



# The Sixty Second Spark™

September 2008

## ServiceSHIFT: Back to School Tools for Service Excellence

It's September and lots of you had to do the dreaded "Back to School Shopping" thing recently. Have you noticed that customer service seems to be suffering these days - especially in big box retailers? It seems to me that service is either really stellar (think Southwest Airlines or Nordstrom's) or really stinky (think of many other retailers). I think the lack of good service is why many of us (myself included) like to shop online - so that we don't have to wait in lines, search shelves for items on our own, or face grouchy employees.



*How does your service delivery stack up?*

Please keep reading even if you don't deal with external customers - I'm going to relate this to "internal" customer service (supporting coworkers and other department staff) as well. Here are 3 tips to see how you stack up in the service delivery continuum.

Three ServiceSHIFT Tools include... 1) *Strategize*; 2) *Organize* and 3) *Optimize*.

1) **Strategize**: Look at the big picture strategies for your job and department and make sure service excellence looms large. Include specific strategic imperatives about how you serve your coworkers and their customers. If this service focus is missing you'll quickly see holes in your service delivery. For example, if you work in a support department like finance - how do you contribute to the organization's strategic service initiatives for business growth?

2) **Organize**: At one of your department staff meetings, conduct an "Optimal Service Audit". Look at the following areas of your work from your customer's viewpoint. Evaluate the physical space, technology, policies & procedures, turn-around time, service recovery, etc. Determine if you are exceeding expectations or creating cranky customers. For example, if you work in HR, are you accessible to employees of the company during *their* work hours?

3) **Optimize**: "The proof is in the pudding", as they say and your internal customers want to see proof of great service, not promises. Encourage your coworkers to be great at service delivery by being a great role model yourself. If you're not sure what to do or how to handle a sticky customer situation, ask for training on a regular basis to keep service standards top of mind (*yes, I do happen to provide lots of interactive, customized, customer service training for internal and external customers J*).

Don't flunk your classes in Service School... take the lead and *Strategize, Organize* and *Optimize* to create a ServiceSHIFT in your department and you'll energize, capitalize and get straight A's from your loyal customers!

Sincerely,

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