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## CUSTOMER AS EMPEROR

From Japan comes the tradition of oshibori. Oshibori is the Japanese word for the rolled up hot towel you receive after eating at an authentic Japanese restaurant or at the conclusion of an international flight. If you have never experienced a hot towel after a long flight, it is as close as you can get to a refreshing shower in the comfort of your seat with all your clothes on. What does it have to do with growing your business? It's remarkable.

As noted, you might expect a hot towel in a Japanese restaurant or on a flight but how about in the dentist chair just after the hygienist has stretched your mouth into unnatural shapes to chisel that last piece of plaque from your teeth? Nice and warm, with the light sent of lemon--that would be remarkable wouldn't it? How might that change what you tell your friends about your trip to the dentist? Simple thing. Only costs a few cents. But it could lead to a number of referrals. What would your customers tell their friends if you gave them a hot towel?

According to Jason Stark of White Towel Services, the majority of his customers are dentists. Dentists that understand that filling your cavity is a commodity-- one of a thousand dentists could it. But having a remarkable experience in their office-- that is something that nobody can compete with.

So what do your customers remember about your business? Do they experience something remarkable enough to tell their friends about? For some businesses it might be their concept. For example, Entrees Made Easy provides the ingredients and recipes for several meals to its customers making it easy and quick for them to create great tasting home cooked meals. The concept is new, innovative, and needed in today's hectic world. Those that try it can't wait to tell their friends.

Thankfully, an innovative new concept isn't the only way to be remarkable. The sad fact is that good service is so rare, any company that does provide it is remarkable. I read just yesterday in a column by John DiJulius about Cameron Mitchell Restaurants (27 restaurants in 7 states). What I read wasn't about their food or their concept (though with further research I learned both are amazing). What I read about was their customer service. They seem to realize that indeed the customer is the emperor and the emperor doesn't like to be told "no." Their promise: "The answer's yes...now what's the question?" Given their growth, I think their customers remember that kind of service and find it remarkable enough to tell their friends.

Still wondering what is remarkable about your business? Here is a suggestion: ask your customers. Ask them if they would recommend you to a friend and if so why? Then listen carefully.

How ever you figure it out, do it quickly. Being remarkable is not just a good idea-- it is absolutely required for any business to both survive and grow.

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