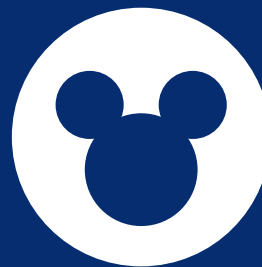


Vinyl Fence *Tip*

Practical and Proven Ways to Sell More Vinyl Fences

From your friends at National Vinyl Products

How to give customer service you'd expect at Disneyland



If you would like a crash course in customer service while having a good time doing it, take the family to visit a Disney theme park.

Disneyland and Disney World have earned the nickname “the happiest place on earth” for good reason. The parks consistently provide exceptional service.

According to the Disney Institute, the company’s customer service training arm, the service you receive as a Disney guest is carefully architected. According to a recent blog article on disneyinstitute.com, “Nothing is left to luck. It is the result of truly understanding our customers’ expectations and putting the right guidelines and service standards in place.”

Let’s look at how you can incorporate some of the Disney customer service tenets into your fencing business.

Build relationships with your customers.

Disney teaches its park staff, called “cast members,” to focus on the little things that can make connections with guests. Cast members offer directions to families who look a little confused. They ask to take photos when they see guests struggling to get everyone in a selfie. They open doors, and if you are wearing a name badge marking your birthday or visiting the park for the first time, they greet you by name — with a smile.

The principle Disney uses for this unique service is “purpose trumps task.” The phrase means that it is okay for a cast member to be off-task if they are on-purpose. For example, if someone is assigned to sweep trash along Main Street but ends up guiding a family to the first-aid center for a band-aid for a child’s skinned knee, that it being “off-task” but “on-purpose.”

How does this translate into selling fences?

Make your customer interactions about the people, not the sale. It is the little things:

- Acknowledge their presence within seconds.
- Introduce yourself. Ask of their name.
- Ask them how you can help and then listen to their responses with a smile.
- Avoid pressuring customers to make a purchase. Instead offer information that will help them make the best fencing choice for their home or business.
- Strive for the “wow factor” by anticipating guests’ needs and wants before they ask for them. Train your employees to look for these opportunities as they serve your guests.

Be show ready.

Disney thinks of their theme parks and resorts as “shows” and their employees as cast members. These terms are not arbitrary. Thinking of your work as a performance gives a heightened sense of awareness to doing a professional job that is on time and on point.

Disney parks are kept immaculately clean. Despite the fact that thousands of people file through the parks each day, it is almost impossible to find a discarded cup, napkin, anywhere on the ground. If a ride or show is delayed, their goal is to let guests know immediately and to give them a time everything will be running again.



a dining experience that did not meet their expectations only to ask the customer to come back when the person with the “voucher drawer” key is on duty.

The three guidelines Disney uses in this step of customer service are:

- **Achievable:** Disney stresses that employees are fulfilling a promise to the customer, so they must only offer products or services that can be delivered.
- **Accessible:** Customer solutions must be readily available. A guest who is already disgruntled does not want to wait for a resolution.
- **Appropriate:** Ideally, the solution should fit each customer’s unique situation. Giving someone a park voucher for the next day will not help a guest who is flying home tomorrow.

For your fencing business, make sure your employees understand the warranties that come with your vinyl fencing. Train them in how to respond in a friendly, professional manner to frequently asked questions about fence cleaning and maintenance.

If there is no way to give the customer what they want — and that can happen sometimes — Disney suggests going back to that all-important focus on relationships. If you have to say no to a customer, here are two Disney Institute credos to keep in mind.

1. Carefully explain the reason for the decision. It’s all too easy to say something like, “That is our policy” or “That is not covered under our fence warranty.” But if you are building and maintaining relationships, you need to take your response further. Customers usually are more understanding of a “no” answer when they know the reasoning behind it. When you don’t offer an explanation, you can seem insensitive and even rude.

2. Offset the customer’s disappointment. Maybe, you can’t refund their money, but is there something you can do instead? Think about what you would want in the same situation and try to save the relationship.

When you run your fencing company with Disney customer service principles, you will see a difference in customer satisfaction. Walt Disney himself once advised, “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.”

For more information on Disney customer service, read the Disney Institute book, *Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service*, by Theodore Kinni, and visit <https://www.disneyinstitute.com>.

How to incorporate this concept into your fencing business?

- Train your employees to know the answers to common questions your customers may ask about your fencing. If they are stumped, train them not to say, “I don’t know,” but “I will find out and get back to you.”
- Give accurate times for delivery and installation and keep your showroom and samples scrupulously clean. Train your staff to come to work well-groomed and dressed in clean, well-fitting clothes that reflect the professionalism of your company.

Resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

Even Disney can’t please all the people all the time. However, they are committed to finding a solution promptly. “When something does go wrong, or a customer is unhappy, we believe speed is critical to service recovery and is best achieved by the maximum possible delegation of authority,” writes Bruce Jones, Senior Cast Development Director for Disney Institute.

“Therefore, it’s essential that employees are empowered and equipped with tools to enable them to quickly resolve as many issues as possible on their own.”

Disney trains employees to carefully listen to a customer’s complaint and to focus on finding a solution right then and there. However, it also cautions employees not to offer something that cannot be delivered.

For example, it would be even more frustrating for the customer, if the employee provided a meal voucher for



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