

# FULLY STOCK YOUR 'REPUTATION' TOOLBOX



Ego aside, what do you think your reputation is in the marketplace? It really does not matter what you believe; it does matter what everyone else does. You define what you are through your marketing and delivery on service, product and facility. The marketplace validates your performance. Their report card is your reputation – good, bad or indifferent. Thus, it boils down to how you can influence and leverage that reputation with what you have learned and how you respond to that insight. And, there are “tools” out there to give you the advantage.

## **QA/Mystery Shops:**

We are talking Standards, your service and operational protocols. It may be language – how you welcome your Customer. It may be mechanical – how you ring up a charge. It may be manual – how you make a bed. It may be problem solving – how your Agent handles a complaint. You expect behaviors and skill sets which support your Value Proposition. You need a means to confirm those efforts.

## **Your Employees and Community:**

Your staff is the face and the voice of your business. They interact with your Customer. You have asked them to do more with less. You have downsized them, cut hours and benefits. They are tired and demoralized. Not a pretty picture moving into 2010, and encouragement needs to go beyond at least they have a job, which rings hollow. A lot of work is required on this front, and they need to be reengaged and motivated. Just ask them (that is exactly what you need to do through meetings, forums, surveys, etc.).

When was the last time you, incognito, asked someone in your community to recommend a particular restaurant, hotel, business or even product or service (much like your own business). What did they say, were you even mentioned, and, if mentioned, how were you described? Community outreach and how you are perceived as an employer and citizen is absolutely critical, as you rebuild your Brand.

## **The On-Line Audience:**

Everyone is a critic and has an opinion. The channels available are vast with specific web sites like Expedia and Yelp to Social Media to blogs. Who knows what will appear next on the horizon? You do not need to be tech-savvy to appreciate the power of the Internet. However, you do need to be attentive, manage what you hear, respond when appropriate and harness the opportunity to establish a rapport with your audience.

## **Customer Interface through Feedback:**

It would be wonderful to have face-time with all your Customers. Not going to happen. So, you depend upon your talented staff to perform. You will learn nothing about your Customer unless you ask. You need this information – real time analytical data to drive your marketing efforts, as well as actionable, immediate Feedback regarding an experience, so your Operations people can respond to any lapses and complaints. The insight is invaluable, driving your training efforts, dictating your sales strategies, and allowing you to respond to that marketplace, efficiently and effectively.

How we rebound after several years of angst and retrenchment is critical to our success. Everything mentioned above represents some investment, paltry, when you consider the consequences. It is

time to replenish your “Reputation” Toolbox and ascend in the marketplace.

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