

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

## Lee Milteer Interviews Keith Lee

### Transcript of Tele-Seminar

Welcome to this month's issue of the Millionaire Smarts® Coaching Program for Profit and Productivity with your coach Lee Milteer

Lee: Hello everybody! It is Lee Milteer, your coach, and I am very happy to be with you this month, and we're going to be sharing a topic that is frankly every single business in the world needs to pay a lot more attention to if you want to win customers, clients or patients and keep them. We're going to be talking about customer service, and the title is "How to have Happy Customers."

So, if you're a business owner and you're very serious about customer service, you want your business to outperform everyone else in your industry, you seriously need to be a student of the type of service that creates loyal, lifetime clients. In today's world, many companies have really bad customer service and society has become so used to bad customer service, it's almost the norm.

We have a fabulous expert guest with us today, someone I have personally had the pleasure of knowing for a long time and working with, and I sincerely admire. He has a quote that I want you to remember, and it is, "Remember, only happy customers come back," and the author of that quote is the one and only Keith Lee. He is the author of a few books, and one of them is *Out Nordstrom Nordstrom, Creating the Best Customer Service*, and the book we're going to talk about today is called *The Happy Customer Handbook*.

He is also - let me give you a little background about his impressive career. He's the owner of a 42 year old company called American Retail Supply. Now, American Retail Supply provides retailers with everything they need to run their stores - the supplies, fixtures, displays, point of sale computer systems and lots and lots more. He actually started managing this company American Retail Supply in 1981, and it's become bigger and bigger throughout the eighties and then he became the sole owner in 1993.

Since then, about eighty percent of his competition has gone out of business, many of them because he actually bought them out. Now, he's

convinced that his happy customers philosophy is the reason he is in business today and growing even in this economy. So, welcome Keith to our call.

Keith: It's great to be here, Lee. Thank you.

Lee: Thank you. It's always fun to talk to you Keith because your business sells the product that independent retail stores need to run their stores correctly things like the bags they use, display cases, shelving, point of sales, all those things. So, tell us right up front what that's been like in the thirty years you've been managing and owning the business?

Keith: Like in the direction that you said, I think that customer service is one of the reasons we're still in this business. We're still doing very, very well. It's more like ninety percent of our competition is gone nowadays. I do think again it's because of our customer service that we provide is one of the very big things. So, to get an idea what it's been trying to run this business is think, we sell to independent retailers. Now, how many independent drug stores do you see today? How many independent menswear stores? How many independent hardware stores? How many independent this or the other things do you see? Then, with the competition from the internet and all of that also, the market has dropped dramatically as far as the market potential, but yet over that period of time when the market has dropped dramatically, we've grown our business dramatically from when I started managing it in early 1980 from way less than a million dollars to doing about eight million dollars today.

I think that a huge reason for that is our focus on the customer service, and when I say focus on customer service, a lot of people when you ask them why should somebody do business with you, they say customer service. Then you say, "Well, what do you mean by that?" They're like, "Well, we have great customer service." "So, what specifically do you do to provide that great customer service?" "Well, we tell our employees that they need to give great customer service." Then you ask, "What does that mean?" They say, "Well, we tell them to serve people like they would want to be served." That's about all you can get out of anybody.

So, that's why when I say customer service, I'm not talking about, "We have great customer service," like everybody says, but what are the specific things that you do? What is it that you do in your business that differentiates yourself? That's what the book that *The Happy Customer Handbook* is all about, and it's about what we teach people to do in their businesses is have specific things, not just we give great customer service.

For instance the subtitle to *The Happy Customer Handbook* is, *Fifty-Nine Secrets to Creating Happy Customers who Come Back Time and Time again and Enthusiastically Tell Others about You.*

So, what are the specific things that you do in your business? Well, they're all of these 59 different things. So, if somebody asked me that, I'll tell them a few of the things, and then I'll say, "But there's 59." So, instead of just telling your team to provide great customer service, you need to as a management team have the things that are behind you, the things that support you in teaching people and teaching your customers, too, what your customer service is all about and you have to have these specific things that you do in your business and not just say, "We have great customer service," because that's what everybody says.

To give you an example too is that our website for American Retail Supply now it says at the top, "Call us at 1-800-426-5708, and you'll talk to a real live person." Then at the end of that, when they do call us, they get that person that's train to give, "WOW" WOW Customer Service, and that's what we mean by that.

Lee: As we said at the beginning, customer service is something that is so needed, but you're absolutely a million percent right, Keith. I think a lot of businesses just talk the game of our people have good customer service, but they have this assumption and expectation that they people that work for them have actually been trained and as you and I well know, unless you grew up in an entrepreneurial family or you've owned your own business and you've actually dealt with that stuff, none of this stuff was taught in school. None of it was taught in college. None was taught in society, and it's not talked about at the dinner table at night as Dan Kennedy would jokingly say.

So, it's all our responsibilities as business owners to make sure that we're educating our folks to do it, and one of the things I really love about your book is it's a small book. It's 88 pages long. A lot of it is in bullet form or almost bullet form. You're to the point. You're quick. So, tell us why you wrote the book *The Happy Customer Handbook*.

Keith: Well, it actually started out as all of our internal training. Back in 1981, when I started managing this business, I thought customer service was going to be the differentiator and really make a huge difference in our business. At that time, *In Search of Excellence* was out with Tom Peters and Bob Waterman, and you can back to *In Search of Excellence* and can say a number of those businesses that they highlighted in there didn't do

so well over time, but the two that they highlighted when it came to customer service have done fabulously over time.

They highlighted Stu Leonard's dairy in Connecticut and then Disney, and obviously those two businesses have done fabulous. So, that was kind of my starting point for customer service, and then I studied a lot of other businesses that are excellent – Nordstrom's and FedEx and a number of different business, and I put together internal training for our own team here.

What I have done since I first started managing the business about that same time, 1981, I started doing a physical newsletter to our customers. With that physical newsletter, I would go over some of the customer training that we do. These people would ask me back, "So, tell me more about that." I'd tell them more and tell them more, and then in 2004, I started doing a retail tip via email to our customers in 2004 every week, and I'd have a lot of these tips in it.

I wasn't necessarily trying to sell them something every time. In fact, there's no mention of a product typically until the very end of the email, but I would go over some of this customer stuff. Then all of a sudden, "Whoa do you have this in place all together so I can get it all?" So, I made it into a document that I could send out to some of our customers who requested it and by the time I got the document made, it was like, "Holy cow, this is big enough to be a book." I made it into *Out Nordstrom Nordstrom, Creating the World's Best Customer Service*.

So, that's how it got started, and by the way, the reason for my marketing tip in my newsletter – and I shared this with my clients – is threefold. It's a little bit off of customer service but not really because this is doing what Zig Zigler says. You've reached the highest pinnacle in sales when your customer thinks of you as their unpaid employee. I think that's huge. Zig Zigler, "You've reached the pinnacle in sales when your customer thinks of you as their unpaid employee."

So, we do this retail tip each week to our clients, and the main reason for it is to help them be better retailers. We also want to make sure they don't forget about us when it's time to look for something, and we will put a product in there once in a while to try to sell something, but that's part of that customer service, too. It's not really covered in the book much, but that whole idea of doing things so that your customer looks at you as their unpaid employee.

So, that's again why the book ended up being written is that it was really internal stuff that we did here that I shared with my customers. My customers said, "Do you have this all in one place?" So, I put it in one place and it became a book.

Lee: Well, one of the things that I really like about your book, Keith, is even though you have a retail background, your information, your wisdom truthfully isn't just about retail. It could be for dentists. It could be for restaurants, for insurance agents. I mean, it's literally useable for us as publishers. Anybody and everybody should be paying attention to how do they make the experience of their customers, their clients or their patients much more valuable.

I really want to point out something here to my coaching folks here. Over the last few years, I've spoken over and over again about the importance of the business owners writing a book of some kind, and Keith, you're a perfect example. Again, your book is 88 pages, and it's a small book, and you took the 59 questions, and you really turned them into answers. It's fast. It's easy to read.

Everyone listening to me really should understand the importance of business owners getting out of their comfort zone, writing down what you know. Truthfully, Amazon can publish these on demand for a very small cost. You'll be seen as a thought leader because you do it in your own community and niche, and if you make it evergreen you have it as training, just like Keith is using - a gift to other clients and a market on reality.

So, I challenge you to earmark a few hours each week to record answers to questions that you personally get. Get yourself an editor and have it printed and suddenly, bingo, you have a book. Now, Keith, you actually said to me before we started our interview that you don't really try to sell this book. So, explain that.

Keith: Well, again, I wrote it to share with my customers in the first place, and that's the main thing that I do with it right now frankly, although we are selling a lot of them. A lot of people are actually buying them in big quantities from us, and sending them out to their customers, and here's what I do with it in our business.

When we have a new prospect contact us and we have a lot of new prospects contact us because we have a good job on the web and all kinds of stuff, but we send them out a new client packet, and in the new client

packet is the book, and the catalogue that they've asked for and some other resources that we provide them with, and the whole ideas that our competition when somebody asks for a catalogue, they get a catalogue. When they ask for a catalogue from us, they get a new client packet that includes the book.

I'm just going to take a second to read the sticky pad that we then put on the front of the book, too. This really then underscores the value of the book without ever selling one at all. This is a three by four sticky pad that we actually stick right on the front of the book, "The main reason I sent you my book *The Happy Customer Handbook* is I want to make sure you know this is the type of service you should get from us here at American Retail Supply each and every time. If we ever let you down, please be sure to call us right away at 800-426-5708 so we can make it right. If you're still not happy, please call me on my direct line 253-859-7310. You may also find that some of the ideas in the book that you can implement in your business. Thanks boss. See secret number four, Keith Lee, owner American Retail Supply, author of *The Happy Customer Handbook*."

So, that's why I use it is I want to give our customers the idea - I want to put in their mind we're the people they want to deal with if they want great customer service. I don't talk about price. I don't say we're lowered price. I don't say we're higher priced. I leave price out of the equation totally, because what I want to get in their mind is that we're the people that give them great customer service.

So, now all of a sudden, we're on a different level of competition. If they're looking for just price, frankly go somewhere else. This is what I think. I don't tell them that, but that's what I think. So, that's one of the main reasons I really don't care if I sell books or not. What some of our customers do then is they do the same thing. With the book, they buy it in bulk, and they put the same kind of sticky pad on it, but instead of saying it's authored by them, of course they say, "This is the kind of customer service that we want to give you every time, and if we don't do that, make sure and give us a call so we can help you right away."

Lee: Keith, as you're talking, just before you said buying in bulk, I have the Entrepreneur's Assistant Training Program, and I'm thinking to myself - I'm writing a note to myself to ask Carly to please contact you about buying it in bulk so I can put them when we advertise the assistant program. So, thank you for that.

The other thing is you're doing something that everybody needs to do but gets very lazy about and that's the shock and awe package. You're doing something that they're not expecting that when they actually do it, they go, "Wow! Look at this." Because most people who are listening to this are familiar with GKIC marketing and things like that, we live and breathe it, and it becomes quite mundane to us. We know about it, so it doesn't feel as valuable, but to the average civilian in the world – and you know what I mean by civilian, your book and instead of just getting the catalogue, they're going, "Wow!" Shock and awe makes you stand out so much.

I love that you do, and I appreciate you bringing that back up. The next question I had I wanted to talk to you about was a lot of people who aren't really training don't really even know where to start. Of course, they haven't seen your book. So, they don't know where to start to talk about great customer service. So, let's talk about that.

Keith: I think this is huge, and that is that your core values need to put a huge emphasis on customer service. If that's not at the heart of your business, your team members are going to figure that out and then they're going to give the kind of customer service that just does not portray that because it's not at the core. It's not the core of what your business is all about.

For instance, our core values are take care of our team members, take care of our customers and be an honorable member of the community, and everybody is trained in those core values the first day they start business here or first day they start work here. They are in that order for a reason, but they're bulleted, not numbered. None of them is really that much more important, but I do have take care of our team members number one, again bulleted, but I have that first even in front of take care of our customers because my philosophy is if we take care of our team members, they will almost automatically take care of our customers. That makes such a huge difference.

Now, I don't mean take care of them as far as being their mother or giving them something for nothing or whatever the case may be, but what we mean by take care of them is that we're going to help them reach their personal and professional goals. In fact, we have people that have decided that their professional goal was outside of our company, and they were forthright enough to come to me and tell me that or come to their manager and tell them that, and we actually worked with them very closely while they went on and pursued something else, but we made it work for them here until they were ready to pursue that something else.

So, your core values need to really emphasize customer service, and Ken Blanchard, One Minute Manager guy, he wrote in an article in Executive Excellence, he went back and he studied businesses that had at the heart of their business providing great customer service. That was their number one goal, or that kind of thing, if you will. He did a study and he looked at this. This was a while ago, now, but if you had invested \$30,000 in the Dow, across the board, or invested \$30,000 in these companies that had the core related values relating to the customers, at the end of thirty years, that \$30,000 if you invested in the overall Dow was \$134,000, but if you invested in companies that had the customer service as their core value, the value had risen to a million dollars.

So, not only is great, and people love to work in businesses that have exceptional customer service. Right now, we had a sales rep retire and then we also have a sales rep frankly that is doing kind of what I just talked about before. She's always kind of wanted to work in helping people get away from addictive behaviors. So, she's moving actually from sales in our business to working for a company where she'll be doing some counseling and that type of thing.

We're going to end up replacing both of those people with people who were referred to us from our current employee. We call them team members, and the reason I bring that up is recruiting and hiring becomes so much easier when you give exceptional customer service because people like to do that. So, then all of a sudden, they're looking at their friends that may want to come to work in a business that has this exceptional customer service.

So, one of the side benefits of giving it is that we feel a huge majority of our openings in our business with relatives, friends, acquaintances, whatever it is of current and team members because people love to work in businesses that provide exceptional customer service.

Lee: I really like that. You and I have had this discussion. There are two kind of clients. There's your internal clients and your external clients, and I think you are a great example of how you take care of your internal clients. I'm a big believer in that that I'm in here for the long run, and I do realize that someone who is not going to stay forever, but their life changes. Circumstances change, and one of the greatest compliments I ever got from a staff person years ago was she left and she said, "I came in working for you as a lamb, but I left a lioness because of all that I learned."

The other compliment I've got is that most people who leave me do start their own business because working for me is like the...

Keith: Crash course in entrepreneurship.

Lee: Absolutely, yes. This is the fast track to entrepreneurship. That's who I am. So, this is great, and it's good to remind people of that that we have those inside clients and external clients. Keith, one of the things that I really liked about your book is that basically the book is divided up kind of into two sections. So, one section is kind of management, philosophy, secrets and team member training secrets. Let's talk about that.

Keith: Well, when it comes to management philosophy, we talked about that a little bit in that what's the number one thing and it is your core values. That is the number one thing that you need to do as far as managing and getting customer service done right in your business.

Now, one of the things when I did write the book too is I didn't want to put in here just a bunch of the same old same old stuff that you see in any other customer service book like smile and say thank you, and some of those things, and there are some things that are really, really important that I see missing dramatically when it comes to providing exceptional customer service, and it's why when we go somewhere we seldom get exceptional customer service.

I'm going to go over this little thing. When somebody orders our book online either *Out Nordstrom Nordstrom* or *The Happy Customer Handbook*, we ask them what kind of customer service training they give, and we ask these five different things. We tell our staff to deliver good customer service. They should know what that is. We tell our staff to deliver good customer service and give some examples sometimes, but nothing formal. C) We have meetings about customer service once in a while and tell everyone they should could give good customer service. D) All new staff gets customer service training when they are hired, or E) everyone has gone through our customer service training and they are consistently and persistently reminded about our customer service expectations.

So, we ask them all the way from we tell them to give good customer service, they should know what that is to everybody has the training and everybody is consistently and persistently reminded of it. Of the people who go to our website and order the book, only two percent answer E. Only two percent of the businesses - and these are businesses that are coming because they're interested in customer service - say that we give

customer training upfront and then we consistently and persistently reinforce that. That is why customer service in America and probably around the world is so bad is that there is no real training and there's not the two things together.

There's not the customer service training upfront and then along with consistent and persistent messages after that. What typically happens in a business that wants to improve their customer service is they'll have a meeting about customer service. They may get some video somewhere, and they may watch the video and they have this meeting and everybody gets rah rah and they go ahead and they go their separate ways and they put a couple of posters up in the office, and the customer service improves for two to three weeks and then there's no consistent and persistent reminders of what's expected and the customer service goes right back down to where it was before.

I like to use the example of Zig Zigler was asked when he was doing one of his talks one time by a reporter and he said, "So, Zig, this motivational thing that they're going to learn here when they're with you, is it permanent?" Zig says, "No, motivation is not permanent, but then again neither is bathing, and in fact, I recommend that people bathe daily and get a dose of motivation daily." That's the same kind of philosophy that we have when it comes to customer service. That is that your reminders to your team need to be consistent and persistent, and that initial training is not permanent and they need reminders. They need to be bathed daily.

Now, we typically do at least weekly with our customer service tips, but again, it's not permanent. So, that would be the biggest thing when it comes to management, what management needs to do. They need to make sure that they're consistent and persistent with their messages over time.

So, that would be the number one things they need to do when it comes to managing. Now, when it comes to actually team member training, my favorite secret in all of the team member actual training that we have in the book is train all team members to add you to every customer interaction.

Now, that doesn't mean that they can't be scripted, that they can't have some scripted customer interactions. The reality is if you're doing business over time with a customer, the script is going to run out at some point. For instance, in our business, people calling up and reordering or people that reorder something from us and now we're talking to them

about something else. That's got to go off script. We have 5,000 different items, if not more, in stock.

So, we train all team members to add you to every customer interaction. I don't know who came up with this, but it's certainly not new and the whole idea of people like doing business with people they know, like and trust. So, you can create that know, like and trust. How are you going to do that? You're going to do that by opening up and putting you into your customer interaction. Put some of your personality into it. Don't be afraid to allow your team to do that.

So, for instance, if I take an order for someone, what's natural for me is to say something like, "Wow, thanks so much for your order. I really appreciate it." Now, for someone else to have that so much, thanks so much for business, that may just come out totally wrong for that person's personality, and that's little thing where you can let them add just a little bit of themselves. When you create that bond between your team member and a client because that team member has shown themselves as a real person, that bond is hard to break, and that's why people do business with people they know, like and trust.

Lee: By the way, Keith, I'm taking copious notes here and I just want to comment on a couple of things. I'm going to feedback to you on some things. What you're really saying is you develop champions and ambassadors by having customer service and that you're asking people to truly be authentic in their own style of sharing, right?

Keith: Yes, exactly, and it can't look the same for everyone, and that's okay. I know that if you're in an environment selling timeshares at Disney and they come in and go through this whole procedure and it's this hour long presentation or whatever, that whole can thing can certainly be scripted. Overtime, when you're dealing with clients over time, you can't script everything.

So, then, one of the things that we do here, too is we hire nice people. I just think that's good. Hire nice people. Hire people that are nice and know how to treat other people nicely. They don't know it, but when somebody comes in and we're not making the whole hiring decision on this, but we actually go up and ask the receptionist then, "How did they treat you when they walked in?" It could be, "Well, they were okay. They weren't anything exceptional." Maybe they're nervous or whatever and they don't want to come out too much and that's fine too, but if they come

in and they treat the receptionist with some kind of, "I'm better than you" attitude, they're kind of off our list.

That goes back to years ago when I first started here in 1978 as a salesperson. Dick Thompson, the owner of the business at the time, I went out on a sales call with him, and he's like - and I hopefully learned this from my mom and dad and other people too, but I went out with Dick and he's so nice to everybody. While he's waiting to talk to the manager of the store or he's going back in the back to check their inventory, there's a warehouse guy back there, he's nice to everybody.

That's just his nature for one thing, but he also said, "Keith, you never know where this guy is going to be. This guy in the warehouse may end being the manager of the store one day, and that's the guy you need to sell." So, treat everybody nice, and again, Dick's the godfather of my first born, so he's a pretty nice guy in my mind anyhow, but there was also a philosophy of sales behind that, and I can tell you it worked later on because I was calling on a customer who was one of our biggest customers and remained one of our biggest customers, but one of the guys that was in the back room and did end up being a manager and purchasing for that company later on and he remembered me. He remembered me as the guy that treated him good when he was in the back room.

Lee: That's a great story. When I was growing up, my father used to say when I started to date, he said, "Look, if you go out with a man and he's nice to you but he's not nice to the waiter or waitress, you can assure that that's who he really is." That was a very good lesson for me, and one of the things I want - you've actually said this, but when you hire people, you really want to hire people who want to be there. I recently let someone go who talked a good game how much she wanted to work for Lee Milteer Publishing and all this stuff. We put everybody on a 90 day trial thing, but when it really came down to it, she didn't really want to be there. She was only there because she wanted the paycheck.

Ultimately, I decided that wasn't strong enough reason to keep her because when she was having a bad day, it would come out. Even though she would be saying correct, her energy level, just kind of her attitude would kind of creep in a little bit. She would get frustrated. So, I had to let her go because not only did she cause us feeling irritated that we were always trying to motivate her, motivate her, that after a while it just got so exhausting. It was like, "Okay, another one bites the dust. She's got to go."

Keith: Excellent, and actually a secret number of 42 in our book kind of relates to that too and the book is indifference is not an option when it comes to customer service. It's what you get. The thing where we all experience this customer service is in retail, so it's easy to use that as an example. You go to a retailer, and more often than not, the customer service that you're getting is indifferent. It's not bad, but it's just indifferent.

I'm here getting a paycheck. I get the same paycheck whether I give you great customer service or I just get by and do what I have to do, and that's what most customer service is. For our businesses, indifference is not an option, and it's critical that you train your team members that indifference is not an option. It's not in the framework of what we do. You need to be truly – I don't even remember the term I use, but it's basically truly grateful to each and every customer, and indifference is simply not an option.

Lee: What they don't realize is that all of our clients, customers and patients are actually paying our salaries. They're affording us to have a business where everybody gets a paycheck at the end of the week. Talk about what you think about mystery calling inside of an organization to check up on their customer service.

Keith: I think it's fabulous. I think that you have to have that kind of feedback one way or another. We have phones. In most cases, we can listen in on the one side of the conversation because we're physically there, and you can tell what's going on the other side, so that's one of the ways we do that. Also, they're on the phone right in front of us. We see their emails, etc., but I think mystery shopping and all of that is absolutely critical to providing exceptional customer service.

The thing you have to remember is if your team members are delivering anything near indifferent customer service when you're there, if that's what they're doing when you're there, you've got real problems. Again, I think mystery shoppers are a fabulous addition to doing this and critical.

Lee: One of the reasons I bring that up is because my office, Lee Milteer Inc. Publishing, we deal with lots of vendors and I had an experience not too terribly long ago where I was actually checking out something, and the person I was talking to must have hated where they were working because they actually said to me, "You know, we don't do that very well. You should actually call, blah, blah." Honest, from their perspective, they were trying to help me personally, but I thought to myself, "If I were the

owner of this company, I would fire you on the spot. One, for bad training, but you see that in the retail world.

I'm at Radio Shack, which is getting ready to be defunct pretty soon, and they're complaining, and I went to a hairdresser not too long ago, and I was out of town and all this person did was actually dump on me about their personal problems. I thought to myself, "I'm paying for top service. I don't want to hear this stuff from you." On top of that, the last time I went to the airport, instead of the person at the airport who got me my water, I don't know I said something about, "Have a nice day," and this is what she said, "Whatever!"

Keith: I just got back from Disneyland. My wife and I took our five year old grandson and here's another little pet peeve of mine. When a person, let's say you're the clerk, and the customer is on the other side, and the customer on the other side says, "Thank you." That happens. They say thank you to the clerk and the clerk comes back with, "No problem." Really, it's no problem?

The reason I brought up Disney is that I don't know if I've heard this before at Disney, but I don't think so, but what we teach people is that when the person on the other line says, "Thank you," your response is, "It's my pleasure," or "Thank you" back. It's not, "No problem." It's those little things where you really need to end it on, "I'm serving you," even if that person said thank you to you. You need to end it on something like, "It's my pleasure," but not, "No problem."

Lee: I'd also like to tell you something very interesting about the brain and why we shouldn't be doing that. I'm glad you talked about that because it's kind of a cultural thing. The younger people usually say that more, and the brain doesn't hear the word, "no." So, the last four bolts of electrical chemical current that ran through the recipient's mind without them being conscious of it is the word problem, which registers in their brain and turns into a picture, and they're unconscious of it.

So, for everybody listening today, if you ever hear anybody in your office say, "No problem," you have to stop that immediately. On the long term results of this will be that people don't have a good feeling about you, and there's something almost sarcastic about that. In my office, we never let anybody say it. We always say, "It's our pleasure," "Thank you for doing business with us," those kind of things. Show gratitude because that's what's lacking in our world today is this feeling that people are appreciative that you're doing business with them.

I just finished building a really big house on the beach and it was a two year project. When you finish a house, there's always little touch up things that have to be done. I had this experience with my trim carpenter, who by the way, I mean the amount of money I spent with this guy was unbelievable. I had done two houses with him, and I call him the other day, and actually he was arrogant. He was frustrated that I had another little project for him, and he no gratitude towards me whatsoever for spending so much money with him.

I actually told him the truth. I said, "Look, I just want you to know something. I won't be calling you again. I will find another trim carpenter because of the two years I've been working with you all you do is complain to me. You have never once offered an appreciative word for me for all the business I've given you. So our deal is done." He didn't even care because here's the deal. The economy right now, four or five years ago, he was starving, but now everything has perked back up. So, he's gotten quite cocky about the whole thing.

I'm a person who people know me. I will tell you what I think, and I don't sugarcoat anything. I'm not putting up with that. I am deliberately finding another trim carpenter because there's plenty of them. So, our customers feel the same way. I'm digressing here, so let's talk about before we end today just a few of the chapters.

Chapter 33, managers should be seen as coaches, facilitators and nurturers of champions, not just cops, naysayers or devil's advocates. Talk about that because I think sometimes we do that unconsciously. We become the cops.

Keith: Yeah, and oh my gosh, that has become such a broad subject for me that goes into that whole idea of that's really the basis of my management system also which is if you're the cop, the naysayer, the devil's advocate, you're just not going to get nearly as good of production from people, and it has to do with this whole idea that - I get this from a guy named Vince Serpoli. You know who Vince is, and he's like 88 years old now, and he's a fabulous management consultant in his day, and he developed his personal development interviews, which I have frankly now purchased all the rights too because he wants them.

Lee: Bill Glazer's mentor.

Keith: The whole idea behind Vince's management system is this idea as managers should be seen as coach facilitators and nurturers of champions and just a real brief overview of it then if you will is that most people have performance reviews in order to have performance management system. There's performance reviews or they've got some kind of mishmash because they don't know anything else to do other than performance reviews. In Vince's system and the system now that I've changed and made I more easy for you to do one on your own, we do what's called personal development interviews. So, just think about that, performance review. Would you rather have a performance review if you're on the receiving end, or a personal development interview? Would you rather be reviewed in hindsight or developed?

It's pretty obvious. What would you rather do with someone if you're the manager? Would you rather review them in hindsight or develop them? It's this whole idea, and this whole idea of coaches, facilitators, nurturers of champions is that whole idea of developing people versus the reviewing them as the cop, the naysayer, the devil's advocate. So, that's just huge in my estimation, and why I decided I was going to.

Lee: The other chapter that I really liked was Chapter 16, Reward Customers who Complain.

Keith: Lee, not too long ago, I heard you talk about that. I don't know where I was, but you were somewhere and you were calling complaints a gift from your customer. I couldn't agree more. What's the other option? Most of the time, it's a customer who quietly goes away, and you still are making the same mistakes with your customers versus the customer who complains cares enough about you to complain in the first place. That's fabulous. Now, we can make that customer happy, and we can change our systems so that never happens again.

Another thing that I talk about in the book is that most problems are system problems, not people problems. One of the things that I really harp on is when people do things wrong, most of the time it's because it's easier to do it wrong than do it right. So, let's look at the system and how we can change the system so that it's easier to do it right than to do it wrong.

So, that's this whole idea, if they come and they tell us about what's going wrong, then we can look at the system. We can change the system if it needs to be changed. If the system doesn't need to be changed, then we look at the person and we retrain, but the first thing that we do and if I

had one of our managers come to me and say or heard about a problem, and it ends up to me somehow, the first question I ask is, "Is the system working right? Is there anything we can do in the system to fix this?"

Then, we look at, "Okay, the system is working right. How do we retrain people so that this doesn't happen?" Again, that all comes back to the customer who complains. Customers who complain are gold.

Lee: Absolutely, and I'll just share this really quick because we're almost out of time, but just yesterday, we had a complaint, and it was something about a website and there was a little hiccup on the website and the person complained.

So, I happened to see that, and I picked up the phone. I don't usually do that. My staff usually does that. I called them directly and told them that we would personally get on it, and I was going to send them my book *Success is an Inside Job* and sign it for them. I got the greatest email this morning from this lady saying, "I was shocked, thrilled and surprised to hear from Lee Milteer herself. I'm excited about getting the book. Thank you so much, and I've been reading your email for ten years and to actually talk to you in person was such a thrill."

Now, I don't always do that, but what we do is really always gift people something if they've had an inconvenience. It might be a book. It might be a coaching session, something. We do something for them. So, I would highly recommend that we take advantage of that.

Keith, we could go on for hours and hours. Your book is fantastic. So, for people who want to know how to find Keith, you're at [www.KeithLee.com](http://www.KeithLee.com), and you're going to be on our membership site and I know people would really like to get your book, and I know you're offering it for free. So, would you share how they could do that?

Keith: All you need to do is go to [www.TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com](http://www.TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com), and put in your information there and we'll ship you the book - not an ebook, but we'll ship you a hardcopy of the book for free, and no shipping, no whatever. I just want to get it in your hands.

What's fun about this Lee is when I send these books out, I think, "Okay, I can not only help this business, but we can help the people in the business to get better customer service, and what does that do then?" This may sound cheesy, but it also then at the other end, just how many people it can effect that that person is dealing with on a daily basis. I love to get the

book out there, so [TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com](http://TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com). I'll send it to you for free.

Lee: We will put this in the information for everybody with a few excerpts from the book. Keith, before we end, let me just say it's not cheesy at all. I'm a big believer that one person makes a difference, and both of us are speakers on stage and we know that people can be in our audience and be in a really bad mood, and because of our clear intentions to be uplifters, we can shift their mood. If we shift their mood, they can go home and be happier parents and better to their spouses, better to their kids, better to their staff, better to their everybody.

The world really needs uplifters right now, and I really appreciate that. I'm also a believer in tithing, and I see you gifting this book including the free postage as kind of a tithing to the goodness of the world. So, that's just my little thoughts and I just want to appreciate you very much for that.

Keith: I hadn't thought of it in that term, but that's great to hear. Thank you.

Lee: This sounds strange, but I gift a lot of my Success is an Inside Job books to different schools and for some reason, groups of people who are underprivileged who have absolutely no money, and if they write us, we send them free books. It's just my way of kind of paying back for all the fantastic prosperity and success I have in my life. The truth is many people have helped me get to where I am today, and I feel very honored to be able to return that back to them just as you are doing.

So, the other thing I want to compliment you at is your great longevity because in today's world, it is very hard to achieve longevity at almost anything between competition and just reality. So, I just want to tell you how much I appreciate that about you, and it's been a great interview and I hope everybody will take this heart. This is going to be obviously on our membership site a transcript of this, some excerpts, but you can get the book yourself and I hope that you will not only listen to this interview several times, but you might use this interview as an actual office meeting.

Whenever I do things like this, Keith, I think these are perfect office meetings for different companies. So, for all of our sponsors, maybe play this, have a lunch and learn or something, and then if you can get your staff to start contributing their own thoughts about customer service, people who think of things are more motivated to do them.

So, we don't always have to teach them things, but if we stimulate their thoughts and they think of them themselves. They're most likely to really get on board with that. With that said, thank you so much, Keith. We really, really appreciate it. Okay folks, this is Lee Milteer calling it a wrap. I'll talk to you next month.