

# next tuesday afternoon

July 8, 2008

The other day I took some draperies in to get a much needed spring cleaning. Yes, I know, it's not spring anymore. Little did I know that my experience at the dry cleaners would be less than stellar, and one that I would share with all who would listen. As I entered and approached the counter, the young lady who was working that day and appeared to be barely out of high school, moved immediately to the cash register. She then launched into a series of questions which made me feel slightly better than a terrorist.

She had difficulty understanding the complex street name "Edgewater" which I ended up repeating five times, and spelling twice. By the time I left, after being scolded that draperies take 10 days to clean, I left much less enthused about the eventual possibility of having clean drapes and wondering if the owners had any idea of the type of treatment their customers were experiencing.

Ironically that same day, I ran into a story about Avis and their tagline "We Try Harder," which was being portrayed as more than just a clever advertising slogan. Customers actually reward companies that appear to go the extra mile, according to research from the University of Southern California. In fact, customers are willing to pay more for a product, frequent one store rather than another, and, in general, have a more positive impression of a company or brand that is perceived to put in more effort.

According to the researchers, customers can view a company's outstanding efforts as either general or personal. When the company's actions, such as creating new product displays, benefit the universe of customers, they are considered to be general. Specific actions on the part of the company to benefit a specific customer (such as rewards, or *stellar customer service*) are deemed personal.

And in the great scheme of things, personal wins. Although customers are positively motivated in both instances, when they see a company's efforts as personal, they are grateful, and feel indebted to it.

The moral? Go the extra mile. Even if it doesn't make your product better, consumers will appreciate and reward you for your effort. I know I will.

I'm Lisa Davis. Let me know if I can help you in any way, please feel free to visit at [OneAlliance.com](http://OneAlliance.com) and I'll be back next Tuesday afternoon.

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