



**PLAYING NICE
IN THE
WORKPLACE**





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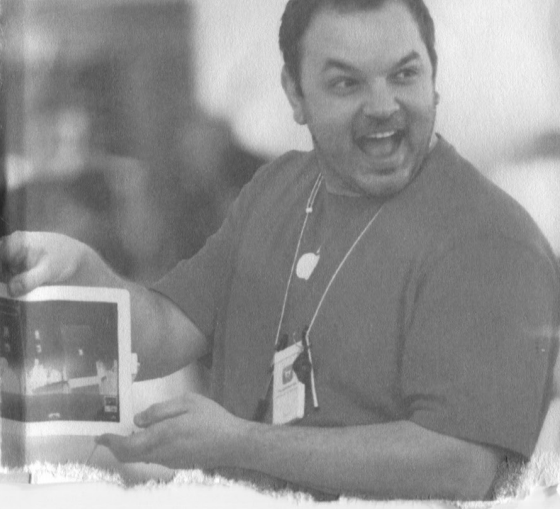
A look at emotional labour in a retail and hospitality environment and how this affects dialogue between the employee and customer.

BY THERESA MOSO

**DO YOU HAVE
A JOB THAT
REQUIRES
YOU TO SMILE
AND FEIGN
HAPPINESS?**



Practically every day, we engage in the buying and selling of feelings. From the smiling barista who always remembers our names to the taxi driver who listens to tales of our crappy day — we not only pay for the services they provide, but also the emotional extras that occasionally accompany them.





EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Emotional labour refers to the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with their organisations rules and guidelines. The term 'emotional labour' was first defined by sociologist, Arlie Hochschild in her book *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling*, as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display." Emotional labour is putting on an act to affect the emotional state of others in a way that meets the expectations of an employer. The most recognisable case of emotional labour is when supervisors demand employees in customer service positions to smile and remain pleasant at all times, even when the customer is insulting the employee.

Amy S. Wharton describes Hochschild's notion of emotional labour as a service acting paradigm (Wharton, 2009). The work place provides the setting and context for the employee to perform for the customer. According to Hochschild three strategies are used to express emotion: surface acting, deep acting and genuine acting (Wharton 2009).

SURFACE ACTING

Surface acting involves the management of observable expressions (Kiely, 2008). Surface acting can include faking emotions not actually felt, along with suppressing and hiding felt emotion that would be inappropriate to display.

DEEP ACTING

Deep acting actively invokes thoughts, images, or memories to induce the "right" emotional expression (Hochschild, 1983).

GENUINE ACTING

Genuine acting is what the employees spontaneously and personally experience and express (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

DIALOGUE IN LABOUR

Due to the affect of standardized language in the workplace, speech patterns have become common and the differences in dialogue between the customer and employee is usually one sided. Dialogue between employees and customers are distant, as emotional labour has designed the workers identity as always being happy and polite to provide good customer service. Employees are trained to manage their emotions becoming less singular in their actions. Dialogue is lost as emotional labour creates a communication barrier between the customer and employee to maintain the face of the company.



TALES FROM RETAIL

~~EMPLOYEE~~ CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 15/10/2013

2 check-ins

Crazy sale. Crazy busy. Underwhelmed by the ridiculous queues that are there and fairly bland clothes. If you do spot something you like, grab it quick, it won't be there next time.

Was this review ... ?

Useful 1 Funny Cool 1

A visit to Mag Nation is usually going to leave you with a slightly lighter wallet. There are so many goodies in here, and not just the magazines. Yes, the magazine selection is great, with stuff that you might not ever see anywhere else, at prices that sometimes leave you scratching your head, but I usually find myself spending more time flicking through the shelves full of sketchbooks, moleskins and other far too expensive arty treats. There's definitely a lot to see in here and it's a great way to kill time. It can get quite busy in here around lunch time but the queues seem to move fast and at least you've got plenty to look at while you wait.

Mark Review

a year ago

★ ★ ★ I like the products but the last time I was here I received horrible customer service. I can't put my finger on it, but there is something about the customer service in Hawthorn, regardless of which shop you go to - the staff will ruin your experience.

On this occasion I had to deal with a very unattractive woman behind the counter. She had pimples and abrasions all over her ugly face. Her tone of voice was loud, overconfident and irritating. Her manners were snappy and direct. Overall BAD PEOPLE SKILLS. I received no greeting and no goodbye. As I was paying for my product she was on the phone completely not paying attention to me.

My suggestion: PUT THE CALLER ON HOLD while you service someone. Once you finish with the customer, then get back on the phone. If you can't put the caller on hold, then say to the customer

vk and crab cakes with duck egg

DINER FROM MELBOURNE • Whythehellant • 1 Review

vk and Crab Cakes with Duck Egg - worth ordering

Posted on 04/09/14 Was this helpful? Yes No

oblie review

DINER FROM MELBOURNE • Perslar • 23 Reviews

went late so no problem getting a table. Food fabulous. Service a later. Couldn't get a drink of this place. Service was terrible. I had to wait for the food on 04/09/14 Was this

Posted on 04/09/14 Was this

DOESN'T LIKE IT

The ridiculous wait means by the time you eat everything is amazing.

DINER FROM MELBOURNE • Ann • 30 Reviews

The ridiculous wait means by the time you eat everything is amazing.

The last time I was at Chin Chin was about 2 years ago. The ridiculous two and a half hour wait every time I attempted to go back just really put me off. One time, just for giggles we rocked up at 12am on Friday to see how long the wait was for dinner. "Hour and a half" came the reply. Finally, we got a table at the bar at 9:30 on a Tuesday evening this week. Okay so it had been so long that all I could remember was that I enjoyed the food last time. The kingfish sashimi did live up to its name. It... Read more »

2 out of 2 found this review helpful

Posted on 01/09/14 Was this helpful? Yes No

LIKES IT

Would recommend to everyone, but not sure how many more people they can fit.....

DINER FROM MELBOURNE • Leo • 41 Reviews

Went for dinner tonight with some friends and could hardly find fault with the experience. The only slight negative was the wait for a table, which turned out to be around 20 minutes (not too bad when with good company). After that, it was not hard to see why so many people wanted to eat here. The food was absolutely delicious (I had the roti chicken rolls, a beef curry laksa and some of the enormous ice kacang), the service was flawless (from order to freshly cooked food being on table was a matter of a 5-10 minutes, while the staff were all excellent) and the prices... well, \$85 effectively... Read more »

Posted on 06/08/14 Was this helpful? Yes No

MISUNDERSTOOD FLIRTING

A slightly older man came in and bought his items and said something to me. His accent was really strong and I couldn't understand what he was saying. I asked him to repeat himself three times before I finally figured out what he was saying "you have a beautiful smile." I wanted to sink into the floor when I realised I had just made a customer compliment me repeatedly.

MY WORKPLACE IS NOT A CHILD CARE CENTRE

I am not your child's babysitter. Please do not leave your daughter without a guardian in my store. I enjoy the company of children, but your child was in our store for more than 20 minutes testing all the pens and creating a mess of the display. Whilst your daughter was doodling about, I needed to attend to other customers, what if someone came in and kidnapped your child? I cannot keep my eyes on all customers who enter the store, especially when I am working by myself. Next time, please consider the safety of your child when you are out shopping.

I CAN COUNT THANKYOU VERY MUCH

As I handed a customer her \$12 change, the lady accused me of stealing her \$50 note as I supposedly didn't give her the right change. She handed me a \$20 note, the item she bought was \$8, therefore \$12 change! She asked to look at the cash register and to check my pockets as she believed I had taken her money. There were no \$50 notes in the till as it was the start of the day and we rarely have \$50 notes. She was accusing me repeatedly and I felt the urge to swear at her as I didn't take her money, but I couldn't. I tried to help her find the missing '\$50 note' but it was nowhere to be found. A few days later, I find out she had done the same act to several other stores nearby. I hate scammers.

The customer is **NOT** always right!

I HAD A CUSTOMER

YELL AND SCREAM AT ME IN STORE

A FEW WEEKS AGO. CALLING ME NAMES

AND TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL INSECURE ABOUT MY

APPEARANCE. SINCE I DIDN'T GIVE HER ANYTHING

BACK IT MADE HER MORE ANGRY.

LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Don't you hate when you have a line going out the door with people on all registers and you're trying to get everyone through as fast as you can and there's always that really impatient person who sighs loudly, checks their watch and mutters not-so-quietly "this is ridiculous". Funnily enough, a lot of people have realised they need to do their Christmas shopping too. We are serving slow on purpose, just to annoy you.

Shop before the christmas rush if you don't like the crowds!

DESIGN NERD

It was lovely chatting to the customer wearing a navy blue suit and red tie. We spoke about the furniture in my store and how he became the first interior architect in our city. I learnt a lot from him about the design of Ludwig Mies van der Roh's 'Barcelona Chair'. He was an interesting person but please, please customers do not come into the store 5 minutes before closing and stay for one hour without buying anything.

Store shuts at 6pm, it's 5:59pm. "Can I quickly grab something?"

If you're as fast as Speedy Gonzales then yes you can.

If you have to deal with difficult customers it disappoints your mood and you begin to question yourself, is it really worth it?
If customers are happy and understanding then it makes your day go smoother.

SWEET ELDERLY MAN

I would like to thank the customers who came into my store today during my busy 50% off sale. About 90% of you were very nice and understanding, which isn't anything short of a miracle. I didn't even mind closing 15 minutes late. So thank you again, but especially thank you to the sweet elderly man who came in a few times and always thanked me kindly for my help. It's people like him who make the job worth it.

GOOD LUCK, YOU NEED IT

To my friends in retail who have the unfortunate task of working during the all-night trade for Christmas. All I can say is, you are a bunch of troopers, I wish you the best of luck, and I hope none of you get pepper-sprayed or punched by aggressive shoppers. I salute you brave men and women. Good luck.



THE ANNOYING COMPLAINER

You can carry on until your voice is hoarse but that doesn't change how this business is run. If you were nice in the first place I would do anything and everything I could do to help you. But since you're being a bitch to me just to get what you want, guess what...I'm gonna help you only as far as our policies allow. Then you can suck it! It's not that I provide a shit service but I'm sick of people thinking that the only way to get results is to threaten and intimidate the staff. If they want something done, manners and general politeness will go a long way. I use mine, they should do the same. Am I asking too much?

9 THINGS RETAIL WORKERS WANT YOU TO KNOW

1

Be polite when requesting attention.

3

We are not a hangout spot!

2

Exercise patience.

4

Realize what 'good customer service' means.

5

Realize retail workers have bad days too.

7

Be nice.

9

We're HUMAN!
Not work machines!

6

I can't do anything about the line.

8

We do not make the rules and prices.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Next time you're at a retail store be polite.
You might just brighten their day with
simple dialogue.

MEMEFEST

International Festival of Radical Communication

Can I help you with
something?