

**Consumer Attitudes & Customer Service:**

***Everybody Is Irrational,  
and You Should Be Too***

**Scott Papich**

Principal, Outside Intelligence LLC

*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
**CONFERENCE AND**  
**OUTFITTER EXPO**





# Outside Intelligence LLC

Scott Papich  
Principal

*Make better business decisions*

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
**CONFERENCE AND**  
**OUTFITTER EXPO**



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

# Learning Objectives

- **Recognize “irrational” consumer attitudes & behavior**
- **Understand WHY that matters to Customer Service**
- **Know WHAT you can do to work WITH it (not against it)**



# Your Customers Are Not Rational

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
CONFERENCE AND  
OUTFITTER EXPO



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

# High school Economics?

*All consumers are “RATIONAL”*

*Essentially, all consumers are “rational” beings – we spend our dollars on fairly-priced goods that we need, until we have enough things.*

*When we run out, we restock.*



# Behavioral Economics: the study of *“IRRATIONAL” consumer behavior*

- **Tribing**
  - **Loss aversion**
  - **Conspicuous Consumption**
- (Plus other crazy behavior)*





# Scholastic references on IRRATIONAL consumer attitudes & behavior:

- *Dan Ariely, Predictably Irrational*
- *Daniel Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow*
- *Philip Graves, Consumerology*
- *Bob Raleigh, The Search for Why*
- *Seth Godin, We Are All Weird*



# Cust Service: Why does it matter? (Part 1)

In recent seasons, SOME outfitters (not all, but some) seem to have more customers than they can accommodate. If you're that good, or that lucky, it might feel like Customer Service is a little unnecessary & obsolete.

But our most important fundamental skills sets will never be obsolete. You know, world champion athletes still practice fielding grounders and shooting free-throws; without that, they wouldn't be the best.

So, we gather at this conference to learn how to run stronger businesses. And the OUTFITTER business will always be about service. Simply put, if we want to stay strong, and keep our client base, then we continuously have to sharpen our customer service skills. That's why this matters.





## Cust Service: Why does it matter? (Part 2)

- **Marketing:** All irrational, “Right-Brain” attitudes and/or behavior will matter to Marketing teams
- **Customer Service:** Even with the best marketing in the world — if your Customer Service is bad, then either a competitor will take both: your clients and your employees; or your customers will very likely search for something else to do. So, your service matters.



# When Cust Service is GOOD?

## *That matters too...*

- **Better tips for your team**
- **Stronger loyalty (*and repeat business*) from your clients**
- **Better online reviews and word of mouth about you**  
(*everybody is an “influencer” now*)
- **You build a stronger brand, a stronger business, and (as an individual) a stronger career**



# The “Agreement” you have with your Customer (this is totally rational)

- ***We take you through a canyon*** (or up a mountain, or down a river, or on a horse, or on a bike)
- ***We equip you***
- ***We feed you***
- ***We do not get you killed***



# If you do everything exactly as per your rational “Agreement” with the Customer?

... Then you will have “checked all the boxes,” which is perfectly rational, but it’s NOT what Customers will post about on Instagram; or what they tip you for; or what they come back for year after year. ***What customers REALLY expect is something more: adventure, humor, beauty, surprises & human connection. And these are all abstract elements, so we need to be just as abstract & irrational as they are. We must anticipate what they want to FEEL, even BEFORE they CONSCIOUSLY decide to give up their credit card info.***

— Good Cust Service starts before the TRIP —



# Steve Jobs, on Apple's legendary “Customer Experience” philosophy:

*“You’ve got to start with the CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE and work backward, not the other way around.”*



# Almost everyone is in “Customer Service”

- Leadership (Business Owners & Directors)
- HQ, with customer contact (*either phone or F2F*)
- Guides and staff in the field





# 1. Leadership (Owners), how to do better

- Phone Auto-Attendants: NO “infinite loops,” dead ends, or dropped calls. Customers who actually call you deserve better phone service from you.
- Do not have “policies” or “algorithms” or “programs” that force your team to say, “My system will not allow me to do that.” Instead, re-program your systems with “work-arounds” and give your team the coaching and the authority to actually solve problems for your customers.
- Your website is your storefront —if it’s unintuitive & hard to navigate, then, to the consumer, you don’t care. Look for aesthetics, usability & function in *other* company’s sites. Then show your web designers what to aspire to.
- RESPECT. Continuously demonstrate the respect and dignity you want to see in your own people (towards each other, and towards customers).

***Think of the best Cust Svc you’ve ever received -- emulate that.***



## 2. HQ teams (with Cust Contact)

- Please don't say, "My system will not allow me to do that"  
Get with your leadership team to build work-arounds.
- Do not say to a customer, "You have to do that online"  
Instead, log in (with them on the phone) and do it for them
- Communicate with purpose
  - Speak clearly and calmly
  - Be concise (but friendly) with answers and remarks
  - Don't interrupt the customer (even when they are irrational)
  - Ask & repeat (for understanding), then go get it done
- If you make a promise to a customer, keep it (and do it ASAP)

***Think of the best Cust Svc you've ever received -- emulate that.***



### 3. Guides & Trip Staff

- **Equipment**: No gear that looks bad in social media post
- **FOOD**: It's not just food
  - Full sensory experience (and something to brag about)
- **Teach**: for the clients who want it
- **Face Time** (it's always time for people skills)
  - “Friendly, not forceful”
  - Never be short-tempered with a colleague
  - Ignore other peoples' domestic tensions
  - Do NOT interrupt a client who is speaking

***Think of the best Cust Svc you've ever received -- emulate that.***



## ***Bonus for: Office / Trip Staff with Cust Contact***

### ***“Professional-Grade” Eye Contact***

**Several times per day, pull off the glasses, and patiently make calm eye contact when:**

- *A client is telling you something important*
- *You are speaking to someone for > than a few seconds*
- *A client is doing something you have asked them to do*



## ***Bonus for: Office / Trip Staff with Cust Contact***

### ***“Professional-Grade” Eye Contact***

- *Don't make it a stare-down*
- *Engage for 3-4 seconds of interested eye contact, then look at what's in front of you for 2 seconds*
- *Then back to your conversation partner*

**(Look at their face, not the logo on their ball cap)**



## ***Bonus for: Office / Trip Staff with Cust Contact***

### ***“Professional-Grade” Eye Contact***

- *Imagine upside-down triangle (eyes & mouth)*
- *Change your gaze every few seconds to a different point on the triangle*
- *This will make you appear more interested*





# The bottom line

## Customer Service is a Profit Center (for four reasons)

- 1) Because the customer who calls you or shows up is already paying attention to you. Everything you do here, unlike most other marketing interactions, really is for the win.
- 2) Because your competitors have decided to treat customer service as a cost. So the odds are, you can out-perform them. You cannot make a widget that's ten times better, but you can produce customer service that's 10X better than the competition's.
- 3) Because people love to tell stories about service, so the word spreads, based on what you're about to do.
- 4) **And it's been demonstrated again and again that the most valuable customers are the loyal ones. While your promotional team is making noise to attract new customers, your Customer Service is turning existing customers into repeat customers and ambassadors.**

***So, the money you spend on customer service isn't just free. It actually repays you.***

*- from Seth Godin*

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
**CONFERENCE AND**  
**OUTFITTER EXPO**



# *Questions?*

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
**CONFERENCE AND**  
**OUTFITTER EXPO**



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

# Thank you

Please complete the session evaluation for  
this presentation in the America Outdoors  
Crowd compass mobile app.

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
CONFERENCE AND  
OUTFITTER EXPO



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

# Appendices

## Scholastic references on irrational consumer attitudes & behavior:

- *Dan Ariely, Predictably Irrational*
- *Daniel Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow*
- *Philip Graves, Consumerology*
- *Bob Raleigh, The Search for Why*
- *Seth Godin, We Are All Weird*



# Appendices

Contact info:

ScottPapich@outlook.com  
Outside Intelligence LLC

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
CONFERENCE AND  
OUTFITTER EXPO



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*

# Bonus Appendices

## Customer Service is a Marketing bargain

You think it's expensive. You have to hire strong people who bring empathy & kindness. And you provide good systems, and ongoing training & support.

You have to avoid shortcuts, and treat people better than the bare minimum. And you need to trust your employees to do what's right, and you recognize and reward them for continuously improving.

**But... Great customer service makes money, because the single biggest marketing bargain is a happy, loyal customer who comes back, and who chooses to recruit new customers for you.**







ScottPapich@outlook.com  
Outside Intelligence LLC

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
**CONFERENCE AND**  
**OUTFITTER EXPO**



*Copyright: Scott Papich, Outside Intelligence, 2021*