

## INTRODUCTION

My name is Don Gallegos and I'm upset by poor customer service. I'm on a crusade to wipe it out, and I want to enlist you to join me.

This book is about customer service and how to improve it. You'll meet some people in the book that you've met in your business. You'll meet the jerk, the complainer, the whiner, the returner ... annoying people who make your business difficult every day.

But wait a second! When you think about it, the jerks, the complainers, the whiners, the returners – they're not a problem. They are all customers, putting money into your cash registers every day. These customers with an attitude or a complaint are really a golden opportunity to prove that your business can deal with any situation.

The real problem today, the real nightmare, is that most businesses in America do not offer good customer service.

It's so bad that people think even mediocre customer service is something to brag about.

Every day, all of you are receiving bad customer service but you are so used to it, you just accept it.

How sad.

Take Mrs. McNulty. A nice elderly woman, Mrs. McNulty lived in my neighborhood and came to see me during the time when I was president of a supermarket chain.

As Mrs. McNulty entered my home, she raved about

how good our employees were to her at our local store.

She said, “I can’t believe what one of your stores did for me last week.”

She told me that she went shopping the previous Thursday and when she got home to put her groceries away, she discovered that three items were missing.

“I called your store and the head clerk said, ‘Yes, Mrs. McNulty, we found those three items. You can come and get them.’”

She added, “I went to get them, and they just gave them to me – no questions asked, no identification and no receipt – they just gave them to me – wasn’t that wonderful?”

My insides started to churn, because this woman, one of our regular customers, thought that what she had just received was great service.

I said, “Mrs. McNulty, what would you have thought if the head clerk had told you over the phone, ‘Yes, we found those items. Please give me your address and we’ll deliver them to your home.’ How would that have made you feel?”

“Oh,” she said, “That would have been wonderful.”

And that’s our policy. Too bad our employee did not follow it.

Mrs. McNulty’s perception was that she had received good service. But, in truth, the service which had impressed her so much struck me as pretty mediocre. Our employees did not take the extra steps necessary to really help the customer.

I know and you know that customer service can be better. Much better. I had a long and successful business career and all my success was built around one

fundamental concept: improving the quality of customer service.

During my career, I worked in nearly every area of the supermarket industry: buying, merchandising, warehousing and store operations. I went through several layers of management including district manager, vice president of retail operations and senior vice-president.

Eventually I became president of King Soopers in Denver, in charge of 15,000 employees. Every day of my 43-year business career I worked with customers, employees, managers and owners to improve the quality of our customer service.

This is not hard stuff. It is easy. It is common sense.

If customer service is so simple, why doesn't everybody do it? Because to improve customer service, you need a concerted effort from the whole organization. And the attitude must start from the top.

**In this book, we'll consider all the people you deal with every day:**

**1. Customers:** We start with the customer because customers are the heart and soul of my business, your business, every business. You'll recognize some annoying customers and complaints, and see what we did in some rough situations.

**2. Employees:** You have to think of front-line employees as your face to the outside world. Treat your employees well and with respect and that's how they will act toward customers. Employees must be led by word and deed.

**3. Managers:** Managers must understand the

importance of outstanding customer service and the need to motivate employees to achieve that goal.

**4. Owners:** It all starts from the top. Your attitude, how you treat managers, employees and customers, will affect how all your employees view customer service.

Once you read this book, you will understand why I think customer service today is so poor. And I hope you will also learn some new ideas for making it better.