

# module one: customer service

Differentiation

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## Show Time

by Laurie Guest

Great customer service doesn't just happen. The health care organization where I worked for eighteen years was renowned for customer service. Patients for miles around said what a great health care experience it was. Referring physicians frequently asked me, "How did you find such great staff?" The answer is we hired good people, and we taught them that the culture of our company had a behavior expectation. We had standards of how we were to treat our patients and how we would treat each other including how the doctors treated staff. Everyone was held accountable in our culture. One of the important things we taught on day one was the concept of showtiming.

### What is showtime?

Consider a theater in which the actors waiting behind the curtain to go on do not get along well. There may be conflict or stress, but when they step on stage, they have lines to say and a role to play in order to give the audience an enjoyable experience. You'll never observe an actor step out of character, look out into the audience, and say, "Hey, you think he's a nice guy? You have no idea what he's really like." It simply would not happen in the theater.

The same is true for business. How often do we tell the customer things that happen behind the curtain that they don't need to know? Once the lights go on and the door is unlocked in your business, it is showtime. Show up in your costume, your business attire. Use the scripts you've been given, the right words at the right time for a desired result. Give your audience, your guest, the best possible experience no matter how many times you've recited those lines or completed that task.



A few years ago, an office manager of a clinic called to share a story with me. She explained that she and five others from her clinic had heard my showtiming story. On the drive home, they talked about showtiming and made light of it. I invited her to tell me more. She said, "We were thinking that every day after unlocking the front doors, we would gather in a circle, put our hands in the middle, and with jazzy hands say, 'It's showtime.'" She continued, "Here's what I noticed after we had been doing this for about three weeks. Our energy was higher, and people were showing up to work on time. Even though it was a silly little thing we were doing, we were serving our patients better because we had a showtime mentality."

With jazzy hands or not, think about what showtiming looks like in your organization. Remember, when the curtain rises, it is go time. Each guest expects a stellar performance.