



20 Tough Questions about Customer Care

By JoAnna Brandi

BUSINESSES ALL OVER the world are waking up to the notion that in order for employees to provide the level of “caring” they want their customers to experience, companies had better start caring more about providing a work experience that is rewarding and even fun. So here are 20 tough questions for you to take to your next management meeting to raise the issues and consciousness of your organization.

1. Is the level of trust in our organization high or low?
2. How do we help individuals cultivate a feeling of pride in their work?
3. When we delegate responsibility, do we also delegate authority along with it?
4. Is a participatory process in place that encourages employees’ input in matters that affect their future?
5. Knowing that creativity and innovation are critical in a globally competitive economy, is training and development an important part of our strategic plan?
6. What methods do we use to show people we appreciate them and their work?
7. What mechanisms are in place to reward the kinds of customer-caring behavior we want to see repeated?
8. Do employees really believe that open and honest communication on their part will not damage their careers here?
9. What are we doing to encourage people to constantly think “continuous improvement”?
10. What flexible work practices are in place to accommodate workers’ growing need for family balance? Are people able to use these options without fear of recrimination? Are people who believe balance is important still considered serious candidates for advancement?
11. What are the five most important values in our organization? How do they get demonstrated by our management and staff every day?
12. On a scale of one to 10, how much real,

honest-to-goodness fun are people having in our organization?

13. What five things do we have in place to support “wellness” in our organization?

14. What are we doing to foster “emotional literacy” in our management team?

15. If we ask our employees to take risks, are we wholeheartedly accepting their failures (learning experiences) as well as their successes?

16. Do we really believe our employees are capable of being fully empowered? If not, what’s missing?

17. Are there negative consequences when someone makes the decision to please the customer rather than please the boss?

18. Have we changed our corporate definitions of success to encompass the non-monetary things like job satisfaction and individual growth? How do we measure it?

19. Have we recently surveyed the staff to find out how they really feel about working here and whether or not they really have what they need to take “exquisite” care of the customers?

20. As we move into a new century that will surely bring with it many changes, both reactive and proactive, what are we doing to support the people who will be upset by these changes? What system do we have in place to help human beings through the change process? ☞

On a scale of one to 10, how much real, honest-to-goodness fun are people having in our organization?

Brandi is publisher of the Customer Care Coach®, a weekly training program on mastering “The Art and Science of Exquisite Customer Care.” She is also the author of two books on retaining customer loyalty. For more information, including free e-mail tips, visit www.customerarecoach.com and www.customerretention.com, or call 561-279-0027.