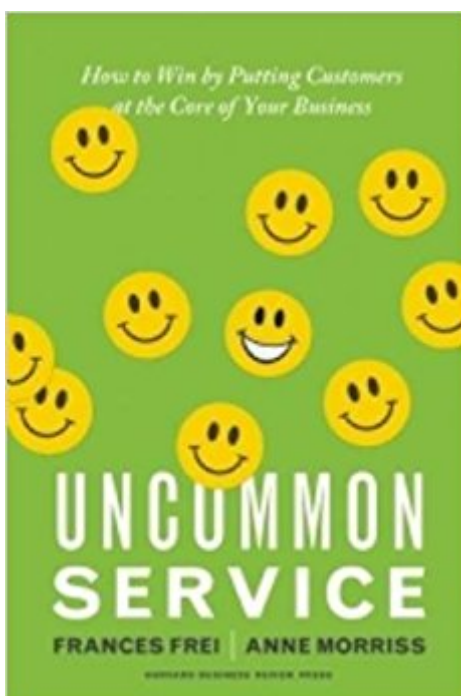


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Uncommon Service: How To Win By Putting Customers At The Core Of Your Business



Synopsis

Most companies treat service as a low-priority business operation, keeping it out of the spotlight until a customer complains. Then service gets to make a brief appearance; for as long as it takes to calm the customer down and fix whatever foul-up jeopardized the relationship. In *Uncommon Service*, Frances Frei and Anne Morriss show how, in a volatile economy where the old rules of strategic advantage no longer hold true, service must become a competitive weapon, not a damage-control function. That means weaving service tightly into every core decision your company makes. The authors reveal a transformed view of service, presenting an operating model built on tough choices organizations must make:

- How do customers define excellence in your offering? Is it convenience? Friendliness? Flexible choices? Price?
- How will you get paid for that excellence? Will you charge customers more? Get them to handle more service tasks themselves?
- How will you empower your employees to deliver excellence? What will your recruiting, selection, training, and job design practices look like? What about your organizational culture?
- How will you get your customers to behave? For example, what do you need to do to get them to treat your employees with respect? Do you need to make it easier for them to use new technology?

Practical and engaging, *Uncommon Service* makes a powerful case for a new and systematic approach to service as a means of boosting productivity, profitability, and competitive advantage.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book was uncommonly excellent. Very straightforward and to the point. Frei and Morriss

uncover four basic truths about customer service, discuss the important ingredient of culture and provide guidance on how companies can scale to get bigger...this might be the best book I've ever read on achieving service excellence. Stan Phelps, CustomerThink (customerthink.com); This book is a practical guide for leaders who want to use service to strategically differentiate their companies from the competition. Jeff Toister, CustomerThink (customerthink.com); Anne Morriss and Harvard Business School Professor Frances Frei make the counterintuitive, but compelling argument that true success for service businesses requires that you give up on being perfect; that you make some tradeoffs. Business Insider (businessinsider.com); Morriss and Frei have a powerful and surprising answer; Forbes.com; In this upbeat and highly readable book, the authors isolate four service truths that companies must understand; BizEd magazine; The book is full of case studies showing how companies have harnessed their strengths but cut corners elsewhere, in pursuit of the ultimate goal: excellent service. South Africa Financial Mail; I found Uncommon Service to be a refreshing, frank and honest look at how any organization can increase profitability, satisfaction and competitive advantage by delivering consistently outstanding service. American Express Open Forum

Frances Frei is UPS Foundation Professor of Service Management at Harvard Business School, where she developed the school's successful Managing Service Operations course. Anne Morriss is the Managing Director of the Concire Leadership Institute, a consulting firm that helps leaders to surface and remove performance barriers.

The book was uncommonly excellent. Very straightforward and to the point. Frei and Morriss uncover four basic truths about customer service, discuss the important ingredient of culture and provide guidance on how companies can scale to get bigger. Points are illustrated through a number of case studies from the familiar likes of Southwest and Zappos to the more obscure Bugs Burger Bug Killers, Ochsner Health System and LSQ Funding Group.

Key Takeaway #1

The book's boldest assertion is that "you must have the courage to be bad . . . in the service of being great." Figuring out where to place your emphasis is based upon prioritizing the needs of your customers. Be a leader in those areas that are valued and have the moxy to purposely stink in lesser areas. Sometimes tradeoffs are not merely enough. You need to find ways to deliver the extra service provided. The easiest way is

to charge a premium for the extra. Since that's not always possible, Frei and Morriss offer three different and novel ways to bridge the gap. Key Takeaway #2 - It is the responsibility of senior management to set their employees and customers up to succeed. This means organizing tasks and processes in a manner that the average employee can deliver upon routinely. Don't expect your employees to wear a cape. Complexity (especially when IT is involved) is bad. Keep it simple stupid. Employees are only part of the equation, we need to organize our customers to improve service. Enlist them to help the service experience for everyone. You have two options: hire/fire or change the process. Key Takeaway #3 - Culture not only beats strategy, but culture is the main driver in creating a leading service organization.

In Peru is difficult to talk about service, and besides that the best companies excel on uncommon service, I think service is an act of faith and the word faith is not present on the book, we serve believing that the seed will grow, not for all companies this works but the companies with most faith will excel, excellent book!

A clear explanation in the necessity of service and respect. Whether towards associates or guests, this book uses great research and examples of how to improve your business.

When I was an MBA student at Harvard Business School, one of the most difficult classes to get into was Frances Frei's Managing Service Operations elective. I was one of her lucky students, but demand was so high that even those who ranked it as their first choice often failed to win one of the prized seats in the class. If you read this book, you'll understand why...Frei is a world-renowned guru in service management and a Harvard teaching legend. In "Uncommon Service," she's partnered with Anne Morriss, a leader in strategy, leadership and institutional change. Together, they distill the principles of service excellence into an intuitive road map that any executive, with the appropriate conviction, can follow to improve customer experiences, and in turn, firm performance. Not a bad value proposition when you think about it - developing a sustainable competitive advantage by making your customers' lives better. What I loved about the course, and indeed this book, is that it is full of real world examples of service successes and failures, used to masterfully illustrate a system of interconnected design principles that lead to service excellence. The stories are compelling and their implications are clear, and by the time you're finished reading, you'll be able to diagnose what's right, and what's wrong with the service design of your company, as well as those of your

competitors. On their own, the principles of service excellence make "Uncommon Service" a must-have for any entrepreneur interested in deploying a world-class service operation from the ground up. Having been a service entrepreneur myself, this aspect of the book appealed to me deeply. However, Frei and Morriss, who themselves have considerable experience working with many of the world's largest and most complicated service organizations, have crafted the book to speak as well to executives interested in improving pre-existing operations. The book tackles implementation issues in the context of a complex organization in motion, as well as how to develop a service culture, and how to scale service excellence as the enterprise experiences growth. If you run, or aspire to run a service organization, and you're concerned at all with the experiences of your customers, you need this book. It is exceptionally engaging, devoid of jargon, brutally honest, and a joy to read. It is simply a masterpiece, and I cannot recommend it more highly.

If the service industry truly grasped this, we would all enjoy the benefits. It's time to strive for excellence. This book is a good start.

Enjoyed this book and many of the insights shared. Figuring out what your priorities should be and what your priorities, decidedly should not be is so important when building a business you want to grow. Loved the stories from businesses I admire like Southwest and Zappos

One of the best business strategy books I have read in a long time. The authors provide a great new perspective, and provide it with outstanding clarity. Their real life examples are excellent at bringing life to a particular point. I would strongly recommend this book to business owners in a highly competitive field, and corporate strategy officers.

Great but very simplistic

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