



The Customer Communicator **Web Extra**



Apples and pineapples: Seven ways to share a smile at work

Having a sense of humor and using humor at work is a great way to deal with the stress that often comes with customer service.

In addition to the ideas in the April issue of *The Customer Communicator*, consider these seven easy-to-implement ideas.

- **Smile: That's it, just smile.** It's contagious.
- **Create a wall of fame.** Decorate it with awards, thank-you notes from customers, news clippings about your company and your team members, and more.
- **Create a humor board.** Encourage everyone on the team to contribute cartoons and jokes, particularly those that poke fun at the circumstances that cause negativity or conflict in the office. Start with a blank board each Monday morning and fill it up all week.
- **Try a "Success Bell".** When someone in the department resolves a tricky customer problem or makes a big sale, give them a moment to ring the bell and to enjoy basking in applause from the entire team.
- **Celebrate the holidays.** Gather to ring in the New Year, try a Christmas cookie exchange, or cast your votes on whether or not the groundhog will see his shadow. There's something to celebrate and bring a smile every month.
- **Celebrate birthdays.** Have cake and ice cream, and give those who have birthday's that month the opportunity to celebrate

together. Or assign birthday buddies who are responsible for hosting the celebration for their buddy.

- **Share a story.** Customers can be funny; there's no denying it. And sharing those stories in a respectful way can lighten the mood.

Here are two of our favorite customer service stories from *Reader's Digest*. You'll find more at www.rd.com/jokes.

You can't teach an old dog to fly

A woman called our airline customer-service desk asking if she could take her dog on board.

"Sure," I said, "as long as you provide your own kennel." I further explained that the kennel needed to be large enough for the dog to stand up, sit down, turn around, and roll over.

The customer was flummoxed: "I'll never be able to teach him all of that by tomorrow!"

Apples and pineapples

After a number of attempts to get the customer service agent on the phone to understand his name, my Asian American friend Appappa decided to spell it out.

"A for apple," he began. "P for pineapple, p for pineapple, a for apple, p for pineapple, p for—"

The flustered agent interrupted. "I have a better idea," she said. "Just tell me how many apples and how many pineapples."

