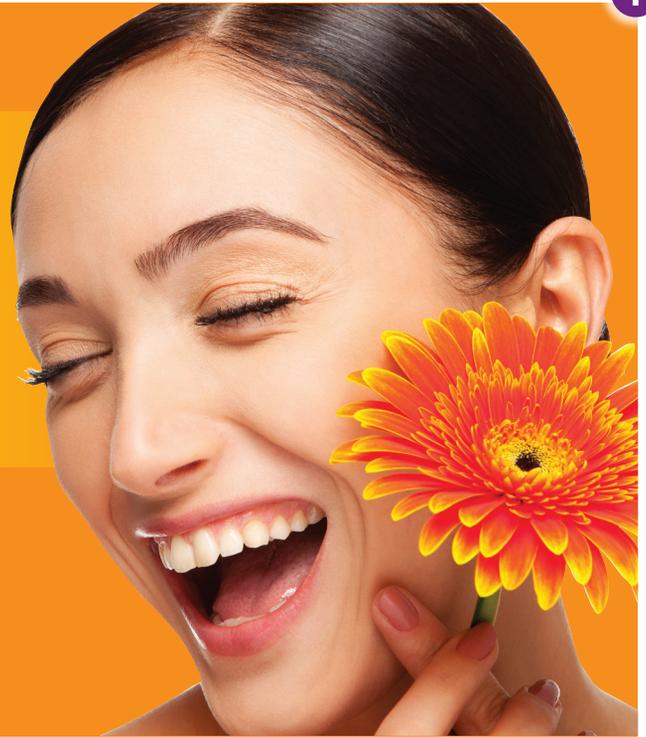


People Will Forget Everything Except How You Made Them Feel

The Secret is in the Service!

BY JUDY KAY MAUSOLF



It was my first time flying into the noisy, congested, Newark Airport. I was going to visit a new client in Hoboken, NJ. Outside the airport I was greeted by a very, very, unhappy taxi stand attendant who hurriedly waived me into a cab - mumbling what I believed to be a yes response to my question about whether they accepted credit cards. When we arrived at the W-Hotel in Hoboken, Joe, the doorman opened my door and heard me tell the driver I only had a credit card to which the driver responded, "Well lady I only take cash, so what are you going to do about it?!" Joe immediately came to my rescue, and said, "I'll take care of it." He proceeded to take out his wallet and pay the driver the \$60 I owed with his personal cash. I tried to give Joe my business card and reassure him that I would reimburse him. He said, "Don't worry about it, we're okay, I don't need your card," and he walked away without even getting my name. I went inside and spoke to the night manager about reimbursing Joe and about his fabulous service. I found out it was Joe's first day on the job!

The W Hotel prides itself on what they call Whatever/Whenever® Service. Their service philosophy states: At W Hoboken, your wish truly is our command with our Whatever/Whenever® Service. We'll make your special moment magical and transform your dreams into reality. Whatever you want. Whenever you want it (as long as it's legal). They answer their phone, "Welcome to the W. Whatever.Whenever. This is Nancy. What is your wish?" Doesn't that greeting alone make you want to visit their hotel?

The W's focus is on every detail that will make their customer's experience top notch! Things like the mats in elevators which are changed to read good morning in the morning and good night at night, air sprays in the elevators, hallways and lobby to keep things fresh. Toiletries & towel service based on first time usage and specific requests and of course their people including a doorman named Joe!

Now compare that experience to a recent stay I had at another hotel that also prides itself on customer service. I will refer to it as the UN-Hotel. When I entered the room I noticed they had a lovely welcome booklet that included information about the amenities. The first page included the following welcome letter:

Welcome,

The following are the rules for your stay in this room.

- ***Absolutely no pets!***
- ***Absolutely no smoking!***
- ***Absolutely no parking unless you have purchased a permit or your vehicle will be towed!***
- ***Absolutely no use of the garbage disposal! No scraps of any kind, down the garbage disposal. Evidently we cannot leave it up to most people to know what is appropriate!***
- ***Absolutely no later check out than 10 am or you will be charged for another day!***

We hope you enjoy your stay and come back soon!

***Warm Regards,
The Management***

The truth is that my stay at the Un-Hotel was not bad. They even had some special amenities. However, after reading their welcome letter, I felt very unwelcomed and everything that I might have considered neutral before reading it now became negative. The Un-Hotel's welcome letter was what I refer to as a weed. A weed is what's not working or inferior or uncomfortable to your patient and makes them feel unwelcome. Whereas I refer to the experience I had at the W Hotel starting with

Joe the doorman as a flower. A flower is what's working and helps your relationship flourish or blossom or thrive and makes your patients feel welcome.

Think about the first impression you make with your patients. What message are you sending with your NP Phone Call and Welcome Packet? Does it truly welcome them (flowers) or is it filled with unwelcoming rules and protocols (weeds)?

Many times we worry so much about implementing wonderful amenities like warm towels, aromatics, and massage chairs and fail to see the weeds we have growing in their office. Your patient's experience is only as welcoming as the weed! To succeed at creating a **W.O.W** Experience for your patients you need to weed out the weeds! **W.O.W** is an acronym for Weed Out the Weeds! Yes, I am an acronym addict!

Embracing a W.O.W. Patient Environment Philosophy will help your team think differently, act differently, make healthy decisions and communicate positively, respectfully and professionally with your patients.

Decision-making is the first step in creating a W.O.W. Patient Environment. Systems and protocol decisions are to take into consideration what's in it for the patient (WIIFTP) in order to nurture a W.O.W. patient experience.

Every time you interact with a patient ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I build a relationship instead of just a transaction?
- Does it make common sense for the patients and the practice?
- Does it set the appropriate expectations and set a precedent the practice can consistently support?

If you can't answer yes to all of these questions you may be sabotaging your service.

To avoid service sabotage:

- Avoid stupid rules!
- Do a few things great!
- Do what you can be consistent at!
- Do WIIFTP!
- Do practice, practice and practice some more!

When your practice loses a patient, ask yourself what are we doing different or what did we not do that made this patient leave our practice?

Step two is to create a positive first impression. First impressions are huge! Within the first 15 seconds of any interaction we decide whether the person, business or experience is positive or negative. We have one chance to make a positive lasting first impression! We are no longer neutral once we have made our decision. Our 5 senses all affect our first impression. Think about what your patients see, hear, touch, smell and taste within the first 15 seconds of any interaction with your practice. I would also add a 6th sense... convenience. Is what you are offering to your patients convenient? If not, regardless of how wonderful it is your patient will deem it as

an inconvenience and negative. Do you make a positive sensory first impression with the phone, website, social media and in your office? Always ask yourself...is it a flower to help your patient relationships flourish or a weed that may end the relationship?

Communication is the third key in creating a W.O.W. Environment. Think about how your team communicates with your patients and each other. Is it positive, respectful and professional? Patients watch and listen to everything that is going on in the office and make assumptions. Keeping your patients informed will help to avoid negative assumptions. I always say under promise and over deliver. If the registration process takes 15 minutes to enter all the information I would inform the patient to plan on approximately 20 to 25 minutes for them to fill out the forms and for the office to upload their personal information, health history and x-rays.

It's not only the words you say. Your words are only 7% of what they retain. Your body language speaks way louder than any words. Body language is 55% and tone of voice is 38% of the message you send. If you are racing around the office, frantic and yelling to another team member for help because you are running behind, you send a message to the patient that things are out of control, chaotic and they feel rushed. When patients feel like they are being rushed through they worry that things will be missed and lose confidence and trust in the team. Slow down your speed of walking and talking and keep moving at a steady normal pace. Regardless of what is going on behind the scenes your patients will feel confident and relaxed.

It is important to include body language and tone of voice when you are establishing your standard of communication.

Here are some simple reminders to help ensure a W.O.W. Patient Environment!

- Serve with a smile.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Base comfort, needs, desires and goals on WIIFTP!
- Own and immediately resolve patient problems.
- Create a work environment of teamwork.
- Be professional in appearance, language and behavior.
- Protect the privacy of our patients, employees and the company.
- Be responsible for maintaining a sparkling clean environment.
- Be a CEO – Chief Experience Officer

Every one of us can make a difference for our patients that will motivate them to come back again and again. I ask you to think about what you can do to create a W.O.W. environment for your patients! What steps are you willing to take right now...right this moment... to make a difference? Because your patients will forget everything except how you made them feel.



For more about
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see her full bio on page 5.

