Really Great Service!
Outrigger Offers Two Fine Examples

In my article last week, I commented that at Outrigger and OHANA hotels, we pay a great deal of attention to customer service. I hear about it week after week from guests who have experienced our brand of hospitality in one or more of our properties across the Pacific—from Hawaii to as far west as Guam and Australia.

This week was no exception as I heard from a couple I had referred to the Outrigger Reef on the Beach. They wrote me a postcard while they were there saying, “Everyone here at the hotel is the greatest!” Upon their return, the husband called me and told of how everyone from the Bell, Housekeeping, Front Desk, and Food & Beverage departments made him feel right at home. “They were so nice and friendly,” he said. “I want to tell this to your wife, too.” I told him that unfortunately, Linda was out of town. He insisted that I give him her telephone number so he could call her long distance and tell her also what a great vacation he had had.

That’s a satisfied customer!!

We had another situation this week where many members of our ‘ohana went to great lengths to provide exceptional service for 990 people on board the MV Explorer, which had been crippled in Alaskan waters by a 50-foot wave and was limping toward Honolulu. The ship had been chartered by the University of Pittsburgh’s Semester at Sea program and its passenger manifest included 681 students and 113 faculty who might all need transportation, housing, and meals on arrival in Honolulu, if the Coast Guard found the ship not seaworthy even in port.

Elizabeth Cambra and many members of our ‘ohana dropped almost everything else and worked feverishly for the next few days. They coordinated with the Semester at Sea offices. Buses were lined up, a printer was ready to print thousands of meal coupons, and the Managers of all Waikiki Outrigger and OHANA hotels were placed on standby.

The ship docked at about 3:00 p.m. on Monday and was finally cleared by the Coast Guard for continued occupancy around 9:00 p.m. Most of the faculty and students remained on board, but a few, tired of being tossed around in heavy seas for a week, did check in at their own expense to various Outrigger and OHANA hotels.

This was an example of providing a great deal of service that, at the last minute, could not be used. However, the efforts of Elizabeth Cambra and her team provided real peace of mind for the ship’s captain and the Semester at Sea administration, which I am certain was much appreciated.

The MV Explorer experience reminds me of what motivational speaker Frank Cooper says about customer relations (www.frankcooper.com):

- **THE CUSTOMER IS NEVER AN INTERRUPTION TO YOUR WORK.** The customer is your real reason for being in business. Chores can wait.
- **BRIGHTEN EVERY CUSTOMER’S DAY!** Make it a point to do something that brings a little sunshine into every customer’s life, and soon you’ll discover that your own life is happier and brighter!
- **GO THE EXTRA MILE!** Always do just a little more than the customer expects you to do. You will be richly rewarded for this habit.
- **REMEMBER – YOU ARE THE COMPANY!** In the customer’s eyes, you are as important as the president of your company … probably even more so.
In fact, the couple at the Outrigger and the Semester at Sea program both benefited from our exceptional focus on the customer. Many of our ‘ohana worked hard, went the extra mile, brightened their days and, in the process, represented our company in the finest possible way.

Well done! Congratulations and mahalo to all.