

# Profit-Growth Banking:

How to Master 7 Breakthrough  
Strategies of  
Top-Performing Banks



Banner Press

Minneapolis, MN

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P.O. Box 390193, Minneapolis MN 55439

[office@EmmerichGroup.com](mailto:office@EmmerichGroup.com) [www.EmmerichFinancial.com](http://www.EmmerichFinancial.com)

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## Dedication

It is my privilege dedicating this book to the four generations of men that have impacted my life the most.

To my grandfather who told me I could do anything in life because I could see things others missed and had the courage to help others see. I miss you Gramps.

To my father who always taught me that conventional wisdom is often short of wisdom and needs to be challenged. You told me to show my prize bull at the fair even though the rulebook said only boys could show bulls. It's no accident that I was always the first woman to do every job I've ever held. You left your mark.

To my husband and soul mate who inspires me and makes me belly laugh. You see me for all I am, and love me more than I knew a man could love a woman. What more could a woman want?

To my son, whose insights, brilliance, and wisdom amaze me every day. I couldn't be more proud.

... You are my blessings. I love you all.

## About the Author

Roxanne Emmerich's ability to help her financial services clients generate profit-growth breakthroughs is the stuff of legend.

It's no surprise *Sales and Marketing Management* magazine lists her as one of the 12 most requested speakers for national sales meetings. Also, the banking industry hails her as one of the highest rated and most in-demand speakers at their CEO and marketing conferences.

Twice voted **Entrepreneur of the Year**, Roxanne built a seven-figure company and **led one of the fastest growth, fastest-to-profit bank startups** in the country in the 1980s.

Her Breakthrough Banking™ video education system is currently the most used sales and service training system for banks all across the United States and Canada.

Roxanne is also an owner of **North American Banking Company** in St. Paul, MN. Currently, she is president of **The Emmerich Group, Inc.**, in Minneapolis, where she works with high performance financial institutions on profit-rich systems and hyper-growth strategies to achieve faster growth of profits.

### Additional Works by the Author

Best Selling Book: *Thank God It's Monday: How to Build a Motivating Workplace*

E-Newsletter: *GrowYourBank*

Training Program: *Breakthrough Banking™*

Teleseminar: *No More Order Taking™*

Bootcamps: *Sales Management Bootcamp™* and *Bank Marketing Bootcamp™*

Summit: *Permission to Be Extraordinary™*

Forthcoming Program: *Strategic Planning in a Box*

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# 1 Breakthrough to Extraordinary Customer Service

## **Turn Service into Profits by Becoming Obsessed about Client Success!**

The foundation for growth is customer service. Without extraordinary service, from the CUSTOMER'S viewpoint, all sales and marketing efforts and all brilliant strategies are only expensive efforts with little return.

Customer retention and evangelistic referrals from customers is the first effort that each financial institution must master.

While most bank executives think they deliver great service, the national research from customers shows the discrepancy between the bank's perception and the customers' perception is alarming. My area newspaper just published an article that included a sad statistic about a large local bank: One-half of its clients who opened new accounts would close those accounts within six months. This same bank spends an astronomical amount on advertising their **outstanding customer service!** As they say in the South, "This dog won't hunt!"

Most of the top-performing banks we've researched are adamant about not using the word "sales" in their banks. They use the word among managers, but *never* in front of employees. They know that the point is not to "sell." They know to direct employees to take such excellent care of customers that they will automatically buy everything they need at that bank. Their employees know to convince their customers to always come to them first for every financial need. Their customers feel like they are taken "under wing," sheltered, protected, counseled, assisted,

and properly informed in all of their financial matters — so they don't need to go anywhere else.

### **“Customer Satisfaction” Is for Wimps**

You can have customers who are satisfied, but they'll leave you for a better rate. The ONLY thing that keeps customers is a feeling of assurance that you are focused on their success!

Top-performing bank managers know that spectacular service will create sales. You should gauge good service by the facts that (1) your customers never leave; they always remain loyal to you and thus remain your customer; (2) they bring all of their business your way now and in the future; and (3) they tell others about you.

Contrast this strategy to a real-life experience I had several years ago:

#### **The Saga Begins . . .**

It was a beautiful spring Monday morning in Minneapolis. I had just moved my business from another state and had spent the prior week setting up my new office. Now it was time to take care of the logistics. I needed a new bank.

Not knowing any of the banks in the area or their reputations, I decided to stop at the one closest to my office. My thought was that the convenience would outweigh any minor differences I might encounter.

When I walked in at 8:02 a.m., it was obvious that I was the only potential customer or client in the bank. There was no signage identifying where the new accounts area

was. Therefore, I walked to the nearest teller station. It would seem I would get direction there.

As I approached the station, I witnessed what I can best describe as “parts disease.” All I saw were scalp parts. All employees had their heads down. No one attempted to make eye contact. As a kid I remember thinking it would come in handy to be invisible at times, but this was ridiculous.

I stopped in front of the teller station. I stood there for some time while the young woman shuffled papers. She never acknowledged my presence. I was completely invisible to her. Because of my move, my time was even more valuable and limited than usual. Thus, I decided to draw attention to myself. After all, I was so close to the teller that she should have heard my breathing.

“Excuse me,” I said. (A long pause followed.) “Excuse me, miss. I’m wondering if you could tell me where I might be able to go to open a business checking account?” I asked clearly.

Her reply, without even looking up, was, “I’m sorry lady, but I’m just a teller.”

“Okay,” I said, “But could you tell me where I could open a business checking account?” I asked again, trying my best to be pleasant.

“You’ll have to sign in at that book over on that table and wait your turn,” she answered without looking up.

At this point, the ridiculousness of the situation nearly became comedic. I had to concentrate to keep a straight face. Wait my turn? I was still the only customer or potential customer in the whole bank. And *I* didn't "have to" do anything. That's why God invented competition.

By now, I had come to terms with the fact that this wasn't going to be my bank, but my curiosity had kicked in and I wanted to stick around and see how bad it could get.

After signing in, I waited "my turn." Employees were laughing about how awful their customers were, gossiping about their coworkers, wasting time, and complaining about what a horrible place it was to work. Yes, they were doing this all within my (their potential new customer's) earshot and line of vision. I was sure they were right about it being a horrible place to work!

This would not be a good place to work or bank.

After another five-minute wait, a young woman closed her *Minneapolis Tribune*, walked over to "the book," crossed off my name, and shouted, "ROXANNE EMMERICH!"

In shock, I looked to my left, to my right, in back of me, in front of me, and finally came to the same conclusion: I was still the only customer-like person in the bank!

Deciding to play the game, I walked over to the desk. What followed would have been astonishing if it had not been for the forewarning of preceding events. I would

have been a fool if I expected anything other than disaster, and I was not disappointed.

“What do you want?” asked the new accounts person.

“Well, I’m considering opening a business checking account,” I said with my hand out, which was ignored.

“Okay, please give me your driver’s license and social security card.”

Clearly, we weren’t going to be best friends. She was hardly making any attempt to be friendly. It just kept getting worse. Not only did she not have any interest in my needs or desires, she had no interest in attempting to look like she cared.

Had she been trained and inspired, she could have started with a comment such as a cordial “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. What brings you in to us today?” Such a greeting would have created a plethora of opportunities for the bank to acquire a new lifelong customer and for me to have a lifelong bank that I respected and trusted. I suspect she could have uncovered ten of my needs that would have created a great bond with her bank, not to mention creating ten profitable transactions.

### **Here’s How It Should Have Happened:**

“What brings you to us today?” the lady asks as she greets me with a smile and a handshake.

“Well, I just moved my business so I need to switch checking accounts,” I state.

“Interesting. What kind of business do you have?”

“We work with financial institutions to help them grow their profits by implementing profit-rich sales and service systems and culture.”

“I see. May I ask what prompted the move?”

“Since I travel so often, I need to live in a hub city so I can get home at night.”

“Have you moved your home? Do you have a family that moved with you?”

On and on the questions should have come. If this had been the case, I would have opened a business checking account, a personal checking account, an IRA rollover, profit-sharing rollover, direct deposit payroll, a mortgage, and a plethora of other ancillary services. Clearly, that was *never* going to be the case.

The service I received that day turned me away from opening a checking account or doing any other business with that bank.

Several years later, I met the CEO of that bank at a conference. When I asked him what differentiated his bank from others, he said proudly, “Customer service!” I suspect I did lasting damage to my tongue that day as I nearly bit it off!

Unfortunately, this type of nightmare customer service and the bank leaders, who underestimate the severity of the problem, are not rare enough. While most bank CEOs state they stand out in

their customer service, national surveys clearly show that consumers feel the banking industry ranks lowest in this area when compared to nearly all other service industries.

### **Why the discrepancy?**

Many bank managers are too far removed from the problems of their clients to understand customers' experiences with their banks. In fact, the people who call a bank CEO tend to be those who are either EXTREMELY dissatisfied or those who are extremely delighted.

Your mainstream business comes from all those who fall between these extremes.

How does a bank management team dramatically improve customer service and make sure it is consistent from branch to branch?

Ask the right questions.

### **Question:**

How do you stop preaching customer service and eliminate the "do gap" between what you want and what actually happens?

### **Solution:**

Create an ironclad customer service strategy and monitor it rigorously.

### **Example:**

Jan Carlson took over the reins of Scandinavian Air at a time when the airline was suffering an \$8 million loss and turned it around to a \$71 million profit within one year.

He created a miracle with more than a hope and a prayer or even a little charismatic leadership. He created a strategy that was so airtight it left no room for misinterpretation.

His transition was based on principles covered in the first video of “Breakthrough Banking™.” This 12-videotape training system helps bank managers educate their employees on “sales and service culture” issues such as customer service, sales, and team building to mention a few. Most banks that use this system do so as a monthly training program, which is repeated each year.

One bank CEO who implemented a strategy from the program called me to share his excitement. “I spent over \$90,000 on sales training last year and I’m already further ahead of that after just the first video!” It was interesting to note that the video he talked about wasn’t even on sales, but service. It was the service “system” that created far more sales for him.

Carlson started his “miracle” by identifying every “Moment of Truth” that each customer encountered. He defined a Moment of Truth as each time a customer had the opportunity to form an impression of the business. He felt that at each of those Moments, a customer would either feel better or worse about Scandinavian Airlines. He felt that if he managed every one of those Moments meticulously, he could create extremely positive impressions consistently, thereby increasing the amount of repeat and referral business.

He identified some of his Moments of Truth as being the cleanliness of the waiting area, the announcements of the

pilot, the check-in process, and even the cleanliness of the plane.

For example, Carlson felt that if a customer saw a coffee stain on a tray when it was pulled down from the seat back, then that person's first thought would be, "Oh my goodness, I wonder if they remembered to service the engines."

**One impression creates concerns for other areas.**

As a frequent traveler on planes, I pray every day that the same person who cleans off those trays isn't the one who services the engines! I think not. But each person's perceptions create his or her reality.

Carlson's point is that passengers are likely to make unreasonable assumptions about whether coffee stains really have anything to do with the area they might worry about. Why? Because the human brain makes those leaps. It is, therefore, very important to manage the perceptions.

The real question is, how do you apply a system that turned a company from a devastating loss to a sensational gain in only one year so you, too, can create such a powerful benefit for your company?

There are nine simple steps which, when implemented, will definitely benefit you immediately and far into the future.

### **Step #1: Gather Your People Together.**

There is a magic that happens when people gather to learn together. Research shows the amount of learning that is actually

implemented when someone trains outside your facility is frighteningly close to *zero*.

No matter how good the intentions may be, when people learn something without their peers learning it at the same time it doesn't work as well as when the entire team learns it together. Why? It is a rather daunting task to go back and not only change your own work processes, beliefs, and habits, but show others how to change at the same time. It is simply harder than if all involved are at the same level of commitment to change and have the same tools so they can implement change immediately.

What happens if learning is done by individuals rather than by the whole group? The individuals may implement the new standards for a short period of time, but once they recognize that those with whom they work have not changed, they have the tendency to slip back into their old patterns.

It is very possible to train technical skills with an outside seminar or speaker. This can be very effective because they are individual skills, not group-related activities. However, when it comes to training in the areas of organizational development, it is **critical** to train people together in the same room and at the same time.

There is a powerful phenomenon called peer pressure that can be utilized very effectively to get a group of people to shift at once in the right direction. I saw this happen after doing one "after hours" session. The bank CEO told me, "I've been doing this for 24 years and if you would have told me you could shift the attitudes so dramatically in one session and make it sustainable, I never would have believed you. What we saw happen here was a miracle."

It's no miracle. When a group gets together in a session and lists all the things they think are examples of horrible customer service, their peers gasp at some of the terrible service. The guilty perpetrators who are sitting amongst them are quite confident they can't go back and do those things again. The gig is up.

There is one other reason you want to get your entire group together to create your service strategy. When they create a process, it's their idea. Who can they blame? Who can they fight? Who cannot use their own idea? You're right: They can't resist their own strategy. They can't say, "I don't have time," or "You don't understand," or "Who thought of this anyway?" People who create a strategy will naturally want to follow through with it. Their creative input is on the line. So what do you do when you get them in the room?

### **Step #2: List the Moments of Truth.**

Pose the question to your group, "At what specific times or under what circumstances do our customers form specific impressions of us?"

They will start to list things like:

- Phone etiquette
- Sales calls
- Greetings
- Rate inquiry calls
- Bank appearance
- Attitude and appearance of our people
- Correspondence and statements
- Recovering from a mistake or dissatisfied customer
- Loan closings
- Follow-up calls and correspondence for current clients

Ask your people to keep listing the times when your customers form an impression of you until you think you've exhausted the list.

### **Step #3: Identify What You DON'T Want.**

Experience the power of “shock training” — why not try asking your employees to list service violations they've seen elsewhere? This will shock violators into waking up.

#### **Example:**

If your employees listed phone etiquette as one of their Moments of Truth, you can then ask the question, “What are examples of some really terrible phone skills?”

#### **Possible Responses:**

- When someone doesn't identify oneself
- When a person's voice is depressing and lacking in confidence
- When the phone rings for a long period of time before someone answers
- When you are put on hold without being asked for your permission
- When someone puts you on hold for over 30 seconds
- When someone transfers the call several times before they get it to the right person
- When someone tells you what they CAN'T do
- When someone uses wimpy language like, “I'll try.”
- And the list goes on and on

Notice that this technique can be used for any standard your bank has.

Now realize that already, just by going this far, there are many people in the room who have violated some of these

“unmentionable acts.” They will probably be extremely careful to never make those mistakes again. The bar has already been raised by watching the disgust on their fellow workers’ faces about how awful these violations appear to others.

After they have listed a series of examples, the next step is to set standards around those atrocities so they don’t happen in your bank.

#### **Step #4: Set Your Standards.**

The group should, for each Moment of Truth, list quantifiable and measurable standards.

**Be Specific!**

Don’t say esoteric things such as, “Our goal is to have happy customers,” or “Be good on the phone.” Instead, make sure that every standard could be shopped by an outside person. Thus, it would be clear that you either did or did not meet the standard.

#### **Examples:**

##### **Standard: Phone**

- Pick up the phone by the second or third ring.
- Always start with an acknowledgement, your name, department when appropriate, and an offer to help. For example: “Thank you for calling XYZ. This is Julie. How may I help you?”
- Always use the client’s name at least once in the conversation.

- Transfer the call only once and announce the call to the person to whom it is transferred to assure the right person is receiving and accepting the call.
- Use a confident and joyful voice.
- Never say what you cannot do. Instead, say what you **can do**.
  - ✓ Don't say, "I can't have those papers to you until Wednesday."
  - ✓ Instead say, "I can have those papers to you on Wednesday."
- Always give the caller a choice between leaving their message on voice mail or with a person instead of automatically transferring them into voice mail.
- Return phone calls within one hour.
- If the person the caller is looking for is unavailable, offer to help them yourself or ask if they would prefer to leave a message.
- Always ask how else you can help before concluding the call.
- Thank the caller for calling.

Notice that in each case, the standard is quantifiable; callers will be able to measure whether each standard is achieved.

Your employees will perceive the importance of something by the amount of attention you spend designing and following the strategy.

For each Moment of Truth there needs to be quantifiable and measurable standards set by your entire staff at the same time. Resist the temptation to have your management team or CEO set those standards and then pass them down from "on high." It won't work. People are likelier to follow processes for which

their input was requested and for which they had some creative license.

The role of management is to raise the bar. As your staff is setting the standards, don't simply challenge them to be just a little better, but coach them on the concept of being EXTRAORDINARY.

When they say something like, "We should answer all phones by the fourth ring, challenge them. Ask, "That might be acceptable customer service, but what would we do if we wanted to have EXTRAORDINARY service?" Let them create from there.

Just as the drawers wouldn't balance without a specific strategy and rigorous monitoring, neither can sales nor service function optimally without a specific strategy and system put in place and followed with thorough monitoring.

**Step #5: Add Distinguishable Standards that Emphasize Your Uniqueness.**

Macaroni Grill, an Italian restaurant chain, has many unique standards that make it distinguishable and impressive compared to its competition. The singing waiter is one of those standards. Another standard that always delights customers is the display of playfulness amidst the somewhat elegant ambiance. The server comes out and signs his or her first name upside down in crayon on the table cover. This helps the customers remember their waiter's name. This ALWAYS happens — no exception.

Macaroni Grill has taken a brand of "be an elegant yet fun environment that is entertaining and comfortable to

the customer” and built a system such that every person who ever comes in is shocked to see this crayon come out but is also delighted at how interesting it is.

What unique standards can you implement? Brainstorm this with your employees.

**Step #6: Evangelize the Standards with a Flair for the Extreme.**

Every human should have at least one convertible in his or her lifetime. I acquired mine several years ago when I went shopping for a car with my highly enthusiastic fourth-grade son. I made an extreme choice of taking a test drive in a blue Saab convertible that looked just adorable. On a beautiful spring day in Minneapolis, with the wind in our hair and the stereo cranked to our favorite hip-hop song, we hadn’t driven more than a block when my son, bursting with excitement, looked over at me and said, “Mom, you just HAVE TO HAVE THIS CAR!”

We drove it home that day and didn’t think twice about it until winter fell upon us once again. Then it seemed reasonable to assume that a convertible perhaps was not the ideal vehicle in Minneapolis. Actually, a two-ton truck with a snowplow mounted on the front would have been much more practical. But, I have to say, I did love that car, and up until that fateful blue Saab day, I didn’t even know that Saab made convertibles.

In fact, up until that day, I had never even noticed a blue Saab convertible anywhere. From that day on, however, I

happened to notice them all around Minneapolis. I saw them everywhere.

What was in the background, but still there, suddenly came to the foreground.

That's exactly what needs to happen with your customer service standards. They need to be brought to the foreground in the minds of your employees.

How do they get there? You have to set the standards and then broadcast them in a unique and remarkable way. But mainly your employees need to eat, sleep, and breathe them each and every day.

Your bank's standards need to be posted, printed, included in employee newsletters, and built into performance reviews. They should be mystery shopped. They should be a part of every new employee orientation. And they should be evangelized on a weekly basis. Whatever medium you use to communicate, be sure to always, always, always include those standards.

It's when your standards take on this type of importance that they are visibly brought to the foreground so that your people really believe they should be the focus of every day.

**Step #7: Attain Complete and Total Commitment from Everyone.**

The most important part of your meeting is the conclusion. It's the part where the *passion* for being extraordinary and actually doing what you say you are going to do is paramount.

I often tell powerful stories of commitment and situations where people removed their excuses and just did what they said they were going to do. The results? Powerful.

It's critical to look people in the eye and ask for that commitment. They need to declare that they want to be extraordinary.

It's the "throwing the heart over the bar" that makes the impact. No great customer service revolution ever happened as a result of an intellectual conversation. It's the passion that moves it forward.

Until you penetrate the core of the issues and spark the desire to perform at that core level, **nothing has really happened!** So your employees will live by the standards, get each of them to commit verbally and/or in writing before they leave the room.

**Step #8: Implement Commitments Immediately with High Expectations.**

At the very same session where you have your staff list your Moments of Truth and create your standards for each, announce that you expect those standards to be implemented immediately and consistently. Let all your employees know that everyone must not only manage themselves and their consistency, but also coach those around them not to slip.

**The 24-hour rule: If people don't apply what they learned within 24 hours, they will probably never implement it.**

Every time I do a session, I recommend that the management team come prepared at the end of the session to announce a

**Mystery Shopping Awards Program.** I have them announce it in exactly the following way with excitement and enthusiasm:

### **Immediately**

Starting tomorrow morning, from the very first call, we expect everyone to be in complete compliance with every one of these standards. To make sure you are, we're going to help you by providing Mystery Shopping so you can see how well you're doing and where you need to improve. The **Mystery Shopping Awards** will be announced at the end of the first week.

### **First Week**

At the end of each week, we will distribute the Mystery Shopping results and have a celebration. All those receiving a score of a perfect 10 will receive a free movie pass, a \$10 bill, or a free breakfast or lunch (or whatever prize management chooses). Each winner's name will go in a hat for the weekly grand prize of a \$100 gift certificate to the mall or a day at the spa (or, again, whatever is of perceived value to your employees).

### **Third Week**

The third week, we will choose from all the names that went in the hat for the ultimate grand prize of a weekend for two at some desired location or a substantial gift certificate.

Only two days into the Mystery Shopping process, one bank CEO told me, “I don’t suppose bank CEOs are supposed to use language like this, but I’m giddy. My customers are calling me and walking into my office asking, ‘What happened here?’”

This is the same CEO whose bank hadn’t grown in four years, and he was now telling me they grew deposits five percent in two weeks. Better yet, they discovered it was sustainable when they grew 50 percent in the next six months!

Why did this CEO and so many other clients of ours receive such powerful results without the need for a market study, a top-six consulting firm strategic plan, or even voodoo?

### **What Transpired to Cause Radical Change?**

What happened is that they brought this concept into the foreground with the complete expectation that every employee would follow and maintain the system, and the focus stayed in place long enough so that the employees began to form daily habits of success.

### **Key to Successful Mystery Shopping**

Many service firms offer Mystery Shopping, but many are too slow to deliver the information for it to be meaningful. Many are outrageously priced, thereby limiting the number of shops.

You *don’t* want to do that.

**You want every employee to be shopped each week for three weeks.**

Obviously, there are times when, after many attempts, a few of your people just can't be reached. However, every effort should be made to make sure each person receives feedback on a weekly basis.

### **Low-Cost Mystery Shopping Do-It-Yourself Kit**

You can Mystery Shop by phone yourself. For a downloadable form for Mystery Shopping, visit [www.EmmerichFinancial.com](http://www.EmmerichFinancial.com). You can simply download this form and hire a bright intern, a stay-at-home mom who understands banking, members of the seniors' club, or people from one of your locations to shop another location.

The most important thing your shoppers must understand is that they **MUST** do their job on time so the results are delivered on time. This shows employees that you, too, are rigorous about your systems.

**An Added Benefit:** Implementing Mystery Shopping also makes your shoppers aware that you are concerned about providing the best customer service possible. By hiring people in the community, you may easily expand your customer base and spread word-of-mouth — a two-for-one deal!

### **Step # 9: Never Ever Drop Customer Service into the Background.**

Follow up and follow through: Our research with banks shows that, after three weeks of Mystery Shopping, the average employee score improves from 4.6 the first week to over 9 by the third week.

Why?

Because by you sustaining the process, your employees realize it isn't going to go away. This isn't another one of those "This, too, shall pass" programs.

I also remind management teams that their most important job during this time is to coach. Their job is to hand deliver each shop and no matter what the score is, congratulate the employee on what he or she did right and say,

"I see you received 5 out of 10. Next week I know you can make a 10. Is there any help you need from me to make sure you receive consistent 10s from now on?"

Notice that the psychological approach is specific and based on some extremely valuable principles:

- Make the person feel good about what was done right.
- Explain that your expectations are extremely high.
- Let employees know that *you* know they can meet or exceed the expectations.
- Offer to help without taking away their responsibility.
- Let them know you haven't given up.

**What is expected must be inspected!**

After the initial three-week campaign to bring customer service to a whole new level, all of your communication, shopping, and focus must be centered on customer service. If this is not true, then you can expect customer service quality to drop off.

**How do you prevent this drop-off?**

Let your staff know that there will be intermittent Mystery Shopping that will not be announced. Those shops must always count for something. You certainly want those shops to be a part of performance reviews as well as continued celebrations and high performance campaigns.

Create a great empire and build your fortress around it for protection. Most importantly, make sure the flag of communicating the standards is never lowered.

For information on how to maximize this process, call our office at 1-800-236-5885 and ask for a FREE special report on customer service strategies.

(Example sheet)

## **Moments of Truth**

Have participants list their own Moments of Truth. Here are some suggestions you won't want to miss:

- Phone calls
- Correspondence
- Greetings
- Loan applications
- Statements
- Building appearance
- Bookkeeping inquiries
- Outside sales calls
- Cleanliness of waiting areas
- Voice mail
- Processing times
- New account openings
- Transaction processing
- Pricing inquiries
- Signage
- Loan closings
- Sales presentations

## Phone Standards

(Use only as a guide and have participants come up with standards so they OWN them.)

- Pick up phone by second or third ring.
- Always offer your name.
- Greet with “Thank you for calling (name of institution). This is (your name). How may I help you?”
- Always thank the customer for calling.
- Ask what else you can help the customer with.
- Project confidence and competence.
- Ask permission before putting someone on hold, and wait for an answer.
- Return phone calls within 90 minutes.
- Offer your name when you place an outbound call.
- Transfer each call only once.
- Never say what you can’t do; always say what you can do.
- Use the customer’s name at least once in each call.
- Update your voice mail daily.

## **Correspondence Standards**

- Similar font on all outgoing correspondence.
- Thank you card sent out within 24 hours of new account opening.
- Bi-monthly letters to hot prospects.
- Letter to prospects within 2 days of initial call.
- Statements understandable and neatly printed.
- Statements out within 24 hours of cycle.
- Quarterly newsletter to all customers.
- Follow-up call within 3 days of opening new account.
- Logo on all marketing materials and letterhead.
- Laser printer for all letters.
- All new-account forms professionally printed.

**Moment of Truth**

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**Quantifiable Standards:**

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**Moment of Truth**

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**Moment of Truth**

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**Moment of Truth**

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## Summary

The point of this chapter is to turn your customer service into a profit center for continued business with your existing customers.

When service is great enough, when it is extraordinary, then sales become automatic. When service is substandard, then customers disappear to more service-oriented banks.

Look at your bank from the eyes of your customers and potential customers. What do they see, hear, and feel about your bank? Determine how you can improve this perception. Most bank managers and CEOs never meet the average customer.

**The Ultimate Solution to Great Customer Service:** Create an ironclad customer service strategy and monitor it rigorously. Take the following nine simple steps that will benefit you immediately and way into the future.

**Step #1:** Gather Your People Together.

**Step #2:** List the Moments of Truth.

**Step #3:** Identify What You *DON'T* Want.

**Step #4:** Set Your Standards.

**Step #5:** Add Distinguishable Standards that Emphasize Your Uniqueness.

**Step #6:** Evangelize the Standards with a Flair for the Extreme.

**Step #7:** Attain Complete and Total Commitment from Everyone.

**Step #8:** Implement Commitments Immediately with High Expectations.

**The 24-hour Rule:** If people don't apply what they have learned within 24 hours, they will probably never implement it.

**Step # 9:** Never Ever Drop Customer Service into the  
Background

Identify your **Moments of Truth** and constantly look for ways to create the impressions you want with potential and existing customers.

<b>Action Plan for Implementing Strategies in Chapter I</b>				
<b>Action to Take</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<b>Benefits</b>				

# Other Financial Services Books and Learning Tools

by Roxanne Emmerich

**FREE Newsletter:** Sign up your entire leadership team for our **FREE GrowYourBank e-mail newsletter** filled with immediately useable sales and marketing strategies. Many leadership teams distribute it at their weekly leadership meeting for a discussion about implementation. Go to [www.EmmerichFinancial.com](http://www.EmmerichFinancial.com).

**Breakthrough Banking™:** The sales and service culture training program in a box with results-oriented proven systems for accountable improvement. Twelve video modules with a leader's guide and workbooks eliminate the need to hire an expensive trainer. Just assign a facilitator to read and follow the detailed instructions in the leader's guide for short but powerful one-hour training sessions. Use one video per month and repeat the process yearly. It can be used in each branch location.

**No More Order Taking™** Teleseminars: Departmental interactive teleseminars focused on results-oriented sales skills.

**Thank God It's Monday: How to Build a Motivating Workplace:** A business best seller and book of outstanding merit that helps everyone in the workplace take accountability for the attitudes and results of the entire organization. Rekindle the passion for extraordinary results.

**Sales Management Bootcamp™:** Not just fluff info . . . A step-by-step template for instant and sustainable sales improvement for your sales manager and those who have sales management responsibility.

**Bank Marketing Bootcamp™:** Almost every financial institution is doing it wrong. Find out shoestring budget approaches that surpass the expensive "traditional" marketing. Discover how to get more clients, keep them for life, and attain more profits from each one.

*Permission to Be Extraordinary™* Summit: For top performing leaders who are ready to be pushed to the next level.

In development: *Strategic Planning in a Box™*: Gone are the days of the typical strategic planning with SWOT analysis, mission statement development, and other bankrupt management tools that have been devoid of results for decades. Follow this process for a results-oriented breakthrough. Can be used for a two-day strategic planning process, or as modules for weekly or monthly leadership meetings in an ongoing strategic planning process.

**Call 800-236-5885 for more information  
on the tools that best fit your specific needs or call to  
discuss how Roxanne can help you develop success  
strategies and maximize results.**

## Submit Your Success Stories

I want to hear your stories of adventure, triumph, and success. When my son was learning to dive off the diving board, he yelled, “look at me” over 100 times in one day. As adults, we’ve learned to suppress that request for someone to praise our successes . . . but the need for someone to applaud remains.

When that feeling of bubbling over hits, please share your excitement here. My staff and I are energized and excited by the breakthroughs of our clients. It’s how we learn, grow, and know that we’re on the right path.

Contact me via e-mail:

**Roxanne@EmmerichGroup.com or  
Call 800-236-5885**



