

Holly Stiel's **Service Moments!**

Keep your service spirit alive with these inspired insights from world renowned service expert Holly Stiel

Show Me a Sign

I am very sensitive to signage. I don't think people realize how much a sign conveys about a business. Maybe it's in my blood—both my grandfather and Uncle were sign painters and designers. Whatever the heritage, the fact remains that signs convey a message and can make the difference between feeling welcomed and respected or feeling as if you have just been scolded. They can say, "We care." Signs can show that we care about the physical space, we care about design, we care about the aesthetic, we care about your experience, we care about the details and we care about you our customer. Whether it is a directional sign perfectly placed, a handicapped parking spot, a command such as "Wait behind this line" or a ladies and gents room differentiator, signage says much more than the actual words on the sign.

The other day I went to peek in at a new restaurant being constructed in a small coastal community near my home. The design of the building was stunning and included a wall of windows overlooking the rugged Pacific Ocean. As I approached to peer into the window, I was greeted by a very harsh admonition not to park in the handicapped parking space or I would be towed away. I was a bit taken aback, but

then I noticed the lovely fireplace in the bar and stylish chairs. As I was leaving, the bathroom signs stopped me short. They had put up generic signs that looked like the kind used to mark outhouses in a state park. It may not be rational, but my immediate reaction was this place might not succeed with this kind of impersonal attitude. I did not get the sense that this business is someone's loving creation, like a chef's dream or a restaurateur's vision. The sign said to me that this is just another mediocre restaurant in a town that has no good places to eat. I walked away feeling disappointed as opposed to anticipating the opening.

Compare that reaction to the one I had at a restaurant in the Halifax Radisson Hotel. Upon entering the restaurant, I saw a sign that said, "Please wait to be greeted." I loved it! Changing 'seated' to 'greeted' made me feel welcomed and appreciated. The choice of words demonstrated thought and hospitality. That feeling was carried out in actions throughout my dining experience.

I believe we are always selling emotional connections and that happens in a myriad of ways, including the signs we post and where and how we post them. Take a look at your signage. What does it say about you and your business?

If you have examples or thoughts about the importance of "attitude" in your work, please send your comments and stories to holly@thankyouverymuchinc.com.

We'd love to hear from you!

ThankYouVery MuchInc.com
Transforming Business to Think
Like a World-Class Concierge

