "Hurry back!"

That's what they say. In every transaction.

Not, "Have a nice day."

Not, "Thank you, come again."

They say, "Hurry back."

And people do.

Mundane into **memorable**.

Or Bishop's Barbershop in Portland, where you can get a great haircut for roughly the same price as anywhere else. Except at Bishop's, the minute you walk through the door for your appointment, the receptionist gives you a free bottle of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

That's just cool. I don't even drink, but I used to go there when I lived in Portland, just to get the beer!

Mundane into **memorable**.

Then there's my favorite ad agency, The Hughes Group. When you walk into their elevator, you'll notice twenty-one buttons, just like any other elevator. Except theirs doesn't say "4," it says "Hughes." And you better believe every client, potential client, or guest comments about it. Then they tell five other people about it. Awesome.

Mundane into **memorable**.

Or what about the parking garage down the street from my office? Every time I go there for a meeting, the guy in the little ticket box takes my slip and says, "That'll be \$4000!" I go back there every month, just to hear him say it. A parking garage! It doesn't get more mundane than that!

Mundane into **memorable**.



LET ME ASK YA THIS...

When was the last time someone made the mundane memorable for you?



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

Picture your typical day. Interactions with customers, prospects, and coworkers. Now think specifically about five mundane moments. List three ways each of those moments could become more memorable below.

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

Greetings
are gold
because
comfort
is king

2

First words **MAKE** (or break) first impressions.

“Checking in...?”
“Next!”
“Here or To-Go?”

Isn't it frustrating when those are the first words that come out of a frontline employee's mouth? As if they didn't want to take the time, or couldn't care less about offering a friendly, approachable greeting to the customer. Meanwhile, the next guy waiting in line thinks to himself, “Gee, thanks for the warm welcome. Nice first impression.”

SAD BUT TRUE FACT: The first impression window is narrowing.

I've been thinking a lot about this social trend since I was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* on the topic. The reporter and I discussed this “window,” and I mentioned my research on hundreds of books on first impressions.

MY THEORY: As years go by, you seem to have less and less time to make a first impression.

Consider these numbers:

- In the 80's and 90's, neuro-linguistic programming authors like Nicholas Boothman claimed you only had 90 seconds to make a first impression
- By the time the new millennium hit, you only had four seconds, according to hundreds of articles
- In 2005, Malcom Gladwell's bestselling book *Blink* explained that people made first impressions in TWO seconds
- This year, an article from The BBC quoted a study which explained that Internet surfers form an impression "in one 20th of a second of viewing a webpage"

It kind of makes you wonder: as technology accelerates and as time goes on, will people eventually have ZERO seconds to make a first impression?

Ok, just kidding.

But - think back to the guy waiting in line at the counter: if employees only have a few seconds to make a first impression anyway, why would the first words out of their mouths be so unfriendly?

I used to work at the Ritz Carlton. We were trained to eliminate the word "Hello" from our vocabulary. It was always "Good morning!" or "Welcome in!"

What ever happened to phraseology like that? Have we become so rushed, so programmed, so

unfriendly, so unapproachable and so robotic that we can't sincerely take the time to offer a customer a warm welcome?

Nevertheless, the following list of substitute phrases will make the first words out of your mouth UNFORGETTABLE.

Instead of "Next," try:

"Step right up!"
"Don't be shy!"
"Come on down!"
(that one's for you, Bob Barker)

Instead of "Checking in?" try:

"You finally made it!"
"Welcome to paradise!"
"Everyone's been waiting for you!"

Now, if you have a standard protocol for greetings, that's understandable. You don't want to upset your boss. On the other hand, if you say, "Step right up," and your customer starts laughing before he even begins the transaction, I seriously doubt your boss will say, "Johnson! Stick with the script!"

The Approachable Frontline

Look, these phrases work. I've used them thousands of times in my retail, food, and guest service experience, and customers love them. They're funny. They're memorable. Most of all, they're different. And that's the whole point: not only to give your customers a brief encounter or experience that's both friendly AND memorable; but also to communicate in a way so others can't help but pay attention to and remember you.

After all, if you only have two seconds anyway, you may as well have a little fun!



LET ME ASK YA THIS...

What's the best welcome/opener you've ever heard?

3

Avoid the first word farce.

I pushed my shopping cart up to the counter.

"Good morning!" I said to the cashier.

I awaited my greeting.

And the first words out of her mouth were:

"Zip code please."

Yes. That was her actual greeting.

Not "Hello."

Not "How are ya?"

Not "Welcome to Office Depot!"

Zip code please.

Gee, thanks for the friendly greeting, I thought.

WARNING: This indicator of unapproachable service
is called The First Word Farce.

And here's why it's so crucial: *According to an
article from The Wall Street Journal in February of
2006, you only have a few seconds to make an
UNFORGETTABLE first impression.*

A few seconds!

LESSON LEARNED: Greetings are GOLD
because comfort is KING.

The Approachable Frontline

Which extreme of the unforgettable spectrum will you project?

Unfortunately, too many frontline employees go the wrong way.

That is, they greet the customer according protocol. What THEY have to say, as opposed to what THE CUSTOMER wants to hear:

Examples include:

Next in line!

Paper or plastic?

Last name please!

***Phone number with
area code first...***

You get the point.

A similar example that comes to mind is the local sandwich shop by my office.

When customers step up to the front counter, the first words out of the cashiers' mouths are, "For here, or to go?"

They will even interrupt YOUR friendly greeting, just because they HAVE to ask that question first!

OK, so here's the deal. If you're a receptionist, cashier or any other frontline employees AND want to avoid *The First Word Farce*, consider three ideas:

1. Brainstorm.

Sit down (or have line-up) with your entire frontline team. Challenge each employee to come up with three brand new, brand consistent greetings. Then, vote on which greetings you like best, and try them out for a week.

2. Field Research.

Now that you understand *The First Word Farce*, the next step is to keep your eyes & ears open. Pay close attention to the first words used by other frontline employees when you're the customer. Make note of how they made you feel. Ask yourself, "Would I want MY customers to be greeted that way?"

3. Think big picture.

Whatever greeting you decide upon, just remember one thing: make it customer oriented.

Even if you're in a rush. Even if you need some information from a customer to begin the transaction. There's always time. AND, there's *always* room, too.



WATCH THIS...

Don't let your frontline fall victim to the First Word Farce.

Tune in to NametagTV.com and boost your approachability today!

The First Impression Fizzles

Are first impressions the most critical part of Approachable Service?

Maybe.

YES, it's true that first impressions are usually correct.

YES, it's true that first impressions are based on instinct and emotion.

YES, it's true that first impressions your customers form about you will probably stay in their minds forever.

YES, it's true that humans put pressure on themselves to behave consistently with their own existing commitments.

YES, the information people see or learn about you is more powerful than what is learned later.

However,

If you google "first impressions," 1,930,000 pages come up. If you google "ongoing impressions," 317 pages come up. If you google "lasting impressions," 630,000 pages come up.

What does that say about our service culture?

LESSON LEARNED: Don't solely focus your service efforts on MAKING first impressions, but also, on MAINTAINING those impressions.

Because if the first few seconds are all that matters, your frontline may fall victim to **The First Impression Fizzle**.

EXAMPLE 1: Have you ever walked into a store or hotel that made a GREAT first impression in the lobby ... and then, sort of gave up after that?

EXAMPLE 2: Have you ever attended a club, association meeting or church service whose greeters extended a warm welcome when you walked in the door ... and then never talked to you again?

EXAMPLE 3: Have you ever eaten dinner at a restaurant in which your server was friendly, helpful and warm ... and then, once the food came, sort of forgot about your table for the rest of the night?

That's The First Impression Fizzle.

And if you want avoid it, remember these ABC's...

ATTITUDE. Don't (just) focus on the first. Remember, The Touchpoint Trinity includes your FIRST, ONGOING and LASTING impressions. None are more important than the others.

The Approachable Frontline

BRAINSTORM. List all the possible Daily Touch points within each category of your Touchpoint Trinity. Examples might include “greeting,” “order taking” and “handling complaints.” Then, for each of the components, think of two new ways to make the mundane memorable. Remember to keep your approaches positive, friendly, fun, unexpected, and most importantly, unique.

CATCH. People doing it right, that is. Any time you see one of your frontline employees reinforcing the customer’s first impression throughout the ENTIRE service process, reward them. Consider making Touchpoint Trinity stickers, stars or slips. Hand them out throughout the day. At the end of the week, reward whichever employee has the most.

MOST IMPORTANTLY: Practice these keys with consistency.

*Because consistency is far better than
rare moments of greatness.*

And if you do, your frontline employees will be certain to avoid The First Impression Fizzle.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

Think about the last time YOU experienced the First Impression Fizzle. Make a list of three ways you would have handled the customer differently.

5

Smile and they will see you.

I used speak and write about smiling.

Then I realized how overdone the subject was.

So I took it out.

Not that smiling wasn't important. After all, it's the #1 symbol of approachability in the world!

But I figured that most people were tired of hearing another author, speaker or manager talk about "the value of a smile."

Smile, you're on stage!

Smile when you answer the phone!

Smile for three seconds when you enter a room!

OK. We get it! Smiling is important. Thanks.

...But the other day I had a thought. I was bumming around New Haven, waiting for my cab to pick me up. To kill time, I walked into this cool looking coffee shop on Orange Avenue. Electronic Indian music blasted from the speakers. A few customers milled about, but for the most part the place was empty.

I approached the counter. Saw the barista across the room, working on his laptop.

He didn't see me.

So, I thought for a second, "What would most customers say in this situation?"

"Um, excuse me...could I get some service?"

"Doesn't anybody work here?"

"Hell-oooo?"

Of course, I didn't say any such thing. That's not how I roll. I like to think I have a little more patience than that!

So, I just smiled.

That's it.

No words. No flailing arms. Just a big fat, friendly grin. Directed right at the Barista.

Sure enough, he looked up from his laptop.

Sure enough, he offered a friendly smile right back at me. And sure enough, he walked over to my side of the counter and took my order.

*Because if you smile, they will see you.
It's just that easy.*

I've been practicing this technique (gosh, do I even have to call it a technique?) for a long time.

Anyway, it's called the Patient Smile. And no matter what side of the frontline you're on, here's how it works:

The Patient Smile

1. You smile and patiently wait.
2. Positive energy is sent to the other person.
3. They “sense” that someone is beckoning their attention.
(People can just TELL when you're smiling at them. It's weird, but it works.)
4. They look up to meet your gaze.
5. They smile back.
6. They approach you.
7. You offer better service.

**Smile and they
will see you.**

go from Greet to **GREAT!**

Are you a Master of the Welcome? **Hope so.**

Because the first words out of your mouth frame the entire customer experience.

CONSIDER THIS: *According to a 2007 report on www.hotelexecutive.com, your greeting influences the customer's perception more than any other act of engagement.*

That's how powerful your first words are.

With that in mind, let's explore three ways to master the welcome so you can go from GREET to **GREAT**.

Phone Greetings

Aaron Jaslow, editor of the networking/marketing publication RainToday, shares a great example. "A family friend once founded a company called Quack Quack Productions. Needless to say, he picked up the phone every day and said, 'Quack, Quack!' I would have paid money to work there and answer the phones like that."

Is your phone greeting that good?

So unique...

...that complete strangers would call just to hear it?

...that people would want to work there just to use it?

GO FROM GREET TO GREAT

Be unique and unforgettable in less than eight words.

Voicemail Greetings

So you miss a few calls. Big deal. You can still leverage your voicemail as an effective branding and service tool.

My friend Kenny Golde, filmmaker and owner of Fire Breathing Dragon, Inc., ends his voicemail greeting with, "And don't forget to tell me your favorite movie!"

Callers love it. What's more, they engage. Clients and prospects alike will go on for minutes. They share movie-related stories, favorites and preferences on a daily basis. What a great technique to get to know your callers!

Is your voicemail that good?

So good...

...that your callers don't want to hang up?

...that it helps you learn customer preferences?

GO FROM GREET TO GREAT

Rerecord your voicemail with a question.

Front Door Greetings

In the retail world, greetings are **GOLD**. As a former furniture salesman, I can attest to that!

Here's an exercise: think about your store. Make a list called "Top Ten Most Common Greetings Customers Expect to Hear."

Then make sure NOBODY uses any of them.

FACT: The most effective way to capture customers' attention is to break their patterns.

The store at which I used to sell furniture was nuts. City Liquidators had three floors of couches, coffee and craziness. So, I would approach customers as they walked in the door and say, "Welcome to the circus!"

And they loved it.

Is your greeting unexpected?

So unexpected...

...that customers stop in their tracks?

...that customers are instantly made comfortable?

GO FROM GREET TO GREAT

When you break a pattern, you make a sale
(and maybe even somebody's day!)

7

How To Become **THE GREATEST RECEPTIONIST EVER.**

1. Get descriptions of the people coming in for appointments. When you recognize them you can say, "Welcome in Mr. Jackson! Have a seat and Steve will be with you shortly."
2. Get business cards, nametags and nameplates with cool job titles. For example: "First Impressions Director," "Chief Hello Distributor" or "Greatest Receptionist Ever."
3. Brainstorm a list of the most common candies, snacks, and goodies that every receptionist in the world uses. (You know - the ones that every customer expects.) Then, go out and buy really delicious, unexpected candy that nobody else offers.
4. Have a "Trivia of the Day" for each guest. Challenge them to solve the answer by the time they go in for their appointment.
5. When a guest checks in, offer him a sticker while he waits. Not only will this be fun, it will spark conversations between other guests! Offer a choice of custom stickers like, "Next Victim," "I'm here for the free food" and "I came to meet Mark."

The Approachable Frontline

6. Instead of falling victim to *The First Word Farce*, (asking for name, information, number, etc.,) create an unexpected, unique greeting. Try something like, "Welcome to the best _____ in the world!"
7. Four words: warm chocolate chip cookies. (Thanks, Seth Godin!)
8. Make your reception desk into a DJ booth. Ask guests what their favorite song is. Set up a pager system. When someone's song comes up, say, "And this next tune is dedicate to our newest guest, Mr. Hansen! Here's 'Don't Stop Believing' by Journey..." (You laugh, but Shoe Carnival actually does stuff like this. It's great.)
9. Do what Australian Dentist Paddi Lund did: chain saw your reception desk in half and serve tea to your clients in bone china cups.
10. Bring your dog.
11. Bring an assortment of treats and bones for other people's dogs.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

Brainstorm twenty-five different greetings and using a new one every day for a month! Let the customers vote on which one they like best!

8

Just don't be (too) approachable.

"Welcome in, Mr. Kendrick! Can I get you anything, Mr. Kendrick? No? Well, just let me know, Mr. Kendrick. If there's anything you need, I am at your service. Have a good night, Mr. Kendrick!"

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Mr. Kendrick is probably ready to kill you by now!

Do you really have to say his name in EVERY sentence? No.

It *IS* possible to provide Overly Approachable Service.

I learned this firsthand working for The Ritz Carlton.

Frontline employees were brainwashed (er, I mean, "trained") to do this kind of stuff.

- Use the guests' names at every possible moment.
- Respond by saying "certainly" to all guest requests.
- Say "My pleasure!" even when you do so much as open the door.

Now, I don't mean to knock any of the service essentials of The Ritz Carlton. They're clearly the best in the hospitality industry...

but...

HERE'S THE BIG QUESTION: Where do front line employees draw the line?

ANSWER: It all depends. You have take ownership of every encounter. You have to read the guest and make the call for yourself based on what you think they want, not what you've been trained to say.

Here are three tips that will help you discover the happy medium and avoid Overly Approachable Service:

1. RELAX

Even during you highest volume hours, there's no need to be frantic. Calm is approachable. So whether you're reaching for the door, the phone, or walking towards a guest, SLOW DOWN.

When guests see a frontline employee straining and stretching to comply with their every desire, it can come off as intimidating. Especially at the front door. So don't be so quick to jump out and yell, "Hi folks! Welcome in!"

REMEMBER: Customers need time to breathe.

2. REDUCE

The number of times you use someone's name, that is. Customer service providers have taken this practice WAY too far. Which isn't to say using someone's name isn't valuable – **because it is.**

HERE'S THE THING: The moment your customer perceives you as trying too hard to be approachable is the moment you become unapproachable. Because it's just not authentic. And customers can smell the difference.

REMEMBER: Use someone's name at the beginning, the middle and the end. That should be enough.

3. READ

Odds are, you probably encounter dozens, maybe even HUNDREDS of customers every day.

This is good. That means you have an excellent frame of reference.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO: Make a list of the different categories of customers that come in. Regulars, first-timers, transients; or whatever your company calls them.

Then, brainstorm the level of service needed by each group. New customers, for example, absolutely need to hear their names a few times. While regulars and long time loyalists require a little less handholding.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS..

Read and react, and you'll be sure to avoid Overly Approachable Customer Service.

Tune in to the customer: **STOP, DROP, and ROLL!**

PICTURE THIS: You're one unhappy customer.

You just discovered something's wrong with your checking account. So, on your lunch break you leave work and head over to the bank to get some answers.

But.

When you walk into the lobby and approach the front desk, nobody seems to be available to assist you!

Now, it's not like nobody works there. Several employees DO mull about behind the counter.

But they're all busy!

And not with other customers -- busy with themselves.

Surfing the Net. Reading books or magazines. Jerking around with fellow employees. Talking to their friends on the cell phone. Gossiping with coworkers about the hot new office romance.

In other words, tuning you out.

BIG mistake.

**This is an act of unapproachable service
— and it's a CRIME.**

Sadly, it persists daily.

In offices, lobbies, front desks, call centers and waiting rooms around the world, customers are getting tuned out!

And they're not happy about it.

What's more, they're telling their friends about it. And it's doubtful those friends are rushing to do business with a company whose frontline staff isn't available to its customers.

SO, HERE'S THE SOLUTION: Remember when you were a kid and you learned fire safety?

Stop, drop and...? Roll, right? Stop, drop and roll. *Everybody remembers that.*

Well, when it comes to delivering approachable service, especially in those crucial moments of greeting the customer, that same three-step process applies:

S T O P .

Stop doing whatever you're doing. Hang up the phone. Pause your conversations. Put down the mouse. Cease any secondary activities the **MOMENT** you spot a customer who needs assistance.

D R O P .

Not to the floor. (You probably WILL get fired if you do that!) Instead, drop your attention. Focus your body and mind on to the customer at hand. Unless you're dealing with another customer or an existing emergency, *nothing* is more important at that moment than the guy who just walked in the door.

R O L L .

Again, please don't literally roll on the ground! But roll with the problem. Project understanding, patience and friendliness, and most importantly **availability**.

That's what approachable service is all about:

Showing the customer that you, as a frontline employee, are personally AND physically available to them.

If you remember to **STOP, DROP and ROLL**, even **YOU** will be able to put out the hottest of fires.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

For a list of ways to approach unhappy customers, e-mail scott@hellomynameisscott.com and write "I'm approachable!" in the subject line.

10

Disarm your customers' immediate concerns

(From CNN.com, 2006) Car shopping as entertainment has always been the draw at Planet Honda in Union, N.J., one of Honda's fastest-growing dealerships. A giant video wall shows footage of the latest models, and new-car buyers get a G-force ride on an 18-foot spaceship simulator.

The best part of the show? The "tech cafe," where the presence of salespeople is strictly verboten, and where a receptionist asks shoppers if they need help. If you respond the way most do—"Just looking, thanks"—you get a yellow smiley-face badge emblazoned with the letters "JL" to stick on your lapel, which alerts the sales guys to back off.

Not for long. Planet Honda owner Tim Ciasulli says JLs turn out to be his best customers, because the badge helps to lower their defenses. "The magic is when they peel it off after 15 minutes and they're ready to do business," Ciasulli says. The dealership sold 3,300 new cars last year, more than three times the average for independent dealerships.

HALLELUJAH!!!!!!

The Approachability Gods have shined down upon thee, oh mighty Planet Honda of Union, New Jersey!

The Approachable Frontline

It's reeeeeeally interesting how this works.

The customers don't care to be approached (yet). But just because they have the stickers on, doesn't mean they can't be approached at all or ever! They just need to be approached differently.

And what happens is, there's a sense of comfort on the end of the customer; since he doesn't have to worry about being bugged; yet the salesman can better read the customers he DOES need to approach in order to serve them better.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

What are the five best greetings you've ever heard?

List them here!

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

When you
**change
your
words**
you change
people's
minds



BE UNFORGETTABLE ON THE PHONE.

In 2006, a study of 2,300 British consumers conducted by Harris Interactive revealed the general public's frustration with poor phone service. According to their research, **65% of consumers withdrew their business due to poor service experiences. Wow.**

Well, it's 2007. How many customers are you going to lose from poor phone service this year?

Hopefully, zip.

But let's explore five keys to **UNFORGETTABLE** phone service just to make sure.

UNFORGETTABLE Openers

Customers will form an impression of you – and your company - within the first few seconds of their phone call. That's why the first words out of your mouth are absolutely crucial.

What's your present opening line? *"Hello?"* *"Good morning?"* Or is it some other boring, corporate handbook greeting that fades into the unmemorable multitude of every other phone call your customer will make that day?

FACT: Phone greetings are opportunities to make the mundane memorable. To make the customer on the other line smile before she even asks you a question. You must project positivity, uniqueness and approachability within seconds.

You can do better than “Hello?”

PERFECT EXAMPLE: For years, I've been answering my phone the same way: “HELLO, my name is Scott!” It's nothing fancy, but nobody else uses it. And that's the key. It's fun, quick and usually gets a laugh 90% of the time. More importantly, those five words also happen to be the name of my company, the title of one of my books and the essence of my branding.

UNFORGETTABLE Callers

OK, now let's switch roles. You're the caller. Making an important sales call to the VP of Marketing. And her assistant prompts you with the ever popular, “May I ask who's calling? *When you hear those beautiful five words, you should get excited. Why?*”

FACT: This is (yet another) two second opportunity to make the mundane memorable and project your uniqueness to someone new.

PERFECT EXAMPLE: “Yes. Tell Mrs. Freidman that it's The Nametag Guy,” I usually say. In most cases, three things happen next:

The Approachable Frontline

1. The gatekeeper chuckles and transfers me,
2. The entire company hears over the loud speaker, "Mrs. Friedman, you have The Nametag Guy holding on line 7,"
3. The person I've called picks up the phone (already laughing) and says, "Hi Scott!"

Score!



LET ME ASK YA THIS...

Do you have the guts to say something other than your name?

UNFORGETTABLE Waiting

When I worked at the Ritz Carlton, the phone light would start blinking rapidly after thirty seconds of hold time. If an employee was in the area and didn't pick up the phone to assist the guest, he was written up.

Sure, it was harsh. But you better believe we picked up every call within thirty seconds! Dominoes would have been proud.

Look. Hold time is still a tough issue. I'm not going to get into the technical side of it, i.e., on-hold jazz music, advertisements, wait time and the like. However:

FACT: Callers become more frustrated with every passing second.

Unless.

PERFECT EXAMPLE: My friend Dave is a pro at lessening hold time. Whenever he has another call or needs to put me on hold, he doesn't say, "*Can I put you on hold?*" or "*Would you mind holding for a minute?*" Instead, Dave says, "**Scott, do me a favor: count to ten and I'll be right back!**"

I still count every time. And Dave almost always comes back as promised.



LET ME ASK YA THIS...

What words could you use to make hold time more fun and engaging?

UNFORGETTABLE What?

In 2006, RainToday released a scintillating study called ***How Clients Buy: The Benchmark Report On Professional Services Marketing And Selling From The Client Perspective.***

The study gathered data from nearly 200 decision makers nationwide who purchased \$1.6 billion in professional services. They were asked

about their biggest pet peeves when working with service providers.

***And the winner went to...
(drum roll please)***

***“They didn’t
listen to me.”***

FACT: When it comes to the phone, you must remember these three things:

1. Listening is not waiting to talk.
2. You have two ears and one mouth. Listen and speak proportionately.
3. A closed mouth gathers no foot.



LET ME ASK YA THIS...

Are you growing bigger ears with every call?

UNFORGETTABLE Attitude

More than anything we’ve talked about today, your attitude is what most determines the success of every phone call. Let’s explore two examples: ***smiling and emotion.***

First of all, I don’t need to waste your time talking about the value, the power and the necessity of

smiling. You should know that already. However:

PERFECT EXAMPLE: the best piece of advice I ever got on phone service was to buy a little mirror and stick it above my phone. Forced me to smile every time! I suggest you try this for one week.

FACT: The customer will HEAR your smile over the phone.

The next facet of an **UNFORGETTABLE** Phone Attitude is emotion. If you want to watch a classic movie on phone service, check out *Boiler Room*. My favorite scene is when the office manager (Ben Affleck) preaches to his neophyte stockbrokers how to connect with prospects during cold calls: **“Get your butt out of the chair! Walk around! Motion creates e-motion!”** he yells. Great point, Ben. In other words:

Motion = Emotion = Enthusiasm = Approachability =
UNFORGETTABLE PHONE SERVICE

Whether you're answering, chatting, listening or putting someone on hold, the phone is your friend. When used in an approachable fashion, it can mean the difference between a prospect and a customer. The difference between a lead and a sale. The difference between a one-time customer and a long time relationship.

13 Phrases That Payses™ ...for the phone

If you control language, you control thought.
If you control thought, you control conversation.
If you control conversation, you control outcomes.

I learned that from famed consultant, Allan Weiss.

Here's a sample of several Phrases That Payses™ to use during your phone conversations.

NOTE: I suggest writing them on sticky notes to post above your phone:

ONE: **You don't know me, but.** Be honest. Don't pretend to be someone's best friend, especially the gatekeeper. When you call, help someone know right away that you are calling as a stranger who hopes to become a friend.

TWO: **Consider it done!** Three simple words and your customer is already thinking about a positive future. It's confident. It's reassuring. It's beautiful. **COOL NOTE:** in 2004, Gaylord Hotels, Inc., received industry-wide acclaim for their new PBX system, appropriately called, "Consider It Done!"

THREE: Excuse my annoying typing; I just want to get all this stuff down! Polite, humorous way to subtly demonstrate active listening while on the phone.

FOUR: Fortunately, I work miracles!

When a customer comes to you with a problem, say this immediately. First of all, it's funny. The humor will diffuse the customer's anger. Secondly, it's positive. Lastly, it's reassuring. I recently had a problem with a vest from Old Navy. When the customer service rep told me she "worked miracles," I was immediately excited and confident that she could help me. Interestingly enough, we never found the right size. But I almost didn't care due to her positive, friendly response.

FIVE: Hang on; I want to write this down.

Great in person, greater on the phone (since they can't see you.) It's the difference between showing and telling. This phrase lets them know you're listening, taking notes, and encourages them to offer more detailed answers.

SIX: I am at your service. Not just for customer service professionals any more, but for everyone! All business professionals are at the service of somebody, be it their customers or coworkers. Say this phrase to reassure your client that you've got their back. Remind them that they can ask anything of you. NOTE: especially effective great phrase to use with new customers or coworkers.

SEVEN: **I think I can help.** It's awfully hard for someone to turn down an offer. However, take caution when adding the word "you" to the end of this sentence. Make sure people know you want to help their situation, not them as a person. They might become defensive if they think YOU think there's something wrong with them.

EIGHT: **Right away.** Two simple, amazing words. Wow! It shows that people don't have to wait. They get it now. Few phone operators use this, but when they do, it's amazing. Way better than "as soon as I can," "as soon as possible" or "immediately." **Right away.**

NINE: **Personally.** A single word with amazing power. For example, "Mr. Sanders, I will take care of your incorrect order," vs. "Mr. Sanders, I will PERSONALLY take care of your incorrect order." You've committed. You've made it personal. You've instilled confidence in Mr. Sanders that you're accountable for the mistake, even if it wasn't your fault. Use this word daily.

TEN: **Say no more!** A fantastic response to any customer request. It shows customers that you've taken *immediate* ownership of their needs. It's fun. And it builds excitement. In fact, it almost makes you sound like you're about to perform a magic trick!

ELEVEN: **The best way for me to help you right now is.** Customers don't want to hear

you say, “I’m sorry, there’s nothing I can do,” they want answers NOW. So, even if you can’t fully solve their problem that very moment, preface your response with this phrase. It demonstrates immediacy and positivity.

TWELVE: We can fix that! This tells your customers that you’re solution-oriented and partnering with them for success. (Key word = partnering) Try using this phrase instead of “no problem.” In fact, the word “fix” almost implies that it’s no problem. That you’re on it. “Fix” reduces the severity of the problem, no matter how big. It’s reassuring.

THIRTEEN: You’re in luck! It doesn’t even matter what you say next because the customer is already excited. Because it’s such a positive answer, use it *before* telling customers you can’t provide exactly what they want. Instead of saying, “We don’t have any window seats left,” you could say, “You’re in luck! Our window seats are full, but we’ve got an even better one by the fireplace.” Same result, better language.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

When working on the phone, you must try even harder to show (not tell) your approachability.

Grow
bigger
ears

13

Don't (over) actively listen.

In the 2003 film *The Life of David Gale*, there's a great scene where Kevin Spacey and Laura Linney are debating Capital Punishment:

LL: "And almost-martyrs don't count."

KS: "Got it."

LL: "So, keep it rational."

KS: "Mm-hmm..."

LL: "And stop that!"

KS: "What?"

LL: "Active listening. I hate active listeners. I feel like they're too busy pretending to listen to actually hear what I'm saying."

KS: "I can listen AND actively listen at the same time."

• • • •

What about you? Ever had a conversation with someone who was (over) actively listening to you?

In other words, even though the person WAS doing all the right things...

...nodding. **...smiling.**
...taking notes.
...leaning forward.
...saying, “Uh-huh...”
...agreeing, “Yeah...!”
...asking clarifying questions.
...offering validation
phrases.
...restating what you just said.
...displaying mirroring or
reflection statements.

...that person still drove you crazy!

LISTEN UP: There are three dangers that can result from (over) actively listening:

Annoyance. If you nod *TOO* much, smile *TOO* much and agree *TOO* much, your customer is going not going to like you ... *TOO* much! Use active listening techniques moderately. Don't overdo it. Especially in highly emotional situations.

REMEMBER: Just because you can doesn't mean you should.

Authenticity. Avoid focusing ALL of your attention on “coming off as a good listener.” Just

relax. The moment you TRY to be authentic is the moment you STOP being authentic. Listening is about focusing on the OTHER person's words, and not about focusing on YOUR own abilities.

Negligence. Think about this: If YOU were talking to your boss and he spent the whole conversation taking notes, how would you feel? Probably like he spent too much time writing and not enough time listening.

LESSON LEARNED: Beware of allowing your ears to get in the way of hearing the message.

So, how do you maintain balance
between active listening and (over)
active listening?

THE SHORT ANSWER:

Moderation.

THE LONG ANSWER:

Grow bigger ears WITHOUT allowing them to stand in the way of what you really need to hear.

Show *(don't tell)* that you're listening.

Customers need **PROOF** that you're listening. You need to show *(not tell)* them that you're personally available and accountable.

Consider the following

Phrases That Payses:

ONE: Excuse my annoying typing; I just want to get all this stuff down!

Similar to the above example. Polite, humorous way to subtly demonstrate active listening while on the phone.

TWO: Do you mind if I take notes?

LISTENING IS ABOUT LISTING. So, turn your notes back to someone when you're done!

THREE: I don't fully understand;

tell me more. Approachability is about curiosity, not judgment. Before making a reactionary mistake (like yelling "What! Are you out of your freaking mind?"), this relaxing statement keeps the conversation cool. Also shows your desire for clarification.

FOUR I don't know what that

means. It shows that you're listening. You're not too proud to admit you don't know everything. You'd like to learn more. This approachable, humble phrase also demonstrates interest in the other person.

FIVE I never thought of it that way.

Most people are too proud and too closed-minded to show openness to new ideas. This phrase compliments someone and shows lack of judgment. What's more, it offers your willingness to hear someone out. (It's amazing how few people say this.)

SIX I'd like to hear ALL of your

feedback. Don't ask if you can have "any feedback." The word "any" narrows the scope of the question, as opposed to wording it more expansively. This will get you a more thorough response.

SEVEN I'm not sure I understand

your point, but keep going. Also known as an "acceptance phrase," this subtle interruption doesn't steal ownership of the conversation, yet makes the point that you're confused.

EIGHT I'm sorry. You lost me.

Great phrase to use against a know-it-all who won't shut up. Use it to gain clarification and keep them accountable.

NINE **I'm sorry; I've been talking**

too much! Admits that you're aware of the way others perceive you. Puts the ball in their corner. Another great demonstrator of listening skills.

TEN **I want to give my full attention to what you're saying, so let me just get this out of the way.**

Halts the conversation, gives you a chance to quickly voice your opinion. Also shows willingness to listen.

ELEVEN **You've got my attention.**

Immediate indicator that you're listening. Also compliments the other person's ability to captivate you.



LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

For a free copy of the e-book *117 Phrases That Payses*, e-mail scott@hellomynameisscott.com and write "Payses!" in the subject line.

**Approachable
service**
is also
about
what you
(don't)
say.

Don't say you *don't* know.

"I don't know."

These three words are DEADLY.

As a frontline employee, you are the face and the voice of your company. As such, you must project an aura of competence, confidence and resourcefulness. That's what approachable service is all about!

So, even if you really DON'T know the answer to a customer question, never let 'em see you sweat.

Here's what you say instead:

"Great question! I'm not exactly sure, so let me ask someone who DOES know."

This is the Phrases that Payses for several reasons:

IT REFRAMES.

The customer is upset. Frustrated. Looking for answers. So, by immediately countering with a positive, even complimentary response, you re-frame the context of the dialogue. They start to feel re-assured right away! You've laid a foundation of positivity and approachability.

IT LOOSENS THE BLOW.

By stating that you're "not exactly" sure, you come off as more competent and confident. Much better than, "I have no idea!" After all, your credibility is on the line. *The frontline!*

IT VOCALIZES COMMITMENT.

It's OK not to know everything. But it's also OK to tell someone that their question is important enough that you will go out of your way to find the answer for them. See, without this display of commitment, you're toast. Because customers only give you (and your company) credit for that which they SEE and HEAR you do consistently. And consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.

Ultimately, your job as a frontline employee is not only to provide approachable service, but also to **CHANGE PEOPLES' MINDS.**

...About their problem.

...About your company.

...About your level of service.

...About YOU as an individual!

Customers want solutions.

And, they want ***first call resolutions!***

And even if you're not exactly sure what those are, that doesn't mean you can't respond in a confident, competent and approachable manner.

No, it's **NOT** okay!

Growing Bigger Ears is a function of subtleties. Eye contact. Taking notes. Asking the right questions. And not (over) active listening.

But sometimes during a conversation, we'll say something that, in our mind sounds fine; but in our partner's mind, comes off as unapproachable.

PICTURE THIS: A friend of yours is complaining about her new boss.

"He's just too demanding," she says. "I can't possibly accomplish all the work he assigns. And he's totally sexist, too!"

Now you, being the approachable, active listener that you are, offer an "encouraging statement," to convey interest and pace the conversation.

"OK..." you say with a nod.

BIG mistake.

See, little do YOU know that in the back of your friend's mind, she's thinking, "No, wait, you're not listening to me. It's not OK what he did ... I'm trying to tell you that my boss is a jerk!"

So, what are the Phrases That Payses?

Instead of saying, “OK,” say, “I see.”

“I see” trumps “OK” for three reasons:

1. It’s positive. This is especially important when you’re dealing with someone who’s complaining or upset. What’s more, positive responses reassure your friend that she’s communicating effectively.

2. It’s empathetic. You understand where she’s coming from. You feel her pain. You see her point. Empathy is absolutely crucial for Growing Bigger Ears.

3. It’s non-committal. You’re not agreeing or disagreeing. By saying “I see,” your neutral response refuses to take sides and suspends judgment. And **THAT** shows respect.

Approachability is about subtlety. And if you want to provide more unforgettable service, make more sales and connect with MORE clients, start by Growing Bigger Ears and saying, “I see...”

Okaaaay?

What customers (don't) want to hear you say...

Your customers are tired.

...Tired of terrible service.

...Tired of getting the run around.

...Tired of waiting in lines all morning.

Most importantly, they're tired of hearing excuses.

BUT HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS: There IS a way to offer more approachable service!

Here is a list of eight phrases (**er, excuses**) your customers don't want to hear; AND, several alternative phrases you can use instead.

I. "I'm sorry."

Sorry is negative, problem-oriented, usually followed by excuses, focused on the wrong person. Sorry sucks the positivity out of a conversation.

Now, this doesn't mean you shouldn't apologize. But consider framing your response differently.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

"Thanks for telling me."

"Thanks for bringing that to my attention."

"That's horrible!"

*“I have no excuse. You’re right.”
“I apologize.”*

2. “That’s not my job.”

Too many frontline employees evade personal responsibility and professional accountability.

REMEMBER: Part of your job is to reassure the customers.

That you’re on it.

That you’re taking ownership of the problem.

That you’re going to find a solution; even it’s not your job.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“I will personally take care of that.”

“I will take ownership of this problem.”

“And for future reference, the person who usually handles that problem is...”

3. “There’s nothing I can do.”

Negative language! No good. Focus instead on what you CAN do. On solutions; not problems.

REMEMBER: There’s always something you can do; even if you are not the right person to help.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“Good news!”

“You’re in luck!”

“Today’s your lucky day!”

“Here’s what I CAN do.”

“The best way for me to help you RIGHT NOW is...”

4. “I don’t know.”

(That’s OK. You can’t know everything!) Still, you want to reassure your customer. So remember to first lay a positive foundation and then reassure the customer that her problem will be addressed.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“Good question! I’m not exactly sure, so let me ask someone who DOES know.”

“Let me find out for you.”

“Let me look that up for you.”

5. “Our policy is...”

The mere mention of the word “policy” sends a chill down customers’ spines.

So, try shifting your verbiage to something more approachable.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“In order to be fair to everybody...”

“Our guidelines are...”

6. “You’ll have to call someone else.”

This is called Punting. Passing the Buck. Evading Responsibility.

And customers are tired of it.

So, even if it’s not your job or area of expertise, you can still be of assistance.

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“Let me connect you with George, he has the answer to your problem!”
“Here’s who you CAN call...”

7. “He’s not here.”

Especially if your goal is to achieve first call resolution, avoid this phrase! Who knows? Maybe you can answer the question for a coworker who isn't available.

REMEMBER: We live in a fast-paced, hyperspeed, A.D.D culture. Customers want answers NOW!

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“Steve’s unavailable right now, but MY name is Karen; is there anything I can do to help?”
“Steve’s out of the office right now, but is there a question I might be able to answer?”

8. “As soon as possible.”

ASAP. When I get a chance. When I get around to it. All of these phrases make customers think, “Yeah right!” You need to emit a sense of urgency, confidence and reassurance. Try these:

PHRASES THAT PAYSES

“Right away.”
“Immediately.”
“Give me fifteen seconds.”

And
finally,
here's what
matters
most...

...because
everything
you've read
in this book
so far means
NOTHING
without:

COMMITMENT

COMMIT yourself...

COMMIT your team...

COMMIT your company...

...to becoming more approachable every single day.

**Make sure you're VISUALLY
reminding the people you
serve OF that commitment
every single day.**

CONSISTENCY

Because customers won't give you credit
for what they HEAR you SAY consistently.

They will only give you credit for what
they SEE you DO consistently.

**Because you never know who's
on the other side of the counter.**

So, remember the Approachable Service Philosophy:

1. People buy people first.
2. Friendly always wins.
3. Make the mundane memorable.
4. Unique, not different.
5. Interaction, not interruption.
6. Be That Guy.
7. Fans, not customers.
8. Don't sell; enable people to buy.
9. Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.
10. If you don't make a name for yourself, someone will make one for you.

My name is Scott.

I'm The Nametag Guy,
reminding you:

**When you
stick yourself
out there,
you get them
to come
to you.**



Scott Ginsberg

That Guy with the Nametag

AUTHOR. Scott is the author of six books including *HELLO, my name is Scott*, *The Power of Approachability*, *How to be That Guy*, *Make a Name for Yourself*, *The Approachable Frontline* and *The Approachable Salesperson*.

SPEAKER. As a member of National Speakers Association, Scott gives presentations, breakout sessions, keynote speeches and seminars to thousands of people each year. Companies and organizations worldwide have been successfully implementing his programs since 2003.

THE NAMETAG GUY. Scott is the only person in the world who wears a nametag 24-7 to make people friendlier. (In case you're wondering, he has a nametag tattooed on his chest for certain occasions.) While transforming his simple idea into a business, his adventures have earned him recognition as "The World's Foremost Expert on Nametags" and secured a spot in *Ripley's Believe it Or Not!*

COLUMNIST. Scott is a regular contributor to the *St. Louis Small Business Monthly*, *INSTORE Magazine* and

Expert Village. His conversational, content-rich articles have appeared in hundreds of online and offline publications worldwide. Also, his work has been reprinted in dozens of textbooks and resource guides.

MEDIA EXPERT. Dubbed as “The Authority on Approachability,” Scott is regularly interviewed by various online, print, radio and TV media for his unique expertise. He has been featured in hundreds of outlets such as *CNN*, *20/20*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Inc. Magazine*, *REDBOOK*, *The Associated Press*, *FastCompany*, *The Washington Post*, *Paul Harvey*, *The CBS Early Show* and *Headline News*. He even wrote “The Quiz” on approachability for *COSMO*!

NAMETAG NETWORK. Scott’s award winning, content-rich websites get as many as 35,000 hits a day from readers and audience members around the world. His ubiquitous web presence and powerful platform set the standard for entrepreneurs and marketers in his field, and have earned him an surprising amount of credibility seeing that he’s just some guy who wears a nametag every day. Check out www.thenametagnetwork.com for details!

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and
people
first.