

# Verizon

*The key to fierce loyalty- An amazing customer experience*

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## PRESENTATION

### **Chris Sirico**

Hey everyone, Chris [Sirico] from Verizon here, and welcome to our Small Business Webinar Series. We're so glad you could be here today. With each webinar we set out to serve small businesses and help them gather new insights and ideas to help move their businesses forward. Returning again as our host today is Ramon Ray, an author, and a speaker, as well as the founder of SmartHustleMedia, and our guest today is Shep Hyken. Shep is a customer service legend. He's written a handful of books, he's done speaking presentations, and he's helped companies across the world, both large and small, develop amazing customer service practices that increase brand loyalty and today he's here to share how your small business can do just that.

So, with that said, let's get this webinar started, shall we? Here right now are Ramon Ray and Shep Hyken. Let's begin.

### **Ramon Ray**

Thanks so much, really, again, I am so excited to be here once again for another amazing session in the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series where we serve small business on a variety of topics. Today, we're talking about something that's so important, and I think, Shep, that people think they know what it is, but I think we're going to learn a lot from them, and right at the top, I encourage everyone, get your questions ready, type them in the question tab. We're going to take your questions live in about 20 minutes or so. So, I know we're going to have a good time and to help you in your business. So, to Shep Hyken, welcome, and thanks for joining me. How do you feel today?

### **Shep Hyken**

I'm feeling fantastic, and you know what, your energy is contagious. I'm already feeling better just looking at you.

### **Ramon Ray**

I appreciate that, brother. So, let's dive into it, and again, those who... we often get the questions and I'll just repeat them, if we have anything to share with you all, just look in the Attachments tab down below or wherever it is on your screen, whatever resources Shep may share will be there, and again, while we're doing this, please feel free to live tweet to me and Shep, Ramon Ray, Shep Hyken, and definitely thank Verizon Business.

Shep, let's dive right into it. I think first, why don't we define this, Shep? How do you define how should we think about customer service? What does that really mean?

### **Shep Hyken**

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Well, first of all, I believe customer service is not a department. It is a philosophy to be embraced by everybody in an organization; big companies, small companies, it permeates throughout the entire organization, everybody needs to recognize they have at least two jobs. The first is to do the job they were hired to do and the second is to take care of their customer, and by the way that customer is typically, when we think it, an outside customer, somebody that pays us for goods and services that we provide, but also, many of us have internal customers, people that at any time are dependent upon us to do a job so that they can do their job often to an outside customer. So, it is a philosophy, and let's just leave it at that.

**Ramon Ray**

I do want to dive in a bit more. When you say philosophy, I mean, I guess because normally – when I say normally, I'm trying to speak for the majority of people possibly watching, that's what I'm trying to do here, but when you think about it, it's at least being polite, someone comes into your store saying thank you. I'm hinting – I don't know, you're the expert in this. Are you saying that's not quite enough? Is that just how I treat my grandmother, or treat my kid, please, thank you, hold the door? Is that?

**Shep Hyken**

Yes, that's great, and if you said, Shep, what's the secret behind delivering a good customer experience? OK. Service is part of that, and everybody needs to understand their part in that. If I were asked to give a speech and said keep it real short. Well, how short? You have 30 seconds, ready, set, go. I'll do it faster than that. I'll do it in two words. Be nice. Drop the microphone, walk off. Now, that's so simplistic, but I want you to understand that the strategies and tactics behind delivering that nice service can get pretty extensive. It's more than just smiling and saying thank you. It's the proper greeting. It's the process that our customers experience. How easy is it to do to do business with us? Where are the friction points that we can eliminate? And what our customers want, they've wanted since the beginning of time, when they're finished doing business with us, they want to be happy, and people say what's changed in customer service and experience in the last five years, and I say, well, you can look at the last 50 years, nothing's changed. The customer wants to go in and have a good experience. The customer has a problem, they want it resolved. At the end, they just want to be happy. What has changed are some of the techniques and tactics and tools that are used to get us to that happy place, and today, more than ever, customers are smarter than they were before. Why? Because companies, the great brands of the world like an Amazon, for example, they're teaching us what great customer service is all about; the Ritz Carltons, Nordstrom, these companies are legendary for good service, and what happens is if you experienced that service, you go, wow, why can't everybody be as good as this? So, these great rock stars are raising the bar for everyone. And by the way, it's not that the bar is high and hard to hit. It's just you've got to be thinking about it so that you can hit it.

**Ramon Ray**

But let me push back on that, Shep – Ramon's pushing back on Shep –

**Shep Hyken**

I like that. I'm bracing myself.

**Ramon Ray**

Good. Let me push back on that as the ambassador for all the small businesses here at the amazing Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. Is that Amazon, Shep, they can say you know what, we made a billion dollar [inaudible] 10,000, the famous what Ritz Carlton, every employee –

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## Shep Hyken

It's a rounding error!

## Ramon Ray

Exactly, it's a rounding error. But, Shep, I own this small little coffee shop, I own... I'm selling pens, can I really afford to do customer service like these billion-dollar companies, Shep?

## Shep Hyken

I think actually some smaller business having a greater advantage because they're quicker, they're nimble and they can make decisions faster. Many times, in a small business, you've got owners and high-level managers that are right there. Even if it's a two or three person operation, somebody in charge might be right there, notice something is happening and immediately get to it, and as far as the big companies go, I only use names like Amazon, Nordstrom, Ritz Carlton and any other big brand, simply because you'll recognize that. If you don't know who Joe's Auto Body Repair is down the street that, by the way, delivers an amazing experience that everybody loves, but you don't know who they are. When I say you've got to follow what Joe's doing, who's Joe?

## Ramon Ray

No, you're right. That's a good point. No, for sure. I think what's interesting about it, Shep, for sure, so we can all learn from these and I just want to say Verizon doesn't ask me to do it, but it's been fun for me. As I played and tested Verizon, even over the years, how Verizon's evolved with customer service, things like from your app, the router's like rebooted if need be, or the automated AI person's helping you, so I just want to shout that out. It's pretty cool even how Verizon is evolving and getting better and better and better at some fast, pretty cool customer service stuff. So, I'm curious, Shep, our team, oftentimes for the very small businesses, Shep, I have a very tiny, small business team of five people, how do we get our team to be involved? It seems to me I'm going to be there first, I'm going to be the last, I'm going to be the most passionate, it's my business, my bread and butter. If Shep was my client, yes, Shep, how are you? Whatever, but how do I train Jenny, who I hired? How do I get Bob to give Shep, my customer in this scenario, the same service? What are some tips on that?

## Shep Hyken

First of all, you want to hire the right people to begin with. So, let's assume you're good at that. You hire somebody good, and there's a technical side of service, and then there's the practical on-the-job experience. For example, I could teach a server at a restaurant that it's proper to pick up the plate from one side of a guest and put it down on the other side of the guest. That's technical service. However, there's a softer side of service, and there's that personality, and we can hire for that right personality. Matter of fact, I'll use a big example, with a big company, but we all know who they are, American Express. I talked to Jim Bush, I interviewed him for one of my books. He was the senior vice president worldwide of customer service, and he said I could hire good people, people that have great support center experience. However, if somebody comes to me, and they've worked in a hotel at the front desk for two or three years, that's the person I want. They've got a hospitality mentality, and I know they're going to treat our members – that's what they refer to as their customers, they're going to treat our members the right way, and we need to hire people that have that hospitality mentality.

Now, once we hire them, we need to train them and we need to train them constantly, and how can we do that? Well, obviously there's traditional training programs, but it's not something that you did when they were onboarded. It's something you do ongoing.

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So, many companies, small businesses have team meetings. Some of them have these meetings once a week. They call them their Monday morning huddles, or their Wednesday morning whatever. Some have them pre-shift before anybody comes on and starts working. Some just have them at the beginning of the day. What I love is there's a friend of mine, he passed away, but his kids are still running the business, and it's a really great restaurant here in St. Louis, where I live – by the way, one restaurant, that's it, a small business, family business, I guess employees are servers and busboys and a bartender, and the rest of the family, small business, and this what he did, and they still do it today. Every single day before the doors open, Vince would come out and he'd share what happened last night, what worked, what didn't work, what did he notice and it was constructive criticism to help his people be better. He talked about the specials that we're going to have that day and then he did something really cool. This is a great restaurant and he heard a lot of accolades from the guests. Some people would leave a voicemail message on there – he said, they left it on my recorder, so you can imagine, he's got a little machine, but maybe they emailed him, but he would always end his meeting with the accolades from the day before, and it made people feel really good, and then he always said... after he shared these accolades, he said, now just remember, in five minutes, those doors open, and I love this next line. He said, we get to start over, when we get to start over. In other words, we were good yesterday, but now we have a chance to be good again today, or maybe with the right attitude, we get a chance to try to be better than yesterday, every day, which means we're always focusing on doing our best.

One other idea I want to share is the idea of telling the story, and we ask all employees – and it's easy to do when there's a business of four or five, but even larger businesses, where thousands of people do this, but it's so much easier when we have a small business and that is to ask every team member to share an example of when they grew created a great experience, either for an outside customer, or an internal customer. We call that that moment of magic, and we want them to share it with the rest of the team if we have these small team meetings, we do it at least once a week, and we switch it up, we say give us an example of when we resolved the problem. Give us an example of when we solved the complaint. Give us an example when we did something internally so we get to switch it up a little bit, and then everybody's getting to share the story, and when they share that story, it means they're actually becoming aware of when they're creating great service. I call that service awareness.

**Ramon Ray**

Wow. I hope that we go back and listen to this again. I hope everyone listening is tweeting this stuff out. In fact, if you're tweeting this out, take a little screenshot. I'm going to buy you one of the Shep's books and send it to you. So, tweet that, tag Ramon Ray, tag Shep Hyken, and definitely tag Verizon Business –

*[All talking]*

@Hyken. We keep it simple. No Shep. Why? Because there's only so many characters, why waste four of them on my first name, right?

**Ramon Ray**

So, @Hyken, @RamonRay, definitely @VerizonBusiness. This is amazing, Shep, and I think this is what I like about this whole series we're doing. We get the nuggets, the practical insight that Verizon is bringing to its community. Let me see, Shep, if you can handle a political question. So, let me go politics, Shep. Are you ready?

**Shep Hyken**

Dangerous, dangerous.

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## Ramon Ray

The question, Shep, for you is, is the customer always right?

## Shep Hyken

Ah, yes. The politically correct answer is yes, but the actual answer is no. The customer is not always right. However, they are always the customer. So, if they're going to be wrong, I want you to remember you're not trying to get into an argument and win an argument with a customer. You're trying to win the customer. So, if they're wrong, let them be wrong with dignity and respect. Manage the experience in such a way and often the way to manage an experience when somebody is wrong is not to tell them they're wrong, not to tell them oh, no, that's not the way we do it, but to educate them properly on how it works, and once somebody understands... you can ask a question, hey, I understand why you might think this is right, do you understand how this process works? Well, no, tell me. When you start to explain something, they go, oh, now I get it. Yes, makes sense to me. I once walked into a hotel. I was in Toronto, Canada, I believe, and my driver late night dropped me off, and I walk into the hotel and I say I'm here for my reservation and the woman behind the front desk was very new, and I could see this panicked look in her eyes, and I said, what's up. She goes we're sold out tonight. But I have a reservation, and I took out my registration confirmation number, and I gave it to her, and she typed it in and guess what? I was wrong. She was right, and here's where I was wrong. I was at the right brand of the hotel. I was just at the wrong hotel. About two blocks away is the hotel that I should have been dropped off at, and she was very confused, and I heard her say under her breath, are you ready, the customer is always right, the customer is always right, just like two or three times, and I go hold on, let's talk about this, and I go, what's going on? She goes, this is my first night that I'm alone. My manager is not with me, and I'm supposed to treat every customer like they're right, but you know what, Mr. Hyken? You don't have a reservation here. I'm not sure what to do about it. So, the customer's not always right, but they're always a customer, and we've talked about it and she was so nice. She had the bellman actually give me a ride down the street to the right hotel, and I just love telling that story because it's obvious I wasn't right, but at the same time, she didn't make me feel bad. She didn't say I'm sorry, I can't do anything about it. You're going to have to leave. No, she worked to resolve it with me.

## Ramon Ray

Shep, that is an amazing story and it leads me to my next question. Again, we have a few minutes left. I don't want to hog all of Shep Hyken's time so make sure you all – in the chat, I'm sure the questions are flying in. Ask questions about your business, ask the thorniest questions. This is where you can get Shep Hyken's advice for you. Listen, Shep consults to big, big, big companies and small ones all over the world. You get some of Shep Hyken's time today. So, make sure you put those questions in there. We'll ask as many as you can. Tweet. Shep is on Twitter as well, so tweet, and etc.

Shep, I'm curious, to your point that you just made about the example of your hotel, which I love, would you encourage businesses to spend a little more time, because I don't think it takes much money per se, but time and effort to build experiences even, to train and go for that to try to give every customer a candy bar or a special call, or how do you guide this, is my question? Should we try to be the Amazons, Ritz Carltons as best we can with the experience side as well? How do we do that?

## Shep Hyken

Well, you don't need to give anything away. I mean, I love it when I go to a hotel and there's candy on the nightstand like... on the pillow. I went to a very small hotel, by the way, a very – this is a great... I love this, I haven't told this in years and years. I went to this hotel, a small hotel, I would say from the standpoint compared to a Ritz, if a Ritz is a Class A, this would be a Class C. It was... I'm not going to tell you the brand [inaudible] saying they weren't, but basically a roadside motel. I walked in and they said sir, we don't

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have mints on the pillow but what we do have, and they pulled out a big candy bar, a basket of candy bars, and they were oversized Snicker bars, Milky Ways, Hershey bars. Unbelievable. I go, I get to take one? Take two if you want. Now, keep this in mind. My room rate, are you ready for this, was \$50, \$49 a night? OK, very low-end hotel. This is where my client put me that night. A Candy bar costs over a dollar. They were willing to spend 2% on an amenity to make me have a better experience. Now you don't always need to spend 2%, but what you can do is take a look at what the big guys are doing, those fancy hotels that put the mints on the pillow. They don't have the people power to go into every room and do turndown service and put a piece of chocolate on the pillow or the nightstand, and their alternative, however, was, hey, I want to do something nice and give them that little sweet treat. Let's do it a little differently. We're still giving them the sweet treat, and guess what? I think that was more impactful than having the chocolate on the nightstand because I get chocolates on the nightstands at lots of hotels, but very few of them take out a basket and give me an oversized candy bar.

**Ramon Ray**

Yes, I think it's amazing, Shep, again, this is what you do, but I think we remember these things. We remember I think very, very bad experiences. Oh, I went to the hotel and he slapped me in the face or punched me, Shep—

[All talking]

Exactly, or I went to a hotel and whatever the thing and this happened. So, I think that this is very interesting. I'm curious, Shep, before we dive into Q&A again, I thank you all, those who are typing the questions in, I'm going to get to you in two or three more minutes. Stay tuned. Don't worry, Shep is going to answer your question, but I'm curious, any technology you want to talk about, and no need to mention specific names of technology, Shep, but I'm just curious, hey, Verizon is a technology company, to a large part, is video part of this, CRM, websites, chats, anything that comes to mind for you that we could start thinking about, especially as we're coming out and reopening our businesses? Anything that comes to mind for you?

**Shep Hyken**

One of the things that companies seem to be doing a good job of, and think about it, when you open up your inbox for the email, you see all these emails from the businesses that you've worked with, have you been collecting information about your customers, and by the way, I'm not talking about secret information. Something simple. If they're doing business with you, and they like you and they're willing to give you their email address, are you keeping that in a safe place, be it a computer, in the right program, and are you using it in the right way to communicate and give the customers what they want? And by the way, not all customers are created equal. If you really want to do a great job, find out or write down or segment your customers into the area of interest that they have. If you have a shoe store, for example, and you sell different types of shoes, if you know that this customer only buys running shoes and not basketball shoes, and you've got some inside, call it insider, or early information about a brand that's coming out with a new shoe. You could say, hey, I know you love your running shoes, check out what this company is getting ready to release. Let me know if you want me to hold a pair in your size. That is totally personalized, powerful information to have and information to use to get your customers to feel that you understand who they are. It's like that old 1980s TV show, Cheers. Everybody wants to go to a place where everybody knows your name, metaphorically speaking, and there I use that term again, metaphorically speaking. Knowing your name is knowing your customer. When you know your customer, you're connected with them, and the connection, by the way, is ideally an emotional connection because that's when you start to see repeat business and, ultimately, loyalty come about as a result of connecting with them on an emotional level. It means you know them and they trust you.

**Ramon Ray**

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Well, I think with that, Shep – I had a few more questions, but I think with that, I'm just going to... I can't be too selfish, Shep. I want to hog all your time, but Shep, are you ready to take questions from the people who are attending the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series? Are you ready?

**Shep Hyken**

I am so ready. Let's get to it.

**Ramon Ray**

Let's do it now.

Wow, a lot of questions coming in. Thank you all very much. So, Shep, I think... and by the way, a little housekeeping. Many people are asking how do I get the slides, how do I get this, that, and the other, Shep's insight – not slides per se, but all that is in the Attachment tab, any information that Shep has so kindly and generously shared with us. Go to the Attachment or the slides tab. There's a lot of resources from Shep. Don't forget also you can go to Shep Hyken's website as well, and he'll say that again. You can tweet at him etc. So, I just want to say that, and those who are asking questions specifically about Verizon, the Verizon team definitely is in there answering them and we will talk to you directly.

So, Shep, question number one came in. Shep, I have an introvert as an employee, this guy or gal, they're programmer, nice person, but I'm not sure if they should be customer facing. Any tips or advice, Shep, on that situation? Do they put them there? Do I not? Do I train them? What should we do?

**Shep Hyken**

So, recognize that as soon as you put somebody into a position that's opposite of what their personality is, they could probably adapt for a very short time before they finally implode. That doesn't mean they're going to be bad to the customer, but internally, they're going to be stressing out and there's going to be a problem. My suggestion is if you've got an introvert that maybe is a financial person who's more interested in numbers than they are in people, hire them for that job. There's all types of behavioral style assessments that will help you find the right person and the right fit for the right job.

**Ramon Ray**

Also, keep the questions coming in. Shep, somebody says – a great question, I've wondered this myself – Shep, when can I fire the customer? They're just... I've reached the limit, Shep. It's like I'm trying to do good, Shep. I'm trying to listen to your advice, I'm reading Shep's books, but I feel they've got to go. Can I do that, Shep?

**Shep Hyken**

So, here's the thing. A difficult customer doesn't necessarily mean they should be fired. There are going to be customers that are very difficult to do business with. They have high expectations, they're going to push you and push you and push you, and you may choose to let them go, but the time you really need to let your customer go is when they've done something that I would consider to be offensive or insulting to your employees, and I believe when you step up on behalf of your employees, say a customer is being belligerent, cussing at them, it's, I would say, a direct offense. I mean, I know... I listen to support center conversations all the time, and yes, occasionally customers may drop a dirty word. If it's directed to the person, it's over. It's time for us to step in. Correct the customer. Give them a chance, but at some point, when they are doing something that's offensive and mean and not good for your people, it's time to let them go. Maybe not every time, but think about it, the power that that would show your people is that you

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would be willing to stand up for them, that your own people are more important than that person's sale, but when you ask that customer to leave, here's the key, keep the door ever so slightly open, unless their offense is so bad that you would never want to get them back. If they see... if they have a change of heart and they see a different way, let them have the opportunity to come back, and earlier you asked me is the customer always right and I said they're not always right, but they're always the customer, let them be wrong with dignity and respect. Well, sometimes you've got to let them be wrong and push them out the door but give them the dignity and respect ideally that they can come back and make amends and become a good customer again.

**Ramon Ray**

Wow, Shep, I think that's powerful. I just want to underline that and repeat what I'm hearing for everyone, because I think these are gems, is that (a) when you do fire the customer, you don't have to go low and say I hope you never come back and all that. No, just, hey, thanks so much, you're not a fit, whatever happens, that's one level I'm hearing.

**Shep Hyken**

Let me introduce you to my competition.

**Ramon Ray**

And then two is that there's a fine line between somebody being barraging, whatever the English word is, Shep, personally versus me being frustrated because Shep came late and I'm like, 'Shep, I've been waiting here all day, you don't have to fire me because of that, I'm genuinely frustrated'. That's what I'm hearing.

**Shep Hyken**

If somebody is taking a personal stab at somebody, they're using language, they're cussing them out, they're being belligerent. I once had a client that we were trying to get business with and I will never forget my assistant called her and the woman was just so rude and mean, it actually made my assistant have a tear in her eye, she was trying to hold back her emotion and explained it to me. I said, 'OK, that's a level four client'. We rate our clients levels one, two, and three, or I should say prospects. Level one, really interested, has the date in mind for me to speak, the budget is approved. Level two is, yes, everything is right, they're just not quite sure I'm the right fit. Level three, they like to get my newsletter. And that's all she had was level one, two, and three. I said, well now we've got level four. What's that? Don't ever call her again. That's the end of that. She all of a sudden smiled because she knew that I was standing up for her and that was real important to show that she was more important than that one particular customer that was just a very difficult person to want to do business with.

**Ramon Ray**

Love it, Shep. Another question came here, a great question. Again, thank you all for sending in your questions, keep them coming in. Shep, basic question, how do you handle negative reviews online? I'm scrolling through Yelp and all of a sudden, somebody just slams me in one degree or another, what do I do?

**Shep Hyken**

Number one, this is a really cool thing, you, as a company, need to respond to every review not just negative reviews. Even if it's simple, 'thank you, appreciate that, glad you enjoyed doing business with us'. Unless you're getting thousands and thousands of reviews, but most people, most small businesses aren't. But what happens when there's a negative review. There's several things



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that have to happen. By the way, in any negative situation, you need to acknowledge, apologize, discuss what you're going to do in a resolution, own it if it comes your way. It may not have been your fault, but it's now your opportunity and act with urgency. That's an in-person experience, but online, what we want to do is almost the same thing.

First, you need to respond in a timely fashion so this shouldn't go on for three or four days with it sitting there. My friend Jay Baer, I love Jay, you know Jay, Jay refers to negative reviews online, he says it turns customer service into a spectator sport, because now the rest of the world gets to watch how this company is going to handle this customer's review.

Number one, acknowledge it. Number two say, 'thanks, we're really sorry, that's not what's supposed to happen', there's your acknowledgement and your apology. 'I would like to go into direct message mode to where I can talk to you about your situation, so let me understand more of the details and I can discuss the resolution with you.' Now, that next step is to resolve it or discuss what you're going to do and, by the way, you've used those words, 'I would like to take care of you, or we would like to do this' that says there's a sense of ownership involved. The fact that you responded quickly is the urgency that we talked about in the acknowledge, apologize, fix it, own it urgency steps, those five steps.

So we go offline, ideally, we deal with the customer's situation, we may have to go on the phone to do that. By the way if you're going to go from one – like if you're on a social media channel or you're seeing a Yelp review, if you go into... you stay in that channel, if you will, until it's time to get on the phone, that's the only other mode of communication that you should switch to is in the phone, or I guess live in person would be good, if you wanted them to come in and give them another chance to experience whatever. But what happens at that point, you resolve the issue, you go back online and you say, 'thanks again for bringing this to our attention, I'm so glad we were able to take care of you and resolve the issue'. In the perfect world, it doesn't happen even half the time, but in the perfect world, that customer is going to come back and say, 'I am so glad that I did', and they think they reached out to you by complaining negatively on a review site. It comes full circle and you see it. But even if he customers who are watching see that you stepped in, you acknowledge, you went offline, you came back and you left the comment that we've taken care of it. It's great.

Another point is that Northwestern University did a study, this was just a few years ago and they said that if you have a perfect score on a scale of 1-5 of a 5, and there's 50 reviewers, 75 reviews, hundreds of review and none of them are less than a 5, its very suspicious. The 4.2-4.4 is a really good... it shows that most people love you. And then if they can look at the negative reviews and see how you handled them, it just negates any negativity that customer might have. You need to create this confidence that you're going to step up and take care of things when there's a problem.

**Ramon Ray**

I think that is powerful. Another question comes in here, Shep, is that for those companies whose businesses have been slow right now during these challenging times, many of us keep saying it, but it's true, even though we all keep saying it. Any suggestions, while business is slow, it's not as high as it was last year, any things that you're advising your clients to do, that you're doing, that we could – two or three things to do this week while we have half the business shut, 20% down.

**Shep Hyken**

You just said something that you're doing. Well, I'll tell you one of the things that I did. As soon as we went slow, I went through my entire client list, everybody that I worked for, for the last, I don't know, eight years, 10 years and I said, 'let's find out, go on LinkedIn, let's see if they are still there'. I don't care if I haven't... understand that a lot of what I do is getting up in front of audiences and speaking at events, so they may have hired me five years ago and I haven't really talked to them since, or maybe I talked to them once, sporadically. This is the time to pick up the phone and reconnect with customers. This is the time to send personalized emails

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to customers. This is the time... I use a video program, I think you're familiar with it as well, and I know when you asked me about some resources and we were talking about CRM, you mentioned the word "video" and I'm glad I'm bringing it up now, I use a video program to actually reach out and connect with people.

Is it OK if I share who that is? Its BombBomb Video, I think its bombbomb.com is what it is and, basically, I'm able to take my iPhone or sit at my desk with my computer camera and do a real short video and email it, and I can say, 'hey, Ramon, I know it's been a few years since we've connected, I'll just say that's my fault for not reaching out, but you know what, its time, I just wanted to let you know in this crazy time we're in that I'm thinking about all of my customers and all of the relationships I have, and I hope that one day we connect again and maybe even work together again, I just want you to know I'm thinking about you, thanks so much'. So that's one thing you can do is connect with that customer.

The other thing is what project did you always want to do that you didn't think you would have time to do. If you have the time, this is the time to do it. I will share something that I did with my team here. When we started going to that shutdown, stay at home mode and we weren't sure what was going to happen... and, by the way, as a speaker, what happened, speaking engagements come to an abrupt halt. I don't know when the next time I'm going to have an audience with a thousand people crammed into a conference room is going to be, hopefully it will be in the next year or so, but with those coming to a halt, here is what I said to my team. We're going to a time that could be slow, but as long as you stay busy, as long as you stay productive and you're focused on moving us forward, regardless of what's happening business-wise, we're going to continue to work together and so let's see how this thing plays out.

Do things that you hadn't done before. I also want you to think about pivoting to something a little different than you've done. What change can you make right now that might be a good one? Example, my friend was in the restaurant business and what happened to restaurants, they were told no more guests can come into restaurants. Sure, we have delivery and takeout, but this is what he did, he modified his restaurant to look more like a food market and he went to the local city hall, I don't know if he had to get a license or whatever and he became, basically, a small food store which allowed customers to come in and buy the items that he would normally sell, but he taught them, the ingredients and the recipes were there, and all of a sudden, he is open for business every day again and, of course, practicing social distancing and proper etiquette. Today, even though he is able to start to open up, as we start to open up across the country and across the world, he is still keeping some of these ideas that he pivoted to because he felt they were good.

By the way, that's a great question to ask yourself. In the last three months, what change was I forced to make that worked so well, I think I'm going to keep doing it, even when this whole thing is over? That's a question not for you, but for the rest of the –

**Ramon Ray**

That's powerful. Remember ladies and gentlemen, I only say Twitter because its powerful and instant, please I hope you're tweeting at Shep Hyken, @hyken on Twitter, @ramonray on Twitter and definitely thank Verizon Business, take a screenshot, send some of these tips to others, don't be selfish, share with other people. We've got several more minutes to go of this amazing insight.

Here we go Shep, and this is, I think, is a tough question, but I think it's interesting. This gentlemen or this lady is saying, hey, listen, our customer service, our customer experience, I'm just mixing them for the sake of this conversation, rocks Shep, it's great, but Shep I want to even better than that. I don't know, what do you say to this person who is we're doing OK, but we want to go to the next level. Any thoughts on that Shep?

**Shep Hyken**

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There's two things. Number one, training. We onboarded people, we trained them when they first came here. Training isn't something you did, it's something you do and it's ongoing all of the time, you don't need to do it every day, but you can do it on a... even if you have a team meeting once a week, you can take three to five minutes. I use the example of Tony's, the restaurant that's here in St Louis that every day before their doors open at 5:30 in the evening, they would have a team meeting and sit down and while you don't specifically say, 'here's a video I want you to watch and fill out the workbook questions', you're talking about customer service. Service awareness is key, that moments of magic card that I talked about just a few minutes ago where everybody tells the story, their story about how they created that positive experience for an inside or outside customer, that allows people to keep service front of mind. The best companies in the world figure out that the way to keep it moving forward, and even get better and better is to constantly be thinking about it.

If I can take another big example, I talked about the Ritz-Carlton as a great example. The Ritz has a mantra, actually, they call it a credo, I call it a mantra, its one sentence, or less that defines what customer service is for your company or customer experience. Their nine-word credo is, "We're ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen", and when you come to work at a Ritz-Carlton, you get it, you understand it, that's what you do. Then they train you to that and they have 24 gold standards, 24 of them, and every day each hotel, no matter where in the world is practicing the same gold standard. It's part of their pre-shift meeting. The manager meets with all of their team and say, 'hey, everybody, today's gold standard is whatever it is, number one, number 16', and when they finally get to 24, you know what they do the next day, like good shampoo, you're support to lather, rinse, and then they repeat. And they start with number one again, and they estimate that by the end of the year, the average employee or ladies and gentlemen who serves at the Ritz will have heard each of these gold standards about 10 times.

Think about that, its constant awareness, its constant pushing the same message. You don't have to have a new theme every year. It's the same thing, focus on it, nuance it. When you get a letter that's an accolade, share it with everybody, and then break down, why did this person send this letter? Can we do it all the time? We can operationalize what made this person so happy. Maybe you're already doing it, it doesn't matter. By the way, that's what happens when you get a negative letter, you break it down and you say, 'how do we make sure this never happens again?' well, with the good ones, break it down and see what you can do to make it happen over and over again. So those are just a few ideas.

**Ramon Ray**

I think that is powerful, Shep. Somebody else, Shep, asked a question about pricing to a degree, and the question is, basically, how do I blend the aspect of us having good customer service, a greater customer experience, and blend it with we're not the cheapest if you understand what I'm trying to ask you. How would you help them understand? Because they don't want to be cheap. They want to be premium –

**Shep Hyken**

People will pay for value, and every statistic or study that you read says the stats are there that people will pay more for a good service experience than they won't. Now, some people are very price focused, but a majority of customers, and unless you're in the type of business who is extremely price-focused, recognize that there's an opportunity not to charge a whole lot more, but to charge competitive pricing versus lowest pricing.

I'll give you an example, I wrote an entire book using this one company as an example through the entire book. It's called, the book is Amaze Every Customer Every Time, and the company that was focused on is Ace Hardware who is not known for low prices. They're, in some cases, 10% the size of their big box competitor that could be across the street or even next door and what they recognize is that if they can create a level of service and they call it, "helpful service", there's friendly service and then there's their

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kind of service, which is helpful, so it's not just, 'what can I help you find today?' when the customer comes in and I'm looking for whatever, 'oh, it's in aisle 10', it's like, 'let me take you there and on the way there, what are you going to use this for?' and ask questions and what can I do to make sure than when you leave the store, you don't have to come back a second time for the same project.

They're focused on delivering a level of service and I will promise you this, they give you great service, you get rock star parking compared to a big box store, this is a much smaller store, maybe a 10,000-15,000 square foot store versus 150,000 square foot retail store, and when you walk in, you have a team of employees that are knowledgeable and they will help you and, at that point, even though they're never going to gouge you on price, price doesn't mean nearly as much as the experience that you get from the value they provide.

**Ramon Ray**

For sure, that is powerful. We have someone here, Shep, who is competing, in one way or another, with Nike, with Under Armor, some big competitors and her question is, Shep, how can I make our brand pop and sizzle just like Nike. I think it's a two-part question, one can be branding and all that, they're a bigger company, billions you can spend on marketing, which is a different story, but you're welcome to answer it, but I think regarding what we're talking about, anything they can do to alter their world, Nike or Jo's Sneaker. Any ideas for me?

**Shep Hyken**

Let's talk about that. I don't know what business they're in, but I'm going to take a stab at sharing with you the stat that I think is real important, that 70% of the people that are viewing this show are employees of five or less is that right, or 10 or less... OK and then there's a group that's 100 or less, so we're small businesses competing, sometimes, against really large brands. Ace Hardware competes against Home Depot, Lowes, Menards, these big brands, so here's what we can do.

I'll give you a good example of this too, I did a speech for Trek Bikes, and Trek are all independently owned stores, just like Ace Hardware stores are, and one of the questions the CEO asked me afterwards is how do we compete against these big companies like Amazon that are selling online the same things we do. I said there's something that we can do as small businesses that these big businesses can't do nearly as well, and that is we can do local so much better than them.

I know a client that was in the retail business and they had a big box store competitor come in and move literally right across the street. When the sun went down, it cast a shadow on their store. He said they were outspending me in advertising by 30 times. For every dollar, they would spend 30, and not only that, they were more than 10 times my size. It sounds like a big brand versus a small business. And what did this guy do, he pulled all of his ad money together that he was using, he said, 'I can't compete anymore like this', and he took it and he put it into the community, he started sponsoring kids' baseball teams and soccer teams. He would go to the school dances and he would pay for the decorations and he would become a part of the community that he was in.

One of the concepts we talk about is to know your mile and it's a metaphorical mile, there's that one word again, "metaphorical", because it could be five miles, it could be your city, but what it is, is you know your customers in the area so well and they know you so well that there's a connection.

Back to the Ace Hardware example, there was an Ace Hardware in a town that literally caught fire and burnt to the ground, and the townspeople came out and they cried not knowing if their Ace Hardware would be rebuilt and, of course, eventually it was and they were happy again. How many of your customers would cry if your business had a fire and burnt down. That's pretty cool.

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## Ramon Ray

Wow! Listen, we've got a few more minutes for questions, I'm going to get to them. If your question wasn't answered and it's really, really burning, really burning you like I wish Shep would answer it. Two things. One, I hope I can speak for Shep in this, just tweet at Shep, @hyken on Twitter, do that and/or you're welcome to email me, [ramon@smarthustle.com](mailto:ramon@smarthustle.com), I'll work with Shep in some way to get that answer, only if it's really desperate you have got to ask it.

## Shep Hyken

You know what I want you to do, @hyken and then use the #askshep, and I promise you I will answer that question, I will probably answer it right there and I might even use that question as an example on the next time that we're doing an interview like this. It would be great if you would ask that question.

## Ramon Ray

Shep, thank you so much. A few more questions coming up is that, Shep, this person here has a daycare, they've been closed for three months and, again, thank you for being on our Verizon webinar, thank you for holding out, thank you for the strength that you show, this person who asked it. The question is, it's not quite customer service, but Shep is a smart guy, but how do they get their staff to embrace all the new rules and procedures and so many things in the question she kind of says or he says, is that should they use the treat method, like incentivizing, but any thoughts on that, Shep, how to work with your staff, kind of how to be a leader, thoughts on that.

## Shep Hyken

There's several things here that are coming to my mind immediately. Number one, you become a leader by being the best example. A good leader, when you create a policy, a process, I hate that word "policy", but today with COVID-19, we have to create certain policies. Everybody that comes in, like our employees, must wear masks, they must practice certain hygiene and safety and health, it's a policy, it's not even a guideline that, 'don't worry about the mask today', it has to be done. So there's certain mandatory areas.

What I always preach in leadership is, number one, if leadership wants to have and create a great customer experience, they have to define what that is and I'm going to get to this in a second, then they communicate it, then they train to it, and here is number four, the leader is a role model. The role model means they exhibit the behavior that they want their employees to exhibit. Walt Disney used to walk into theme parks when he was alive and he would see a piece of trash on the ground, he would stoop down, pick it up, throw it away and he called that Stooping to Excellence. He said, 'I know that everybody knows who I am and when I walk in the theme park, all of the cast members', which is what their employees are called, 'all those cast members are looking at me going, oh, there's Mr. Disney, oh look at that, he picked up a piece of paper, I better not ever pass up a piece of paper, because if Walt Disney can stoop down and pick up a piece of paper, I surely can', so he was role modelling and that's so important.

You've got these guidelines. Here is what I would say, for the safety and health of our customers and fellow employees, these cannot be broken and when you are emphatic about it, you're determined to keep it and you're walking the talk, I believe your customers and your employees, together, are going to feel confident about wanting to come to a safe place that cares about their health.

Just a couple of days ago, Apple announced – and by the way, Apple was the first major retailer to close down their entire retail operation mid-March. One of the first, but I think they claimed to be the first. I believe it was yesterday or the day before, they shut down after they've opened up all their stores, they shut down 11 stores. Why? These are areas where the COVID-19 is coming back

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and people are getting sick again, and they said, 'you know what, as much as we want to sell computers and iPhones and god knows what, we've got to stop until people get better'. That's a pretty good message that says, 'I care more about you than the money'. I want to chase my customers, I don't need to chase the sale.

## **Ramon Ray**

Wow! Shep, with that, can you one more time that hashtag, #askshep or #askshephyken.

## **Shep Hyken**

The hashtag is #askshep and if you go to Twitter, its @hyken. You can find me on Twitter, just putt the name in, Shep Hyken, you will find it, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, I'm there, just about everywhere.

## **Ramon Ray**

That's what I love about it. Again, I know you're doing this on behalf of Verizon Small Business so thank you, Shep, for your generosity. Before we go, I just wanted to give another word from from Chris, but Shep, it's been wonderful and let's hear this final word, Shep, from Chris.

## **Chris Sirico**

And that's it for today's webinar. Thanks again to Ramon and Shep, this was an amazing and insightful topic, we hope our viewers enjoyed it too.

Now, in the "Attachments" tab you will see that I'm sharing a handout from Shep, it's called the Convenience Revolution, so look for that. You can check out the other webinars in this series on our BrightTALK channel page, and be sure to tune into our next webinar coming up on Tuesday 30 June when we will be talking with Carl Gould on how to sustain your business with a bold promise.

I hope you will join us again on 30 June, and for all of the events in our Small Business Webinar Series. Thanks again for joining us. We will see you soon.

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