Standing Out in a Crowd

Recently I watched a news program about a theater owner who has completely changed the movie-going experience. Normally we go to dinner before the movie. This theater owner has considered everything the consumer could possibly desire and provided it in one location. The theater houses a restaurant with delicious and reasonably priced food as well as a full service bar, babysitting facilities and seating with plenty of leg room.

In our busy lives an evening out has become quite a luxury and it is no surprise that this one stop entertainment center has become very successful.







It is hard to find a strip mall in any town today that does not house a Mani/Pedi salon giving new meaning to the phrase "a crowded market." A nail salon in our town has once

again looked at the competition and added simple services and perks that no one else has. Ladue Nails greets each patron at the door with a friendly "concierge" with a great smile. There is never a wait because they have enough staff and treatment chairs to

accommodate everyone. As you receive your treatment, snacks and beverages are available at no charge. Customers seated at the nail drying station are offered a fabulous neck and shoulder massage—10 dollars for 10 minutes. This salon employs approximately 15 staff and 2 or 3 of them do nothing but service the patrons—ensuring that when I want my nails done I drive all the way across town to Ladue Nails and would not dream of going anywhere else.



On one of our shopping excursions we hired a car and driver for the day. This man's job was nothing more than to drive our party around and to know where he was going. This gentleman arrived fifteen minutes early and was waiting in the lobby of our hotel. He was professional and friendly and apparently took great pride in what he did. It was a very warm day and at every stop we were handed a damp cloth and a cold drink. Upon exiting each shop our driver was there to take the packages to the trunk, carefully

marking each one so that there would be no confusion later. At every turn our driver was full of interesting facts about the city as well as recommended restaurants and not to miss sights. Needless to say he made our time with him in his city a very pleasant experience. And for his extra effort not only was he tipped the customary twenty percent but also was handed an additional tip by each member of our excursion.

In our industry where our profit depends on the right suppliers and customers, it should be our number one priority to find out what they want and to give it to them. Strive to exceed their expectations and leave a lasting impression. Customer recognition is very important at *Women's Closet Exchange*. Mary's mom always needs a chair, Karen loves diet Sprite and Nicole needs to borrow some glasses because she left hers in the car. Everyone is offered a drink upon arrival. It is the best money you will ever spend (It costs us approximately 20 cents each.) There is no appointment necessary for us to look at your items in our store. We will also be more than happy to go to clients' homes with an appointment.

Challenge yourself, volunteers and staff to provide not only what is expected but service that will be the topic of conversation at every cocktail party, girls' night out and family get-together.

Sue McCarthy, owner of *Women's Closet Exchange* in St. Louis, MO, is NARTS Treasurer and Outstanding Service Award winner. She has opened seven new locations, moved several and currently operates four shops in one plaza: ladies', plus size, children/maternity and furniture.