

Lee Milteer's Millionaire Smarts® Coaching Program Outshine Your Competitors with Outstanding Customer Service

Lee Milteer Interviews Keith Lee

IV. The L.E.A.R. Principle

Dear Millionaire Smarts® Members,

Since our focus is on Outshining your competitors with outstanding Customer service, please do remember that you are developing champions and ambassadors who are authentic in their own style for your business.

As a gift to our Millionaire Smarts® Members, our expert guest author, Keith Lee, is offering a FREE copy of *The Happy Customer Handbook*. Simply go to www.TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com and submit your information to receive a free paperback copy of the book, *The Happy Customer Handbook: 59 Secrets to Creating Happy Customers Who Come Back Time and Time Again and Enthusiastically Tell others About You*. Keith will even cover the cost of shipping. Sign up to get your copy today.

Keith Lee has graciously allowed us to share with you another important excerpt from his book about how to deal with upset clients. Enjoy!

TRAIN ALL TEAM MEMBERS WHO COME IN CONTACT WITH CLIENTS HOW TO TAKE CARE OF AN UPSET CLIENT

Listen, Empathize, Ask, Resolve. We've used this L.E.A.R. system to take care of upset clients at American Retail Supply since 1991.

I suggest you train your front-line people to implement the L.E.A.R. System and back it up with your new 'Make-You-Happy Guarantee' which I'll explain later in this secret. You don't have to advertise this new guarantee when you start. Simply implement it and see how it goes. If it works, go with it. If it doesn't work for you, go back to what you have now.

P.S. I've never heard of a business implementing the Make-You-Happy Guarantee who's not kept it.

Here is the L.E.A.R. principle

L is for Listen. Listen and don't interrupt. There are many reasons we don't interrupt. We don't interrupt because, number one, it's rude. Another reason is that when you're upset, you, I, and everyone else practices what we're going to say... and we all practice it the same way, *from the beginning*. So if you interrupt, they're going to lose their place and you're going to have to listen to the whole thing all over again - from the beginning.

Then, of course, we listen to the client because we respect the client and know they are in fact, the boss.

E is for Empathize. Empathize means to put ourselves in their shoes. My favorite is, 'I'm sure glad you told me so I can help you.'

A is for Ask. Ask, "What can I do to Make-You-Happy?" Most of the time you don't actually have to say the words, "What can I do to Make-You-Happy?" It's often obvious what you should do. But, sometimes you will want to actually use the words, "What can I do to Make-You-Happy?"

The main idea though, is portraying the attitude of "What can I do to Make-You-Happy?"

R is for Resolve. Give your team members guidelines of what they can and can't do right then and there to make the client happy. If what the client wants is reasonable, and it is within their guidelines, your team member needs to make the client happy. Train them to take care of the client right then and there.

I know, without an angry person in front of me, it's easy to explain how to implement the L.E.A.R. principle. It's a lot more difficult to implement it calmly and rationally when someone is screaming at you. You need to train your team members to understand that the client is upset at the situation and not with them.

Train your team members to take a deep breath, and tell themselves, 'It is not me. It's the situation.' Train them to talk to themselves and make sure they are the person who stays calm and collected. Train them that there is never an excuse for getting angry or short.

If the client is abusive, your team member needs to be trained to say, 'Sir, I'm sure I can help you.'

What if what the client asks for is beyond your guidelines or completely unreasonable? In this case, you simply say to the client 'I'm going to have to get a manager to see if we can do that.' Or 'Let me see if my manager can take care of that for you.' Or 'We don't have a manager here that can approve that right now, but if I can get your phone number, I'll have someone get back to you tomorrow morning, or whenever it is most convenient for you.'

In order to use the L.E.A.R. system effectively, you need to empower your front line people with your new 'Make-You-Happy Guarantee.' I believe 'Make-You-Happy' is the best, and least costly guarantee, for almost any business.

Here's our Make-You-Happy Guarantee: 'When a client has a problem, American Retail Supply team members are trained to ask, 'What can I do to Make-You-Happy?' In forty-four years we have never refused a client's request to make it right.'

Does this mean we'll do anything? Just about, but my guess is that someday someone will ask for something so outrageous that we won't do it. Then we won't be able to say, 'In forty-four years we've never refused a client's request to make it right.'

I've presented customer service seminars to dozens of different organizations and each time I ask the businesses if any have a guarantee similar to ours. In each seminar, a few people raise their hands. Then I ask them how the guarantee works. Every person, every time, answers 'Great!'

Then I ask each of these businesses with the Make-You-Happy Guarantee, "How often do people ask for more than you would be willing to give them?" The answer is 'almost never' or 'never!'

So, if people never, or almost never, ask for more than you would be willing to give them, why would you make them jump through hoops or talk to a manager to give them what they want?

This guarantee will most likely cost you less than a guarantee in which you make an offer to the client. More often than not, the client will ask for much less than you would have offered. This savings will more than make up for the few times that clients are unreasonable.

You certainly will want to give your team members some guidelines. Give them a limit as to what they can do without a manager's approval.

Then, unless the request is ridiculous, train them to take care of the client 'on the spot'

But if the request is ridiculous or over their limit, train them to say, 'I'm sorry, I'm not authorized to do that, but if I can get your name and phone number, I'll be sure that our owner gives you a call tomorrow.'

So What Happens When Someone Asks For Something Really Unreasonable?

Here's what we do when someone gets really unreasonable with their request. The sales representative simply tells the client that the owner (or sales manager) will call them. Many times the client just needs some time to calm down. When you, as the owner or manager, gets back with them they will often have a much more reasonable request.

But what if after you call them back, their request is still not reasonable? You need to try to get them to be reasonable. But what if they simply won't be swayed?

I love advertising that, 'In forty-four years we have never refused a client's request to make it right.' With this, we have taken care of some very unreasonable requests. But again, they are few and far between.

If the unreasonable request is ridiculous and expensive, we do what the client wants and then we code their account to say, "Client has requested unreasonable Make-You-Happy Guarantee." This

alerts us so that if the client makes an unreasonable request a second time, we do what they want again, and then after the second unreasonable request, we code the account not to sell to them in the future.

In Forty-Four Years, We Have Sold To Over 100,000 clients And We Have Coded Only Two Accounts To Not Do Business With In The Future!

There are a number of reasons for using Make-You-Happy as your guarantee and L.E.A.R. as your system to take care of upset clients.

- It's easy for you, your team members, and your clients. Neither you, nor your team members, needs to play Solomon and come up with what is 'fair.'
- It's easy to train your employees.
- It costs less. Everyone I know who uses this agrees – It Costs Less.
- It creates happy clients – and 'Only Happy Clients Come Back!' In addition, happy clients spread positive word-of-mouth advertising and unhappy clients spread negative word-of-mouth advertising.
- It makes your job easier and less hectic.

Type this up, laminate it, and have every member of your team keep it close by:

Listen and don't interrupt.

Empathize with something like, 'I'm sure glad you told me so I can help you.'

Ask, "What can I do to Make-You-Happy?"

Resolve - Unless what the client asks for is ridiculous, DO IT!

UNDER-PROMISE AND OVER-DELIVER

Again, this is something Disney does well. If you're in line for a ride at Disneyland, and see a sign that says, "The wait from this point is 35 minutes." The actual wait will be less than thirty-five minutes. That's under-promise and over-deliver.

This principle applies to many areas. Here are some examples. If you tell a client that someone will get back to them within a certain amount of time, you need to make sure they are gotten back to before that time.

In our business, we sell a lot of custom printed items. If we think the item is going to take three weeks to get, we'll quote four weeks. Then when the client gets the product in three weeks, we're a hero, instead of a goat when we say three weeks, and something goes wrong. We would rather err on the side of under-promising and over-delivering.

Now that doesn't mean that we're going to walk away from orders that are tight. For example, a client has a trade show coming up, and they need their custom printed bags before the trade show. After the trade show, those bags aren't worth anything to them. We know it's going to be a tight deadline. First, we make sure the client knows that the bags will only be on time if

everything goes well. Then we'll make phone calls or whatever needs to be done to ensure that we can make that deadline. The key is that we need to follow up on that order every single step along the line to make sure we make the deadline.

Here's another example. We may have a supplier who's providing us a product and we don't know exactly when we're going to get it. In that case, we need to allow the client to make the decision as to whether they want it or not. We may say something like, 'If everything goes right we expect that container to be here by then, but we don't have any control if US Customs decides to delay it by inspecting it, so I just want to be sure you understand.' Again, this goes back to the idea of being totally honest with your client. Never tell a client you can get something done when you think you can't.

To find out more about Keith Lee, go to www.keithlee.com.

In Closing from Lee:

One of the most important things you can train your team on is how to take care of an upset customer, client, or patient so they feel heard and valued. It takes time and practice for team members to understand how to deal with upset customers and feel confident solving their problems. I encourage you to do some role-playing with your team so they can practice dealing with customer complaints. Create scripts with suggestions your team members can use to deal with upset people in a calm and effective manner.

Your Mindset and Performance Coach,
Lee Milteer

P.S. Remember to take advantage of the resources on your Millionaire Smarts® Membership page. Each month, we provide you with digital copies of the reports and transcript, an MP3 of the call to download to your mobile devices, information on our featured expert guest and links to free gifts & helpful resources, and supplementary content from our team of expert faculty coaches—who include Dan Kennedy, additional reports from me, Phone Sales Doctor Chris Mullins, Health and Fitness Coach Joe Carabase, Leadership Coach Kevin Eikenberry, Newsletter Guru Jim Palmer, and Sales Coach Steve Clark.

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