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## WHO CARES WINS

Am I alone in being frustrated on an almost daily basis when dealing with suppliers? I'm convinced the 'who cares' attitude is spreading like an epidemic. Let me give you a quick run down of just one of this week's fiascos to demonstrate what I mean. A package from one of my suppliers was overdue for delivery from a well known courier company, even though the tracking showed that it had been sitting on a shelf in the local depot for several days. Now, I live in a reasonable size city, Salt Lake City in fact, which has a decent size population and infrastructure – heck, there's even an IKEA, and there ain't many of those across the U.S. I'm not talking about Barstow here (no offence to Barstow readers, I'm not picking on you, I promise). Anyway, so I get on the phone with the 'customer service' advisor who tells me that they only deliver on certain days of the week - I'm serious! Apparently however, I'm permitted to trudge the 15 miles out there to collect the package if I want it before they were ready to find a slot in their random delivery schedule. I considered pursuing the line of reasoning that since I'd paid for two day shipping, I'd kinda' hoped that I'd see it within 2 days of ordering, but I thought better of it. I didn't want to appear unreasonable or demanding. Instead I bit my tongue and dutifully trotted off down to the depot and stood my turn in line until permitted to utter my request. Not much to do while waiting, other than eavesdrop on a phone conversation between a customer and a 'support' rep. Obviously I couldn't hear the customer, but fortunately in this instance, the rep had a habit of repeating the caller almost verbatim, which under normal circumstances would have been highly irritating. Anyway, I digress. This is how the conversation went: "So you're saying that the driver threw the box over your fence, is that right?" (customer replies) "Well, obviously I wasn't there, but I'm sure he just wanted to make sure the package was hidden from the view of any passers by." (customer replies) "Oh, you're saying the fence is 7ft high?" (customer replies) "And the antique set was smashed?" (customer replies) "Mmm, that happens a lot. I hope it was insured." I'm not making this up, I wish I was. At that point I was feeling absolutely thrilled that I'd escaped with only having to go outside in the freezing cold in the middle of the winter and drive 15 miles - it was a relief to know that I'd intercepted the sequence of doom, before my box had got to the throwing over the fence part. I got my box, and little did it know that it had been spared the physical trauma that apparently was a standard feature. I didn't even throw the box away after emptying its contents, it seemed cruel, it needed protecting... Okay, so I got a little carried away, but actually I'm deadly serious about the lesson here. Customer service is such a rare commodity that it's in danger of becoming extinct. Let's face it, the times when we experience great service with a smile are now so rare that we tell everyone, and they're suitably impressed. If providing outstanding customer service and keeping customers happy is a high priority for you and your staff, you'll immediately put your business a giant leap ahead of all your competitors. It's such a ridiculously simple principle to comprehend, but sadly many more overlook it than 'get it'. Be one of the ones who gets it. Give it time and your business will explode over the long-term, I guarantee it.

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