I’VE GOT A SECRET

Objective
To accomplish individual introductions in a fun way.

Procedure
At the beginning of a session, or at a food break, comment on the importance of informality and getting acquainted with other participants. But rather than have individuals introduce themselves tell the group they will introduce the person to their right. They will have 1 - 5 minutes to learn that person’s name, business or business idea and personal background. Then humorously suggest they divulge some deep, dark secret about themselves that “nobody in the whole world knows about them!”

Start the process with the first person who introduces the individual on his/her right. To start things off, the instructor could begin. Keep things moving quickly and lightly.

If participants are seated at round tables, randomly select any participant. If theater or U-shaped seating is used, start introductions in the front of the room.

Materials Required
None.

Approximate Time Required
10 - 25 minutes (depending on the size of the group).
BRAINSTORMING REVISED

Objective
To clear cobwebs in group work and acclimate participants to a creative process.

Procedure
Although “brainstorming” has been around since Alex Osbourne’s introduction of this technique in the 1950’s, it seems now to be regaining popularity after many years of dormancy.

Since many participants have never been exposed to this novel approach to problem solving, review and describe the four rules of brainstorming:

1. No critical judgement allowed
2. Quantity not quality, is desired
3. The wilder the better!
4. Hitchhiking (combination and improvement) is sought

To get participants in a creative mood, it is suggested that a “warm-up” exercise be used. For example, small groups of 3-4 are formed and participants are asked to think of different uses for a paper-clip. Announce that they have just 60 seconds, and have someone jot down the number of ideas their groups suggests. (Don’t write out the actual ideas.) Following this exercise, address the real-world problem to attack.

Materials Required
None.

Approximate Time Required
12 - 15 minutes (depending on the size of the group).
**Alphabet Soup**

**Objective**
To allow participants some practice in simple problem solving.

**Procedure**
Prepare the following questions as a simple quiz. Ask participants to complete the exercise as quickly as possible.

1. What is the only letter open on all sides?
2. What are the only curved letters that are the same upside down?
3. What are the only letters containing one single horizontal line?
4. What are the only letters with two parallel horizontal lines?
5. What are the only letters with two diagonal straight lines?
6. Abecedarians who mind their P’s and Q’s should have little trouble with this puzzle:

   What letter of the alphabet is:
   a. a bird?
   b. part of your head?
   c. an insect?
   d. a drink?
   e. a building extension?
   f. a hint?
   g. a vegetable?
   h. a body of water?
   i. a farm animal?

**Materials Required**
Handout sheets.

**Approximate Time Required**
5-10 minutes.

**Alphabet Soup—Answers**

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**Objective**
To be used to introduce any session on creativity, problem solving or related topic. Just for fun or as a “icebreaker.”

**Procedure**
Hand out copies of any of the following Word Puzzles. Suggest that each block represents a well known phrase or saying.

**Materials Required**
Handout sheets.

**Approximate Time Required**
5 - 10 minutes.
# Word Puzzle 1

Here are some real puzzlers for you!
Decipher the hidden meaning of each set of words.

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**WORD PUZZLE 1—ANSWERS**

1. Cry over spilled milk  
2. Big man on campus  
3. Six of one; half dozen of the other  
4. Unfinished business  
5. Cancelled check  
6. Moving in the right circles  
7. Middle of the road  
8. Sitting on top of the world  
9. Three square meals a day  
10. Vitamin "A" deficiency  
11. Stepping over  
12. backseat driver  
13. Right under your nose  
14. Splitting headache  
15. Heatwave  
16. Mountain climbing
**WORD PUZZLE 2**

Here are some real puzzlers for you! Decipher the hidden meaning of each set of words.

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Games, Brain Teasers and Food For Thought
Tab D–Page 7
1. High I. Q.
2. Line up
3. Blood is thicker than water
4. Mixed emotions
5. No excuse for it
6. You're under arrest
7. Love among the ruins
8. You ought to be in pictures
9. Take you out to lunch
10. Petit fours
11. Distance running
12. Pay through the nose
13. Cyclones
14. Sick in bed
15. Mother-in-law
16. High above the clouds
Here are some real puzzlers for you!
Decipher the hidden meaning of each set of words.

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WORD PUZZLE 3—ANSWERS

1. It’s up to you
2. Different strokes
3. Start of something big
4. Just in case
5. Fouled up
6. Jay walking
7. Just between you and me
8. Time’s up
9. Deep sea fishing
10. Forget it
11. More to it that meets the eye
12. Space invaders
13. That is beside the point
14. Water under the bridge
15. Highway overpass
16. Making ends meet
Here are some real puzzlers for you!
Decipher the hidden meaning of each set of words.

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WORD PUZZLE 4—ANSWERS

1. Play on words
2. Dipsy doodle
3. Better late than never
4. Partly cloudy
5. Head over heels in love
6. Fancy that
7. Bed and breakfast
8. This round is on me
10. Without a second glance
11. Man in the moon
12. Open-and-shut case
13. A round of drinks
14. Middle of the ninth
15. Overseas holiday
16. Downhill skiing
Many business people are surprised when they learn the Pareto Principle, also known as the “80-20 Rule.” The rule states that 80 percent of your results come from 20 percent of your efforts.

The rule is almost invariably accurate and translates to more than your personal efforts. For instance:

- 80% of your sales will come from 20% of your sales staff
- 80% of purchases made from your business will come from 20% of your customers
- 80% of your personal production will come from 20% of the work you do
- 80% of your profits will come from 20% of your product line

How can you use the 80-20 rule to improve your business and your personal productivity?

Stop and think about what you do throughout your workday. Consider what actions you take that generate income for your company. Is it sales calls? Is it opening the mail? Is it going to the bank? Whatever it is that generates the bulk of your sales will probably only take about 20% of your time.

Your job, as an entrepreneur, then, is to expand the amount of “20%-ing” you do so that you can generate more results. You can off-load the unproductive tasks to someone else. For instance, you may find that running to the post office and bank, while necessary, actually takes up too much of your time. Delegate those tasks to someone on staff or hire someone part-time to do the chores that keep you from your productive work.

Evaluate your sales staff to see who the “20%-ers” are. Reward them for their service and always be on the lookout for “20%-ers” in other companies who may be willing to come work for you because you treat producers properly.

Look at your customer list to see which 20% is responsible for the 80% of your sales. Make sure you keep them extra happy and work to increase their purchases. By raising the amount of purchases a “20%-er” makes, you’ll increase your entire bottom line.

Take a good look at your business. You’ll find that in almost every aspect of it, 20% of the effort, people or your personal efforts generate 80% of the results. Simply identify the 20% and expand the amount of it you do and you’ll continue to grow your business.

EXERCISE:
Divide the class into smaller groups of 3-5. Ask each group to identify the top 2 areas they will examine within their businesses or daily lives to determine where their 20% efforts are being spent most productively; then identify the top two areas where 80% of their efforts are probably netting only 20% results. Have each group report out, and log answers on a board/flip chart. Discuss.
Getting your act together increasing your business’ income can be as simple as increasing your Average Customer Transaction (ACT). We all look for ways to increase the bottom line, but sometimes we forget a truism of marketing and sales: The customer you’ve got is the cheapest customer to work with.

It costs far more per customer to bring new customers in. It is relatively inexpensive to keep existing customers coming back. They know you, are comfortable with you and feel good about doing business with you.

So how can you get your existing customers to spend more money with you? You increase your average customer transaction. Have you ever noticed that when you go to McDonald’s and order only a sandwich you’re asked, “Would you like fries with that?” Asking a simple question like that has meant millions of dollars of extra revenue because the sales people are suggesting a natural add-on to a purchase.

If you sell clothing, you could suggest a nice silk tie with a suit of clothes. If you operate a car wash, you could suggest an anti-rust treatment along with the wash. A CPA might want to suggest monthly or quarterly reviews of the books along with tax preparation service.

Increasing the average customer transaction is an easy way to increase your bottom line and serve your customer as well. How many times have you gotten home after a special trip to a store to buy an item only to realize that you forgot something you need to make the purchase work properly? By asking your customer if they’d like an add-on item, you are actually doing them a service. The worst they can do is say no.

Besides, have you ever eaten a hamburger without fries?

EXERCISE:
Divide into smaller groups of 3-5. For each business in the group, brainstorm 2 ways of expanding the ACT within that business. Have each group report out their findings to the class as a whole.
Tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in business we often try other strategies with dead horses, including the following:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
2. Changing riders.
3. Saying things like: “This is the way we always have ridden this horse.”
4. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
5. Arranging to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
6. Increasing the standards to ride dead horses.
7. Appointing a tiger team to revive the dead horse.
8. Creating a training session to increase our riding ability.
9. Comparing the state of dead horses in today’s environment.
10. Changing the requirements, thereby declaring that “This horse is not dead.”
11. Hiring contractors to ride the dead horse.
12. Harnessing several dead horses together for increased speed.
13. Declaring that “No horse is too dead to beat.”
14. Providing additional funding to increase the horse’s performance.
15. Doing a study to see if contractors can ride it cheaper.
16. Purchasing a product to make dead horses run faster.
17. Declaring the horse is “better, faster, and cheaper” dead.
18. Forming a quality circle to find uses for dead horses.
19. Saying this horse was procured with cost as an independent variable.
20. Promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position.
# More Brain Teasers

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MORE BRAIN TEASERS—ANSWERS

1. Theater in the round
2. The Bee Gees
3. Incomplete sentence
4. Four seasons
5. Little House on the Prairie
6. Mother-in-law
7. Cross purposes
8. Mixed drink
9. Green with envy
10. Growing pains
11. Reverse discrimination
12. For once in my life
13. Split decision
14. Low self-esteem
15. See you in court
16. Water under the bridge
Find the common phrase or saying in the alphabet equations below.

26 = L. of the A.

7 = W. of the A. W.

12 = S. of the Z.

88 = P. K.

1001 = A. N.

32 = D. F. at which W. F.

90 = D. in a R. A.

200 = D. for P. G. in M.

4 = Q. in a G.

1 = W. on a U.

29 = D. in F. in a L. Y.

40 = D. and N. of the G. F.

64 = S. on a C.

13 = S. on the A. F.
26 = Letters of the Alphabet
7 = Wonders of the Ancient World
12 = Signs of the Zodiac
88 = Piano Keys
1001 = Arabian Nights
32 = Degrees Fahrenheit at which Water Freezes
90 = Degrees in a Right Angle
200 = Dollars for Passing Go in Monopoly
4 = Quarters in a Game
1 = Wheel on a Unicycle
29 = Days in February in a Leap Year
40 = Days and Nights of the Great Flood
64 = Squares on a Chessboard
13 = Stripes on the American Flag
18 = Holes on a Golf Course
3 = Blind Mice (See How They Run)
57 = Heinz Varieties
9 = Lives that a Cat Has
24 = Hours in a Day
11 = Players on a Football Team
5 = Digits in a Zip Code
1000 = Words that a Picture is Worth
Check out these REAL Advertisements!

1. Illiterate?  Write today for free help.
3. Our experienced Mom will care for your child.  Fenced yard, meals and smacks included.
4. Dog for sale.  Eats anything and is fond of children.
5. Man wanted to work in dynamite factory.  Must be willing to travel.
6. Stock up and save.  Limit one.
7. 3-year old teacher needed for pre-school.  Experience preferred.
8. Mixing bowl set designed to please a cook with round bottom for efficient beating.
9. Dinner special:  Turkey $2.35;  Chicken or Beef $2.25;  Children $2.00
10. For sale:  Antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.
11. Now is your chance to have your ears pierced and get an extra pair to take home.
12. We do not tear your clothing with machinery.  We do it carefully by hand.
13. For sale:  Three canaries of undermined sex.
14. Have several very old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition.
15. Vacation special:  have your home exterminated.
17. Toaster:  A gift that every member of the family appreciates.  Automatically burns toast.
18. For rent:  6-room hated apartment.
19. Man, honest;  will take anything.
20. And now, the Superstore-unequaled in size, unmatched in variety, unrivaled inconvenience.
21. We will oil your sewing machine and adjust tension in your home for $1.00.
An expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget!

As this woman stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers she said, “Okay, time for a quiz.” Then she pulled out a one-gallon wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of her. She then produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, she asked, “Is this jar full?”

Everyone in the class said, “Yes.”

Then she said, “Really?” She reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then she dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks.

Then she asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?” By this time the class was onto her. “Probably not,” one of them answered. “Good!” she replied.

She reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. She started dumping in the sand and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more she asked the question, “Is this jar full?”

“No!” the class shouted. Once again she said, “Good!”

Then she grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then she looked up at the class and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!”

“No,” the woman replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.”

**Exercise:**

**DO** the above illustration. You need: a one-gallon wide-mouthed mason jar, about 12 fist-sized rocks, some gravel, some sand, and some water.

After the illustration, ask the question: “What are YOUR big rocks?”

This is a great exercise to do at the start of the financial sessions, since bookkeeping, record-keeping and understanding financial information tends to be one of those BIG ROCKS that many people want to put off dealing with!
CUSTOMER WORD FINDER

Objective:
To illustrate the value of tapping into your ENTIRE business team’s knowledge and thinking styles, rather than just relying on your own.

Procedure:
Write the word CUSTOMER on the blackboard, whiteboard or a blank flip chart. Then hand out a sheet of paper to each participant that says the following:

CUSTOMER

YOUR TASK:
Working alone, identify as many legitimate two-or-more letter words as you can from the letters in the word “customer” (you may only use the letters that appear once in a word).

Before you begin, make two predictions:
1. How many words do you think you can identify? ______________
2. If I split you into teams of 5, how many words do you think your team as a whole will be able to identify? ______________

Words found:

Allow approximately 5 minutes of individual work time. Have each participant stop, and record the number of words they individually found. Then quickly divide the group into teams of 5. Allow approximately 5 more minutes to “collaborate” as a team to develop their team list of words. (Suggestion: Tape several blank pieces of flip chart paper around the room, and have each team work at a flip chart to log all the words the team members identified.)

After 5 minutes of group work time, call STOP. Have each team count their team total. Then ask the following questions:

1. How many words did you predict you’d find? How many words did you ACTUALLY find? How does your own individual performance expectation compare to the expectations others held for themselves?
2. How many words did you predict the team could find? How does that compare to your actual team total?
3. What does this exercise illustrate to you?
**HINT**– As part of the post-activity discussion mention to the group:

Team members with high verbal skills typically do well on this activity. Those with lower verbal skills may experience some frustration, but that doesn’t mean they are “non-productive” team members! Some people are good with words, others may be better with numbers or analyzing spatial issues, or dealing with customers. The wisdom comes from learning to tap into all of the strengths, resources and skills each TEAM MEMBER has to offer the business.

Whose responsibility is it to identify the team members’ skills in your business?

Here’s a PARTIAL list of words that can be formed from the letters in the base word CUSTOMER. Keep looking–there are probably more!

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Whenever you travel to a place you have never been, it’s always best to bring a map. When customers come to your company, they are guided by their own “maps”—previous service experiences with your firm or ones like it, life experiences, service histories, and recommendations from others. In order to understand your customer’s experience, let’s look at a map known as the Cycle of Service.

This mapping process consists of three basic parts:

* **The beginning.** This is the point at which the customer first comes into contact with you, your people, your systems, and some or all of your entire organization. This is the doorway to the service concept known as the “moment of truth.” At the start, the customer is making certain basic, intuitive, or even sophisticated value judgments about your company.

* **The middle.** As the service experience continues, more and more moments of truth are piling up in the customer’s mind.

* **And the end of the customer’s experience.** At this point, the customer has completed business with you, and his or her mental report card has already posted a grade. Some people use their own “pass/fail” system—Was this a good experience? Would I come here again? Others are more diligent: What went right here? What went wrong? What did I like or dislike?

The Cycle of Service is a series of “moments of truth” your customer goes through as he or she experiences the service your organization delivers. Whereas you and your people might see these steps as simply tasks to complete, the customer sees each situation, taken singly and together, as a complete “service experience.”

The Cycle of Service is really a map of your company’s systems, broken down into increments, steps, decisions, duties, and activities, all designed to take the customer from the front door, through the company, and back out the front door again. While the Cycle of Service says nothing about your hope that the customer will want to repeat the process with you again, this hope should be built into your thought processes. The power behind the Cycle of Service is the way it helps you see things that are unique from the customer’s point of view. The more you can see, understand, and experience the same things as your customer, the better equipped you’ll be to fix what needs fixing or adjust what’s working well.

Let’s choose a common service experience and map it out along the Cycle of Service. As you read and follow the progression, put yourself into that customer’s shoes.

You’ve decided to go to a movie. This figure gives the Cycle of Service from beginning to end, start when you leave your house and drive to the theater. (Note: Visualize this diagram as a circle.)

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A. Find a parking space at the theater
B. Wait in line to buy a ticket
C. Buy your ticket
D. Enter and give your ticket to the ticket taker
E. Wait in line to buy popcorn and soda
F. Pay for your food
G. Go to the restroom before the movie
H. Go into the theater and find a seat
I. Sit and watch the movie
J. Leave the theater, go back to your car
These ten steps represent a sample of your total customer experience at the movies, which is probably a fairly common experience that most of us can relate to. What the customer is experiencing is ten separate “moments of truth.” You, as the customer, are constantly making conscious or subconscious value judgments about each of the moments of truth you encounter. These value judgments go into that mental “service report card” you carry in your head.

These events either exceed your expectations or needs, meet them, or fail to meet them. All customers give you these kinds of “grades” each time they do business with you. Just because you don’t hear them out loud doesn’t mean they’re not being tallied.

Let’s break the theater experiences down and look at what could go right and what could go wrong during this excursion into movie-time service.

A. Find a parking space at the theater.
   **Exceeds Expectations:** You find a nice, roomy space in a well-lit area, close to the front door, and away from those people with their notorious door-denting cars. You see a security guard walking around the lot, keeping an eye on things.
   **Meets Expectations:** You find a space not too close and not too far away from the door.
   **Fails Expectations:** You do not find any parking space in the entire lot and have to park across the road from the theater building.

B. Wait in line to buy a ticket.
   **Exceeds Expectations:** No line; no wait to get your ticket.
   **Meets Expectations:** A short line; not much wait for your ticket; still enough seats left inside.
   **Fails Expectations:** A long line and a long wait to get your ticket; a long line and all tickets sold out for that showing.

C. Buy your ticket.
   **Exceeds Expectations:** Low bargain prices that you didn’t expect; a friendly ticket seller who makes pleasant conversation and tells you to enjoy the show; correct change from your bill and a coupon for a discount on your next ticket purchase.
   **Meets Expectations:** Standard prices; a polite ticket seller; correct change; no problems getting a ticket.
   **Fails Expectations:** Higher than expected prices; a rude, surly, or downright dishonest ticket seller who snaps at you, talks on the phone to his or her friends during the transaction, or short changes you.

D. Enter the movie theater; give your ticket to the taker.
   **Exceeds Expectations:** A spotless lobby; a charming ticket taker who makes you feel glad you chose that particular movie, gives directions to the theater, and gives you a quick reminder about a new movie coming next week.
   **Meets Expectations:** A clean, well-kept, and well-lighted lobby, and a polite ticket taker who directs you to the correct theater.
   **Fails Expectations:** A filthy lobby with food and trash on the floor; a sour ticket taker who shoves your stub into your hand, says, “Next!” and motions for you to move along.

E. Wait in line to buy popcorn and soda.
   **Exceeds Expectations:** No line, a courteous and friendly counter person who explains the best popcorn and soda bargains for your money, and a cheery send off as you head for the cashier.
   **Meets Expectations:** A short line, a helpful counter person, the right food you ordered, a polite thank you.
   **Fails Expectations:** A long, disorganized line full of angry patrons; a rude counter person who gives you the wrong food and tries to hustle you through his or her station like it was an auto plant assembly line.
F. Pay for your food.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Lower than average prices, the correct change, and a cheerful cashier.

**Meets Expectations:** Competitive prices, the correct change, and a polite cashier.

**Fails Expectations:** Excessively high prices, the wrong change, and a mean, obviously bored, or angry cashier.

G. Go to the restroom before the movie.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Spotlessly clean, roomy, well-lit, dry floors, well-stocked, nice decor.

**Meets Expectations:** Clean, safe, and functional.

**Fails Expectations:** Filthy, foul-smelling, broken toilets, missing hand towels, soap, or toilet paper, too crowded, too small.

H. Go into the theater and find a seat.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Spotless seating area; well-designed theater with no “bad” seats; enough light to find a good chair; pleasant background music or slides on the screen; roomy, comfortable chairs that recline slightly; drink and popcorn cup holders on each seat; a pleasant temperature—not too hot or too cold; no gum on the seat or sticky soda on the floor around you.

**Meets Expectations:** Clean theater with good seats nearly everywhere; safe, comfortable, and dark enough for you to enjoy the show when the lights go down.

**Fails Expectations:** Trash on the floor around you as you look for a seat, broken seats, missing armrests, sticky floor with gum everywhere, too hot or too cold, smells like cigarette smoke around you, a movie screen with a tear in it, loud music blaring from the speakers, gloomy lighting, burned-out exit door signs.

I. Sit and watch the movie.

**Exceeds Expectations:** A fabulous movie in a fabulous theater—great sound system, excellent film quality, no talkers or crying babies around you, and a memorable entertainment experience overall.

**Meets Expectations:** A good movie in a good theater—good sound system and film quality, polite people nearby, and an enjoyable entertainment experience overall.

**Fails Expectations:** A rotten movie in a rotten theater—shoddy sound and movie equipment; a terrible film print, out of focus or threaded in backwards; talkers, smokers, and criers nearby; and an awful entertainment experience overall.

J. Leave the theater and go back to your car.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Friendly theater staff who greet you as you leave, an easy trip through an uncrowded lobby, and a stroll through a clean, well-lit, and secure parking lot to your car.

**Meets Expectations:** No problem leaving the theater: a safe trip to your car.

**Fails Expectations:** Rude theater staff filing their nails, horsing around, or throwing food at each other as you leave; an uneasy trip as you’re herded through a crowded lobby and out the door, only to find that your car is in a dark part of the parking lot, or gone altogether.

When you look at these “moments of truth” individually and collectively from the customer’s point of view, what connections can you make with your own experiences?

When an organization exceeds our needs or expectations, we’re pleased and often shocked, since most of our service experiences tend to run at only an acceptable level.

And when an organization fails to meet our needs or expectations, we’re displeased and again, often shocked. Why? Because we’ve been conditioned over the years to expect good or at least acceptable service from the places we patronize. Our mental customer report cards are sacred to most of us. We keep careful tabs on who treats us well and who does not, and impacts our decisions about repeat business and what positive or negative things we say.
The Cycle of Service—How To See Things From the Customer’s Viewpoint—cont’d

Studies have shown that people might tell one or two others about excellent customer service. But, they will tell 7 to 10 people about BAD customer service. The point is that you can’t always control what people say about your company. Positive feedback is always worth fighting for. BUT, too much bad press can put you out of business, particularly because it spreads so quickly!

Now that you’ve seen the cycle in operation, it’s time to create separate Cycles of Service for your own organization.

A. Find a parking space at the theater  F. Pay for your food
B. Wait in line to buy a ticket   G. Go to the restroom before the movie
C. Buy your ticket  
D. Enter and give your ticket to the ticket taker  I. Sit and watch the movie
E. Wait in line to buy popcorn and soda   J. Leave the theater, go back to your car

What are the steps in your Cycle of Service? Are they positive “moments of truth” for your customer? Where can you improve?

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