

Please... pick me!

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In this series of Supermarket & Retailer's articles, we share stories of what some organisations and managers have done to motivate and inspire their teams. We give you practical ideas of what you can do to create the most amazing, customer-driven company in the world.

Do you remember when you were still a little kid at school and the teacher asked the class a question? And do you remember that immediately a whole bunch of hands enthusiastically went up, and the kids who knew the answer clicked their fingers and almost begged to be picked? "Pick me, Miss. Pick me, please!" was the chorus.

I don't know what happens between the ages of six and sixty-three, but have you noticed how most adults lose that enthusiasm?

In most businesses where customers wait to be served, I swear it seems to me that some service people have great tactics for ignoring you. They seem to have perfected it to an art, and it mostly involves completely ignoring you. But they



can't be obvious about it, or they know you will become very angry, so they kind of pretend that there is something else occupying them, and look everywhere else except at you personally. It doesn't matter if there are five of them and only one of you, it's like a game – to see who can avoid the customer best.

But I have a dream that one day I will walk into your business (or my bank, or a restaurant) and, instead of someone occasionally shouting, "Next!" or hearing that infuriating pre-recorded voice that

says, "Next customer please," there will be a bunch of people fighting about who is going to serve me. "Pick me! Pick me! Don't go to her! I'm the best one here!" But being the world's greatest optimist, I still hope for a miracle, but if it does happen I will probably get a heart attack.

You see, these days, doing what we did last year is just not enough. If you are old enough, you will remember when the first bank manager arranged a few poles and a rope, and served customers in turn without them having to pick a queue. It was

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delightful! “Wow! They aren’t going to serve some other customer who came in after me! I don’t have to wonder or try to figure out which queue will be the fastest.”

Today, of course, we all take this for granted and, in fact, we tend to get really irritated when we don’t see this simple system in place.

But I’m not just talking about queues in this post, I’m talking about all customer touch points, including call centres and even digital marketing channels, where we can treat our customers with that same enthusiasm of those children, where we respond to them in a way which surprises and delights them.

Let’s illustrate what I mean with some examples: With the regular power failures that we experience, many businesses instruct staff that the first thing they do is immediately shut the doors to stop customers from stealing stuff. In some cases, they are unable to help you because there is no back-up plan, and you have to dump your stuff without paying because the tills aren’t working.

Not at the all retailers. At one store in St. Francis Bay, the first thing that happened when the power failed was that every employee grabbed a high-visibility reflective waistcoat and a torch – and then walked customers individually through the store working through the shopping list and helping the customers find what they need. They then escorted them politely to the tills for payment and moved on to help the next customer.

And just to show that it’s not a fluke, I have heard so many good stories about that retail chain



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recently. I heard of a woman who said she liked cherry and apple pie, and so now they make one especially for her every Friday. It’s become a best seller apparently, because now other customers are also buying it.

And how about the little old lady who broke her walking stick in the store in Harrismith? The manager went out to the luggage shop and bought her a new one – even if it wasn’t their fault, and it had nothing to do with them.

But my favourite was about someone who ordered a special birthday cake for her daughter, and she – the customer – didn’t write the name clearly on the special form that gets filled in. (She was in a rush, she claims.) When she saw ‘their’ mistake about 30 minutes before the party was due to start, she telephoned the manager in a huff. So he did what any good retail manager would do... he immediately drove to her house

with the confectionery assistant, and they redid all the icing on the cake with the correct spelling – at no charge. When they showed her the form she had completed, she was so embarrassed.

“But,” she told me, “You know what the best was? He made me feel so good about it because he told me that he also has terrible writing, makes mistakes like this all the time, and he was just happy he could help!” A really great example of the enthusiasm that kids show.

A final story. A few months before lockdown, I was lucky enough to be in a beautiful hotel and conference centre in Cape Town. I was due to start my presentation and, about three minutes before the conference was due to start, while chatting to the delegates and their CEO, I suddenly remembered I’d left my course handouts in a box in my room on the 18th floor. I had about three seconds of calmness, panicked, and then excused



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myself from the conversation, explaining what I had just done. A part-time waiter from the coffee station heard this, and he said, “May I get your box from your room so that you don’t have to miss the start?” I was so relieved because it would have made me look so stupid arriving late or starting without presentation notes, and I gave him my room card. Ten minutes later he slipped in from one of the side doors and dropped the box next to my seat without a word, but with a flashing smile.

Looking after your customers doesn’t have to be a drag. In fact, I’d suggest that when you do something nice for them, it also improves the quality of your life, and you get to sleep better at night. I know I’ve got lots of little guardian angels

in my life as a customer – people who help me when I need it most, people who respond with that same energy and enthusiasm of children wanting to be the first to answer the teacher’s question.

**The question is: Are you one of them?
Do you urgently shout out ...**

“Pick me, please!”
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CASE CLOSED

Energy Saving Solutions

Glacier Door Systems has introduced the Air Shield ('Close the Case') Glass Door retrofit solution for refrigerated supermarket display cases, as well as the Eco Leaf Replacement Glass Door for existing glass door freezer rooms and glass door freezer display cabinets. Both solutions guarantee energy-savings in an ever-increasing energy cost environment. Part of the well-established Universal Industries Group, Glacier has 26 years' experience and are acknowledged industry leaders in refrigeration door technology. Innovative and forward-thinking, the company is built on cutting-edge technology, technical expertise and a customer-centric approach.

Air Shield Glass Doors

Features and Benefits

- Double glazed glass doors with Argon gas fill for superior insulation.
- Glass durability and clarity with torsion bar for positive closing.
- Glass door heating option for high humidity environments.
- Glass doors available with hold open brackets and LED lighting options.
- Flex modelling means glass panels are customised to fit existing cabinets and are tailored to suit each store's specific environment.

A quick and easy energy-saving retrofit solution, Air Shield Glass Doors can be fitted to any existing open refrigeration case, saving up to 40% on energy consumption.



Note: The value proposal is based on R1.31 per kWh and 40% energy saving. These are averages based on our experience and can be validated per store.

The value benefit

- High-quality locally manufactured solutions featuring the latest energy-saving technology.
- Demonstrated good pay back periods can be expected.
- Customised solutions to suit your store.
- ISO 9001 accredited factory.
- Safety toughened glass in accordance with SABS/SANS certification.
- Flexible installation timing to offset any customer disruption.
- Financing options available.

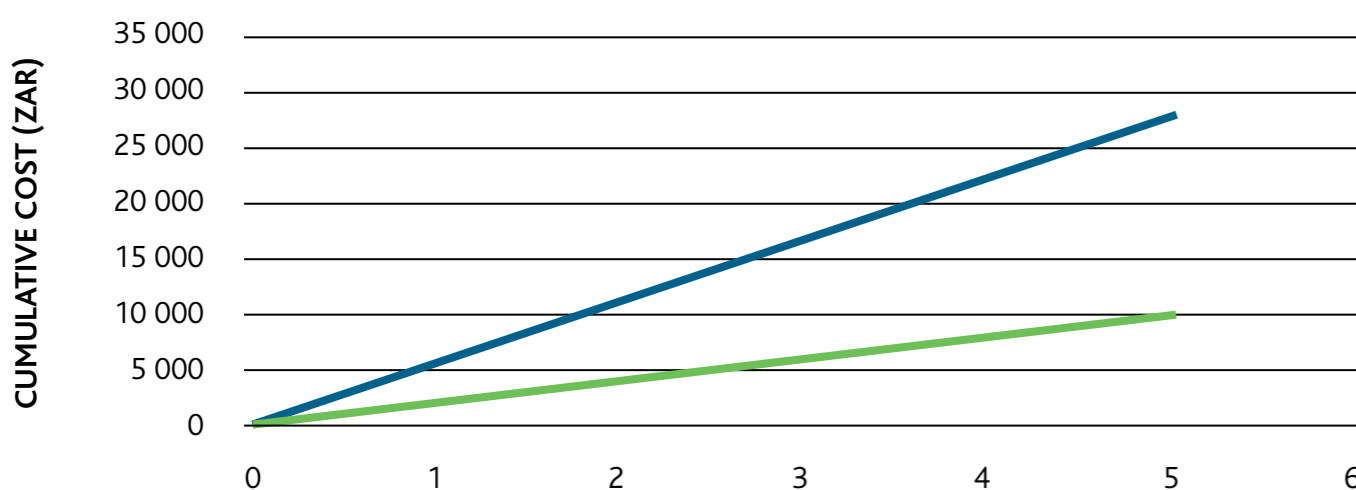
You can trust a Glacier door



Eco Leaf Freezer Doors

Designed as a 'swop-out', energy-saving replacement glass door utilising 220V technology that eliminates the need for voltage-reducing capacitors. This results in an amperage reduction from 1.29A on the standard door to 0.46A (64%) with the replacement Eco Leaf Door.

The Eco Leaf door is 64% more efficient than the standard door. The value proposal is based on R1.31 per kWh and 64% energy saving. These are averages based on our experience and can be validated per store.



	AMPS	VOLTS	WATTS
Glacier Eco Leaf Door	0,46	230	105.8
Glacier Standard Door	1,29	230	296.7