



# Being Courteous Goes a Long Way for Storage Managers

A self storage business consisting of numerous facilities hires managers who can handle the books, market the facility and keep it clean and safe. These are all notable and desirable qualities, but what about the one quality that might sell a potential customer the most? What about the aspect of the business that many owner/operators seem to ignore?

That's right, we are talking about common courtesy. How many managers are being hired because they have a way of making customers always feel welcome? Doesn't it make sense to hire a manager who is good with people, empathizes with their problems and actually makes an effort to put a smile on customers' faces?

In this age of computer-centric business, where a "like" on Facebook means everything, perhaps a "like" from the customer about the manager is even more important. Customers come into self storage for any number of reasons, some of which revolve around stressful aspects of life—like moves, downsizing, divorce and job loss. So a manager who cares more about computers and less about customers is very likely missing the point—it is all about the customer.

Oxana Solomon is the manager of StoragePro in Richmond, California. And her top priority is to keep her customers happy through kindness and courtesy.

"I care about the facility like it was my own business," said Solomon. "I'm always cheerful to every single customer. I listen to my customers and care about them, and that makes them feel special."

"I believe that treating customers well is the way to build a healthy and successful business, because each and every customer matters," Solomon added. "And there are little

things you can do, like helping carry boxes to the car, or opening a door for a customer. These things are cost-free for the business and so valuable to our customers."

Foy Dawkins manages Budget Self Storage in Turlock, California, and he said nothing speaks more to the appeal of a facility than a manager who has empathy and compassion for his or her customer.

"We managers have a few minutes to make the customers feel comfortable about leaving their items in our care, and we have a few minutes to let our personalities stand out and make them feel at home," Dawkins says. "Put notes in your computer concerning something special about a customer—like they are in med school or they have two kids or they are looking for a house—anything that makes them feel like you have made the effort to remember who they are. Because, in the end, everyone wants to feel special."

If you are a manager, you may want to concentrate a little more effort on listening to every person who comes into your office. Greet them with a smile, ask questions, offer advice and follow up to see how they are doing. Let your tenants know that you are there to help them. If you are an owner/operator, put as much of a premium on your manager being courteous as computer smart. ❖



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