

LNP 166

How to Create an Unforgettable Client Experience Kevin Thompson

Pat: Welcome to Legal Nurse Podcasts. This is Pat Iyer and I'm so happy today to be able to bring you Kevin Thompson, who I met through the National Speakers Association New Jersey Chapter. Kevin was involved in our chapter as the president. Kevin and I have been attending the national conferences for the National Speakers Association for several years. One little secret about Kevin is that he has a very distinctive laugh. When I listen to recordings of sessions that I did not attend, I can tell if Kevin has been in the room and he's been laughing.

Kevin is an author, a speaker, a consultant and a coach. He has more than 25 years of experience in leadership and helping organizations transform their service culture into unforgettable experiences. Kevin also has a background in health care, which I'll be asking him about, and financial services, which positions him as a thought leader. He's an inspiring presenter who challenges clients to alter their mindset and embrace new paradigms.

Kevin also went through training and has become a Six Sigma Black Belt in process improvement. You may remember that Dr. Larry Cohen who I interviewed on a podcast earlier (LNP 178) also had gone through the Six Sigma Black Belt training to apply that information to health care. Kevin also has a Master's in Public Administration and is a distinguished Toastmaster.

You may not know that Kevin was suspended from preschool for talking too much. He went on to become a class valedictorian and has

been talking ever since. Kevin thank you so much for joining us today and welcome to the show.

Kevin: Thank you so much Pat and thank you for that wonderful introduction. I really had to try to keep myself from laughing during the introduction so I didn't interrupt you.

Pat: Thank you, if I get you to laugh on this show today then our listeners will know about your distinctive laugh.

Kevin: You had me at the edge, Pat.

Pat: Good. We're going to be talking today about the customer experience. I invited Kevin to the show because it is so important for us to focus on the dynamics between being a legal nurse consultant and the attorneys who we serve.

Kevin, could you give us just a little bit of an overview of what you did in health care?

Kevin: I have been an administrator for an admissions department of a tertiary hospital Level 1 trauma center in Newark, New Jersey and a world class rehab hospital in West Orange, New Jersey. In both of those positions I had the opportunity to deal with nurses, physicians, lab staff and most importantly with patients and their families. Some of them are very distressed. Some of them are very irate. My intention in dealing with all of them was to help them get the best result in terms of the customer service that they needed.

In fact, when I was working in Newark I had a staff of 50 individuals, including registration in the emergency room, admissions department and outpatient areas. It had the worst customer service and employee satisfaction in the entire organization and then within a year's time I turned them around to be number one in both areas.

Pat: That's quite an accomplishment because we know how difficult it is to change people's behavior.

Kevin: No question about that. The funny thing is it can be fun. It can be rewarding and exciting not only as the change agent but also for the individuals who experience the change. It can have also a ripple effect because then it changes the feeling and the approach of the people

around them. That's where it becomes exponentially better for the organization.

Pat: We were talking before we started the recording about legal nurse consultants and functioning in an independent business environment. Some of them are working full time in their business. Some of them are working part time and some of them are working to get clients so that they can work part time. I focused a lot in my programs on marketing, but I also wanted to focus this show on the customer service aspect of this and not overshadow, "I've got to get clients". Once you have the clients if you don't have comfortable dynamics between you and the attorney who's paying the bills, then it rather quickly dissolves.

Tell us why we should be focusing on customer service.

Kevin: That's a great question, Pat. In most industries, and this is no different than others, customer referral is the highest level of growing your business. That's one customer telling another and telling another. The funny thing is that everybody talks about having bad customer service is bad. Yes, because not only do they have it, but then they go around and tell their friends how bad the service was and encourage them not to partake of that service.

The flipside of that is equally as good. If you provide an exceptional customer experience that information will go from individual to individual and will help to grow your business, and help to get you referrals.

I think that's the main reason to developing an unforgettable customer experience for your customers and the people that you serve as an independent business owner.

Pat: That's a great point, Kevin because it's easier now than ever for people to share information about businesses. On the consumer level there's Yelp, which I'm sure you have used as I have to get information about a restaurant before going. There are listservs for attorneys who share information with their colleagues. There's picking up the phone and talking to a colleague about an experience with a legal nurse

consultant. They get together at conferences and share information. Happiness and unhappiness are easy to spread in today's world.

Kevin: The worst thing is to have unhappiness spread because that can be just like a virus and not have a very positive result for you and your business.

Pat: Let's talk about what makes a customer service experience unforgettable.

Kevin: What makes an unforgettable customer experience? I would like to ask your listeners have they ever gone to Disney and if they answer yes, they have now obtained a glimpse into making an unforgettable customer experience. I like to use the Disney example because almost everything that they do is focused on providing an unforgettable customer experience.

Let me tell you what I mean. At Disney, we've gone there for I think 10 consecutive years straight. One of the first things that you will notice especially if you go to the Magic Kingdom is that you walk in and everything is spotless. They have taken every possible step in making the area look clean, nice and welcoming. You never see any trash on the floor. You never see anybody picking up trash. You never see any food delivery trucks or anything like that.

Why? Because of the staff individuals who are there. It's everyone's job if they see something on the floor to pick it up and to dispose of it. The food is delivered through an underground passageway, so there's never any type of congestion in the Magic Kingdom when you're entering with food trucks and different things like that. That is not an issue.

Everything is focused on being aesthetically pleasing to the customer and things are congruent. You have different sections within Magic Kingdom. You will have Frontier Land. You will have Cinderella's Castle, which is Fantasy Land. All the characters in Fantasy Land stay in Fantasy Land. You have never seen a cowboy in Fantasy Land or Cinderella in Frontier Land.

There's a sense of congruency with providing unforgettable experiences. People understand what they're going to get and the

actual person providing that unforgettable experience is identifying in advance one thing or another that their customer is looking forward to.

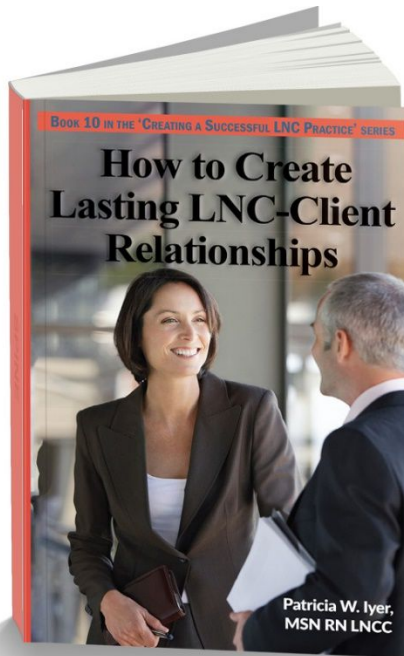
Another one of the mysteries that they do is that they pump smells into the air to invite people into the shops. You don't really realize it, but you're walking down the street and you're smelling cookies or chocolate. They do that intentionally to invite the people in. Everything they do is focused on providing an unforgettable experience for the customer. That's what we need to do in our businesses by looking at what our customers need, want and desire, anticipating them and then providing that to them even before they ask for it.

Pat: In context of a service industry how could you apply what you just said to working with an attorney who is highly demanding, has tight deadlines and is working in a high stakes environment? What tips could you share with us about making an unforgettable customer experience in that context?

Kevin: If that person is a nurse, as a nurse I would want to know what is it this attorney at the end of the day really wants to have and to be able to identify that thing. It could be accurate turnaround in the reading of records or pointing out specific items within the record that will help in terms of case development. It could be identifying possible experts who can be helpful in terms of connecting that with the records so that the attorney will have people that he or she can reach out to as subject matter experts in a particular area where this patient was injured. To me that would be things that the nurse would be looking for to be able identify for the attorney to establish an unforgettable experience.

It's where an attorney doesn't have to say, "I have this type of injury case. Where am I going to find a subject matter expert?" If the nurse has a relationship with the subject matter expert, be able to provide that to that attorney and this way the attorney's stress level will be decreased. It's an opportunity to develop a stronger relationship. In any type of service industry what is at the baseline or the foundation

of that industry is the development of a wonderful relationship between the people that are involved in providing that service.



Let me stop for a minute. I am so excited to share the news of how you can discover even more tips for developing strong relationships with your clients - so strong that they would not dream of using anyone else for their cases.

How to Create Lasting LNC-Client Relationships is Book 10 of the *Creating a Successful Legal Nurse Consulting Practice*. It provides a deep dive into the relationship between legal nurse consultants and their clients. Working with attorneys is challenging and rewarding. Without a steady stream of attorneys who love working with you, your legal nurse consulting business collapses. Does this worry you? It should!

The core of being a successful LNC is being able to effectively work with attorneys.

You can have an aggressive marketing program to bring in new clients, but if you cannot retain them, you'll be endlessly spinning your wheels. Your clients will stay with you when you understand what they want, how they are wired, and how you can do a fantastic job for them.

When I ran my independent LNC business, some stayed with me for more than 20 years.

My new 2018 book, *How to Create Lasting LNC-Client Relationships* explains the best way to build a solid client retention program, using strategies that work to identify the desirable clients and avoid the trouble makers.

This is an essential reference for every LNC. Order your copy today at <http://LNC.tips/LNCClient> and use the code listened to get a 25% discount off of the price. Let's return to the show.

Pat: I know we talked a little bit before we got on the recording about the potential for conflict between a legal nurse consultant and an attorney, and how that conflict is handled which is critical. Earlier you mentioned how easy it is to spread happiness or unhappiness about a particular legal nurse consultant, meaning the attorney's perceptions on how well that person was able to help the attorney. Imagine you're at the other end of a phone and there's an attorney who is screaming about an invoice and saying, "I never expected you to bill that many hours on this case."

What can you share with us from that customer service aspect of this and the conflict resolution aspect of this that we should be thinking about when we get a phone call like that?

Kevin: I'm so glad that you asked that question, Pat. There are two different dynamics going on, so let's talk about one and then I'll shift to the other.

The attorney and the nurse should both consider each other as customers. The reason I say that is the reality of it is that they have a partnership, but in that partnership you want to develop the best possible relationship. If you consider each other as customers and you're focused on providing an unforgettable experience for that customer, then you're going to start to anticipate that customer's needs.

One of the best ways to do that is to have open communication. When you have open communication, you are thinking about the customer. You're not afraid to ask questions. You're anticipating what they want. You're letting them know what you want. A lot of times the issues that come up are opportunities to knock heads and the lack of communication helps to fuel that. It's like throwing gasoline on a fire, but even more deeply than that though is understanding each other's behavior style.

I know that attorneys can be very exacting and demanding. With nurses, a number of them are perfectionists and want to make sure that they are helping, and helpful. When you look at that in terms of behavior styles (and I'm going to use the DISC model of human behavior), if you have an attorney that is very demanding (let's call that demanding behavior style a "D") and you have a nurse who is

exact and very helpful (we'll call that behavior style an "S") there is going to be immediate conflict when the attorney is aggressive to the person who is a nurse.

Why? Because a nurse who is a "S" is never going to say, "You hurt my feelings" or "You were nasty" or anything like that because they're looking for everyone to be part of a team and being a team player. The attorney who's a "D" has no idea that what they're saying is hurting that person's feelings and making that person not want to work with them in the future.

It allows people to knock heads and when you have someone who is operating from a position of fear or a position of being hurt, you're not going to get the best possible performance. At the end of the day, both the attorney and the nurse are focused on trying to get the best possible outcome for the ultimate client who is both of their customers. If they're not having that communication, developing that relationship, focusing on what each other needs and how to deliver that best possible outcome to the ultimate customer, they are going to not be able to provide it. You're not going to get that from someone who's functioning from the position of fear or someone who is being too aggressive.

Pat: I think you have exactly described the dynamics that typically create the most angst for legal nurse consultants because many of them are "S's" in the DISC model. We've covered this in an earlier podcast with a subject on how you identify what personality type you are with Lorna Kibbey, who's also an NSA member. (This was LNP 120.)

I tell legal nurse consultants that we have got a hook in us because we're nurses. We are trained to be responsive, to be caring and to want to go out of our way to help somebody. In a business environment that can be very useful, but you have got to have safeguards or controls so that you also are not a doormat for the angry "D" attorney who is a perfectionist himself and may have had unreasonable expectations about what type of customer service experience he was going to have.

As an example, one of the people that I'm coaching now was talking to an attorney who wanted her to do something quickly for his mother who he was representing. He expected her to come to his office to pick up records, which would have been an hour each way, and then

spend time in the office. He then said, "By the way, you're not going to charge me for that time are you?"

That's billable time in our world, the travel time and the meeting time, but his expectations were right from the beginning transmitting to her, "I'm an unreasonable person and I want you to give and give to me. I'm not willing to hold up my part of this transaction of paying you for all the things that I'm going to be asking you to do." Right now it's unclear whether he's going to contact her again because he was gathering more records, but she's already defined this is what I will do for him and this is what I will not do for him.

Kevin: That's a perfect example, Pat because what happens is if I was the nurse and I was an "S" I would say "Okay." Maybe I would go ahead and do the work, but I would never want to do business with that individual again because it did not make me feel good in that he or she did not respect me. At the end of the day the "S's" need to be respected just like the "D" feels like he or she needs to be respected.

It's kind of sad if you flipped it and you said, "Would you not expect to bill for your travel and your time in court? Would that be unbillable time? The only time that would be billable is when the judge was there deliberating and finally giving a result?" The attorney would say "No" and I think sometimes people don't look at what they're asking as being unreasonable. Sometimes you just have to have them put the shoe on the other foot and say, "If that wouldn't be acceptable for you, then how would this be acceptable for me?"

One thing that I like to tell you is that I help individuals understand their behavior styles and also how to communicate with the other behavior styles to avoid having that type of conflict situation.

Just to flip it on the other side. If I was the attorney I might say to the nurse, "I just want to be upfront with you. We're working on this case and I'm trying to get the best possible outcome. I'm having cash flow

issues and I'm not really confident if we're going to be able to settle this case within (x) time period."

I would want to be upfront and honest with that person so that person would know that I really want for them to work on this case.

"I think that you are the best person to be able to identify what needs to come out of this case. I want to make sure that I partner with you, but because of our relationship I want for you to understand exactly where I am and for it not to be a surprise to you."

One of the worst things that you can do for an "S" is to give them a surprise. They don't like surprises, so if you do that, what it does is give the power back to the nurse and the nurse now has the opportunity to say, "You know what Kevin, we've worked together before and I really enjoy working with you. Yes, let's do this. I'm hoping that you will get the money by (x) time, but if you don't and it's not until (y) I understand" and then move forward.

Now they both have put out what their issues are on the table. It's given the nurse the opportunity to say, "I understand what the issue is. I still value this relationship. I want to help you and we're going to partner together." That's how open communication provides an opportunity for us to now build a better working relationship with each other instead of the conflict of, "I'm expecting you to do this and you're not going to bill me for it."

Pat: Yes, what you are describing is something that takes a lot of insight, skill and understanding to recognize how to communicate with a person who has a very different style than you do.

Kevin: That's what I help individuals do. It's funny that when you do that it becomes so rewarding because the outcomes that you get from that type of communication is so much better than you would have if you

stayed where you were prior to getting this knowledge and understanding.

Pat: Let's talk about what you refer to as the "CEO Process". What does that term mean and how does that apply to what we're talking about today?

Kevin: The name of my book is "Everyone Is A CEO (Customer Experience Originator)". The CEO is an acronym for Customer Experience Originator, so everyone is a CEO. A CEO is typically thought of as a business owner. If you owned a business regardless of what your role is in an organization and if you found yourself as the business owner, nine times out of ten your approach to solving problems is going to be a lot different than your current role now. As a business owner if you have thought of creating an unforgettable customer experience, you're looking at a win-win situation.

My book basically talks about putting both of those mindsets together to help transform transactional customer service into an unforgettable experience.

Pat: Let's talk about what is transactional customer service.

Kevin: I'm going to ask your listeners have you ever been to an ATM. I know that more than likely the answer is yes.

When you go to the ATM, what do you do? You take out your card. You put it into the machine. You put in your little code. You get the money back. That is a transaction. That's a service, but that's a transactional service.

Too often customer service is seen as a transaction, but there's no experience for going to an ATM machine. An experience would be entering a bank, being offered some water or some candy, having someone at the door asking you, "How can I help you" and then providing you that individualized service.

Understanding who that individual is, calling that individual by name especially if this person is a person who is a repeat customer, understanding what their needs are, spending the time to identify

those individuals and understand their needs are steps toward making that an unforgettable experience.

I'll give you an example. One of the places that I used to frequent when I was in Flushing, New York was this restaurant called Bacciagalupe's. It was an Italian restaurant and beautiful place. As soon as you walked in, they had waiters who were running all around the restaurant and some would come in and greet you. Since I frequented the restaurant, they knew my name and I would come and sit down. They would tell me what the specials were on the menu and then everything that you needed was attended to. They always were there to pour water for you. They poured a glass of wine. This was back in the 80's, so you could smoke in a restaurant. If you took out a cigarette, they would be there to light it for you. Anything that you can think about, they were there and very attentive. They also knew your favorite dessert and they would bring that out for you.

This place was so amazing that any of my family members that came from out of town we would had to go to Bacciagalupe's. The reason I'm sharing that story with you is because that is part of creating that unforgettable experience. When you do, you want other people to share in that unforgettable experience. That's that referral business that we discussed earlier.

Pat: Exactly and Kevin, can you tell our listeners how they can get a copy of your book?

Kevin: My book is available on Amazon. It is "Everyone Is A CEO" where CEO is an acronym that means "Customer Experience Originator". It's available on Amazon or you can go to my website and you can order it there. My website is www.inspiredcommunicationsllc.com. You can click on the image of the book, order the book there and I will send you an autographed copy.

Pat: That is wonderful, Kevin and I appreciate the time that you have spent with us today. I know that the next time I walk into a restaurant I'm going to be paying more attention to how we're greeted and whether there's recognition if we're going back to the same restaurant frequently. I love the ideas that you have shared with us that we can apply to working with attorneys, which is our client base, and how we

can respond more effectively to maintaining an unforgettable customer experience.

Kevin: Thank you, Pat. Don't forget that your attorneys and your nurses need to think of each other as customers in creating an unforgettable experience for each other, focusing on what your potential needs are. If your listeners would like to get in contact with me to be able to learn how to develop better communication styles through resolving conflict, they can reach me at Kevin@inspiredcommunicationsllc.com.

Pat: Thank you Kevin Thompson for being with us today and thank you to you, our listeners, for being part of this show. Please subscribe to the show. We have a button on our website and you can also subscribe through iTunes. We love having you be part of this community and learning about your business. We will be back a week from now with a new interview.

Have you ordered your copy of How to Create Lasting LNC-Client relationships yet? We'll put it right into the mail for you when you order it at <http://LNC.tips/LNCCClient> and use the code listened for a 25% discount.

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