

**October 2007**  
**Nutrition InfoGram**

Issue Number # 18

A bimonthly Electronic Newsletter from the Nutrition and Health Promotion Team of the California Department of Aging (CDA)

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**November Nutrition Program Meeting**

The November meeting for the nutrition program will be held on the Friday after the C4A Conference on

- November 16, 2007 from 9-12 in Los Angeles  
At the Wilshire Grand Hotel  
930 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90017

If you have any suggestions for agenda items please call:

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**C4A Annual Meeting and Allied Conference**

The C4A Annual meeting and Allied Conference will be held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel, 930 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles from November 13 – 16, 2007. The Nutrition Team has coordinated several workshops that you are encouraged to attend and participate in:

**November 14 at 1:30 – The Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP) Update** This session is intended as an update for Area Agency Directors that impact elderly nutrition programs. Learn about implementing the DRIs and the new California Retail Food Code, along with guidance on current topics.

**November 15 at 1:30 – Congregate and Home Delivered Meal Programs: Providing Service Excellence** Need to “spice” up your meal program? A panel of ENP professionals will discuss ideas on marketing and fund raising strategies, customer service excellence, menu improvements, and how to motivate volunteers.

**November 15 at 3:30 – “Be Well” Works** This session will describe successful outcomes of a senior fitness and nutrition program for the moderate to high risk elderly. This demonstration project, with nine pilots operated in Los Angeles County, will show how one program can make a difference and improve blood pressure, lipid

management, weight reduction, blood glucose, and impact fitness markers, and falls reduction.

For more information about conference and other workshops that may be of interest visit the C4A website at: <http://c4a.info/2007EventsHP.html>

## **Evidence Based Programs for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion**

Aging is an inevitable process which is a genetically determined and environmentally influenced process. Evidence Based Programs are scientifically validated activities that promote healthier aging. The U.S. Administrative on Aging (AoA) strongly supports these programs, and the Department of Aging (CDA) Nutrition and Health Promotion Team (NHPT) encourages Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and providers to incorporate these programs into their plans and objectives starting with the 2008-09 Area Plan Update. Evidence based programs have proven outcomes, proven outcomes assures funding is used to its full potential.

Evidence based prevention programs are interventions based on scientifically generated evidence published in peer-reviewed journals. These programs are community based and need to be supported by community service providers and health care providers. Therefore, AoA strongly encourages providers to get involved to save lives of the elderly. Evidence based programs correspond to the purposes of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion under Title III D of the Older Americans Act. Prevention of chronic diseases and conditions affecting the older Americans is the main goal of these programs.

Evidence based programs have been proven effective to reduce risks of diseases, disabilities, and injuries in older Americans. According to AoA, each evidence based program should focus on a subject area where there is evidence documenting the effectiveness of risk-based intervention. The overall objective is to provide accessible, high quality disease prevention programming documented to be effective in reducing the risk of disability and/or disease in the following areas:

- **Fall Prevention**: 30% of community-residing persons over 65 years of age and 50% over 80 years of age, fall each year. One in ten falls result in serious injuries, such as fracture. Falling increases the risk of permanent nursing home placement threefold while a fall injury increases the risk tenfold. The frequency, harm, and costs associated with falls plus the evidence supporting prevention combine to make fall prevention a cost-effective strategy for reducing functional decline, health care costs, and social service utilization among at-risk seniors.
- **Physical Activity**: The benefits of physical activity to the health and well-being of older adults have been well documented. The keys to achieving these benefits are consistent involvement in appropriate types and levels of activity. People aged 60+ have the lowest rates of activity among adults. Levels of

physical inactivity are especially high for persons age 75 or older and for members of minority groups.

- Nutrition: The importance of nutrition as part of a program to limit the incidence and progression of chronic diseases is very well established. People with diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases can substantially benefit from programs that assist them in appropriate nutritional habits. The increase in obesity throughout the population is recognized as a major risk factor for chronic diseases.
- Medication Management: There is evidence that community-based programs limiting medication errors for elders yield positive results. Inappropriate medication usage by community-residing elderly persons has been documented to be between 12% and 40%. Errors in medications are ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for people over the age of 65.
- Disease Self-management: It has been conclusively demonstrated that with appropriate training and support, persons with chronic diseases can help manage their own diseases. Such diseases as, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, and major depression have effectively used this approach as part of treatment for the disease.
- Depression: Nearly 20% of U.S. adults 65 years and older experience depressive symptoms. There is evidence that depression self-management programs can effectively address this problem.

In addition, these programs can help seniors decrease their dependence on the healthcare system. If seniors learn behaviors and strategies in order to be healthier longer, they won't need to spend their money on expensive health care services because they won't need them. Improved health among seniors reduces health complications, which increases independent living.

Many older people suffer from chronic diseases or conditions preventing them from many activities. Four out of five older adults have a chronic condition and many experience limitations in activities due to such conditions. 80% of the "illness burden" in the U.S. is the result of chronic illness occurring between the age of 55 and death. Therefore, we, the government and service providers, must become conscious of this growing problem and act together immediately to ease these burdens.

Initiating evidence-based programs can effectively promote healthier lifestyles and help older adults prevent/manage chronic diseases, which Title III-D of the Older Americans Act seeks to accomplish. We at the CDA would like to see Area Agencies on Aging implement these practices using Title III-D funding. Providing evidence-based services, which have proven outcomes, ensures that funding is maximized. These programs can help seniors all over California adopt healthy lifestyle changes resulting in an increased quality of life and reduced health care costs.

Government, educational, and commercial agencies provide abundant information about evidence based programs online. Most of these programs are free to assess and usually available in the community.

Following is a list of links to evidence based prevention programs that are available to the public.

**DISEASE PREVENTION & HEALTH PROMOTION  
EVIDENCE BASED WEB SITE RESOURCES  
August 2007**

**GOVERNMENT (.gov)**

**Administration on Aging Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Grants Program:**  
<http://www.aoa.gov/prof/evidence/evidence.asp>

The AoA launched a grants program and public/private partnership to increase older people's access to programs that have proven to be effective in reducing their risk of disease, disability and injury. The partnership involves a variety of federal agencies and private foundations that are coordinating their efforts to support the implementation of evidence-based disease prevention programs at the state and community level. The program demonstrates how the results of research from the Department of Health and Human Service's National Institute on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and others can be effectively translated into practice at the community level through service providers for the aging.

**Alzheimer's Disease Program of California:**  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/CDIC/alzheimers/>

The Program provides: Services to persons with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and their families through the [Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers of California](#) (ARCCs) and research funding to scientists engaged in the study of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders through the [Alzheimer's Disease Research Fund](#)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** <http://www.cdc.gov/aging/>

In this website you can access information about different chronic diseases that affect Older Americans today. Also, you can access a list of evidence-based programs that offer help in preventing these diseases and/or improving overall health:  
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/saha/EBPrograms.aspx>

**Healthways SilverSneakers® Fitness Program:** [www.healthways.com](http://www.healthways.com)

The nation's leading evidence-based physical activity and preventive health program that allows Medicare-eligible individuals to take greater control of their health. It provides a comprehensive, turnkey solution that's easy to implement, track and measure.

SilverSneakers reduces barriers to exercise, promotes social interaction and encourages healthy lifestyle activities. This program appeals to all members at all

fitness levels because of its high-touch, customized approach to increasing physical activity.

**National Institute on Aging:**

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/ExerciseGuide/>

A Guide from the National Institute on Aging about exercise.

**REACH 2010 Program:** <http://www.cdc.gov/reach2010>

REACH supports community coalitions in designing, implementing, and evaluating community-driven strategies to eliminate health disparities. Each coalition comprises a community-based organization and three other organizations, of which at least one is either a local or state health department or a university or research organization. REACH grantees are using local data to implement interventions that address one or more of the six priority areas and targets one or more of the racial and ethnic minority groups mentioned above. The activities of these community coalitions include continuing education on disease prevention for health care providers, health education and health promotion programs that use lay health workers to reach community members, and health communications campaigns.

**United States Department of Health & Human Services (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality):** <http://www.ahrq.gov/news/ulp/diselder/ulpdiseld.htm>

This website provides a summary that reflects the discussions among participants of an AHRQ Knowledge Transfer Liaison Program (KTLP) workshop held December 6-7, 2004, in Chicago, IL. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Administration on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute on Aging, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. It was designed for teams of State and community leaders who are responsible for disability and disease prevention programs and was designed to assist them in developing or refining evidence-based interventions to help reduce the risk of disease, disability, and injury.

**COMMERCIAL (.com)**

**AgeNet Eldercare Network:** <http://www.agenet.com>

Solutions for better aging.

**Arthritis Foundation AQUATIC Program:**

[www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/aquaticprogram.asp](http://www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/aquaticprogram.asp)

Water is a safe, ideal environment for relieving arthritis pain and stiffness. That's why the Arthritis Foundation offers its Aquatic Program, designed to safely keep your joints moving and improve your sense of well-being.

**Arthritis Foundation EXERCISE Program:**

[www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/afep.asp](http://www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/afep.asp)

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, formerly known as PACE (People with Arthritis Can Exercise) is an evidence-based exercise program developed specifically for people with arthritis.

**Arthritis Foundation SELF HELP Program:**

[www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/arthritisselfhelp.asp](http://www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/ProgramsServices/arthritisselfhelp.asp)

The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program helps you learn the skills you need to build your own self-management program that helps you become an active member of your health-care team, work better with your health-care providers and handle the day-to-day challenges of your disease.

The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program is a group education program designed to complement the care provided by your health-care team and allow you to share experiences with others. Trained volunteers, many of whom have arthritis or fibromyalgia, lead the courses.

**Center for Healthy Aging:**

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=6>

The Center for Healthy Aging encourages and assists community-based organizations serving older adults to develop and implement *evidence-based* health promotion/disease prevention programs. *Evidence-based* programming translates tested program models or interventions into practical, effective community programs that can provide proven health benefits to participants.

**Health and Age: <http://www.healthandage.com/>**

HealthandAge Foundation (HAF) is a nonprofit corporation providing web-based, interactive health information for people as they move towards their senior years, and for those who take care of them. The website is written and edited by medical professionals; it presents accurate, credible, and reliable health information online, which empowers people of all ages to identify, understand, prevent, treat, and communicate effectively with their health professionals about a wide variety of medical conditions.

**Models of Community Collaboration:**

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=6&ElementID=320>

Presented at the 2006 NCOA-ASA Joint Conference, this website provides the presentation on an overview of the preparation and skills needed, as well as lessons learned, when implementing evidence-based health programming for older adults. The importance of building and maintaining strong partnerships is emphasized.

**The First Step to Active Healthier – Active Aging Toolkit:**

<http://www.firststeptoactivehealth.com>

The First Step to Active Health® provides an evidence-based, progressive activity program. The goal of the program is to improve health and functional ability, to promote independence, and to help prevent chronic disease and disability in adults over age 50. The program includes a step-by-step approach to improve physical abilities with a

variety of simple activities, including cardio/aerobic, flexibility, strength, and balance activities. The First Step is an example of a “Best Practice” for older adult physical activity programs as described by the American College of Sports Medicine.

## **ORGANIZATIONS (.org)**

### **AoA Community-Based Medication Management Intervention project:**

**[http://www.homemedics.org/AoA\\_site/home.htm](http://www.homemedics.org/AoA_site/home.htm)**

This web site presents findings and lessons learned from Partners’ Community-Based Medication Management Intervention (CBM Intervention) study. It offers materials and technical assistance for aging service agencies wishing to adopt the Medication Management Model into their own setting.

### **Center for Healthy Aging: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/>**

Encourage and assist community-based organizations serving older adults to develop and implement evidence-based programs on health promotion, disease prevention, and chronic disease self-management.

### **EnhanceFitness (formerly Lifetime Fitness):**

**<http://projectenhance.org/pro/fitness.html>**

EnhanceFitness is an evidence-based, community-delivered exercise program to increase strength, boost activity levels, and elevate mood. Certified instructors offer a program that focuses on stretching, flexibility, balance, low-impact aerobics, and strength training exercises.

### **Guide to Community Preventative Services: <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>**

Provides evidence-based recommendations for programs and policies to promote population health.

### **National Association of Chronic Disease Directors:**

**<http://www.chronicdisease.org/custom/directory/?pageid=3281&showTitle=1>**

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) links chronic disease program directors in every US state and territory and provides a national forum focused on efforts to reduce the impact of chronic diseases and their risk factors on states and communities nationwide. Here you can access contacts for chronic disease information from specific states and territories.

### **National Resource Center for Safe Aging: <http://safeaging.org/>**

The National Resource Center for Safe Aging’s mission is to gather and share the best information and resources on senior safety, including fall prevention, pedestrian and motor vehicle safety, and prevention of elder abuse.

**Prevent Blindness Northern California:**

<http://www.eyeinfo.org/services/adultScreening.html>

Prevention of vision loss is crucial to preserve the independence and quality of life for our elder population. The PBNC Adult Vision Screening Program, held in health fairs, senior centers, and the PBNC Office, stresses the early identification of possible eye disorders. This service is free of charge, if eligible.

**Project Enhance:** <http://www.projectenhance.org/>

This organization administers two award-winning, community-based health programs for older adults—EnhanceFitness and EnhanceWellness.

Developed from years of solid scientific research and hands-on experience, these evidence-based programs can now be found at over 100 sites around the country, with more opening every day at senior centers, hospitals, assisted living facilities, and continuing-care retirement communities.

**The California Wellness Foundation:**

[http://www.tcdf.org/health\\_issues/healthy\\_aging.htm](http://www.tcdf.org/health_issues/healthy_aging.htm)

This organization provides grants that address the issue of healthy aging are commonly given to programs/organizations that provide: clinical preventive services, falls prevention programs, food and nutrition programs, and in-home support.

**UNIVERSITY (.edu)**

**Boston University – Health & Disability Research Institute:**

<http://www.bu.edu/hdr/products/balance/index.html>

Information about the Evidence-based program called *Fear of Falling: A Matter of Balance*.

**Stanford University – Chronic Disease Self-Management Program:**

<http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html>

The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a workshop given two and a half hours, once a week, for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals. People with different chronic health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with a chronic diseases themselves.

**University of California, San Francisco – Institute for Health & Aging:**

<http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/iha/>

The mission of the Institute for Health & Aging is to optimize the health and aging of individuals, communities, and society through research, education, and public service in social and behavioral sciences.

The Institute for Health & Aging provides public service to Californians through a number of important health promotion and research programs, which are funded

through the Chronic Disease, Injury and Control (CDIC) & Cancer Detection Sections of the California Department of Health Services.

### [www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov) Updates

The following additions and changes have been made to the CDA website:

- The link to the California Retail Food Code (CRFC) has been added under the Laws and Regulations section.  
<http://www.aging.ca.gov/regs/lawsandregs.html>
- A PDF file of the complete text of the CRFC has been added under the AAA Partners, Resource Guide, Congregate Nutrition and Home Delivered Meal section.  
[http://www.aging.ca.gov/aaa/guidance/congregate\\_nutrition\\_&\\_home\\_delivered\\_meals\\_index.asp](http://www.aging.ca.gov/aaa/guidance/congregate_nutrition_&_home_delivered_meals_index.asp)

### **Customer Service**

This section continues a series of articles, tips, resources, and information to assist providers in developing strategies to improve customer service and increase program participation. They are based on business principles that can also be used in the public/non-profit sector.

### **The Ten Demandments**

*Ten Demandments for turning the most demanding consumers into the most delighted customers. Rules to Live By in the Age of the Demanding Customer by Kelly Mooney.*

Beyond all the hype about delighting customers by meeting and exceeding their expectations, is the simple reality that most businesses just don't come close to knowing what customers care about. Today's consumers expect more and tolerate less, in part because they have so many options. With the ever-expanding explosion of information readily available and easily accessible via the Internet, modern consumers are able to research and comparison shop an endless array of both products and services from the comfort of their own homes or offices. Welcome to the age of the demanding consumer.

Mooney's Ten Demandments for turning the most demanding consumers into the most delighted customers are:

1. **Earn my trust** through respect, integrity, advocacy and quality.
2. **Inspire me** through immersive experiences, motivating messages and related philanthropy.
3. **Make it easy** with simplicity, speed and usefulness.
4. **Put me in charge** of making choices and give me control.
5. **Guide me** with expert advise, education and information.
6. **Giver me 24/7 access**, from anywhere, at anytime.
7. **Get to know me** – listen, learn and study me, the real customer, not just data.

8. **Exceed my expectations** with uncommon courtesies and surprising services.
9. **Reward me** with points programs, privileges of access or other worthwhile extras.
10. **Stay with me** with follow through and meaningful follow-up.

A detailed description of four of the key demandments follows. Mooney provides specific action items you can use to tackle the challenges of the ever-demanding customer and secure your company's future.

### **Demandment #1: Earn My Trust**

The first demandment, **Earn My Trust**, is the single most important demandment. Not only is it the heart of the new consumer experience, it is also the center of the old-school consumer experience. Regardless of where a buyer interacts with a brand, be it a store, a service center, online or on the phone, trust is a fluid commodity that ebbs and flows with each experience. As Mooney points out, a bad experience is often more memorable than a good one and consumers tend to remember when they've been treated poorly often than when they've been treated well.

In this era of seemingly endless options, with an infinite number of stores and brands and choices, companies possessing a historical relationship with customers and who have provided generation after generation with products and services are ahead of the game in maintaining and extending consumer loyalty. For example, in Harris Polls, consumers frequently rank Johnson & Johnson, makers of Johnson's Baby Shampoo, at the top of the list of most trusted brands. Any brand that succeeds in getting millions of consumers to entrust their babies to its products is clearly onto a good thing. Earning Trust, from the consumer point of view, can be achieved by following these edicts.

- **Straight talk, not slick talk.** Make clear and honest claims. For example, Land's End guarantee: "Guaranteed. Period." is simple, clear and true.
- **Prove you're on my side.** Adopt policies that reflect a philosophy of customer advocacy, even if it means losing a sale. Progressive Insurance is an excellent role model, offering free price comparisons and assisting consumers in shopping for insurance rather than simply selling their own products.
- **Don't be pushy getting information.** Make questions optional, relevant and understated. Ponder this: Why does Radio Shack need a ZIP code before a customer can buy a battery?
- **Align your marketing and sales channels to present a unified face to customers.** Clearly communicate key information and sales conditions across all channels. According to Jupiter Media Metrix, Inc., 70 percent of online shoppers said that poor online communications could lead them to spend less time and money at their retail store.
- **Protect me.** Employ a Chief Privacy Officer to ensure consumer privacy and security. One example of a protective response was when IKEA's online

catalogue sign-up list was compromised, IKEA sent out an email notifying their customers of the breach.

The final trust-earning behavior is particularly salient with today's information sharing technology. American Express is a terrific example of a corporation protecting its customers: In early 2001 the company sent all cardholders a comprehensive and easy-to-understand notice explaining how they protect cardholder privacy when collecting and using personal information. American Express also provided customers with easy and actionable opt-out choices. These proactive protective services measures clearly illustrate the truth behind the opening sentence of the privacy notice mailing: "At American Express, maintaining our customer's trust and confidence is a high priority."

## **Demandment #2: Inspire Me**

According to Mooney, inspiration is the ultimate form of communion between a company and its consumers. Brand survival depends on creating an emotional bond with consumers, and the companies that successfully establish this bond are the ones that map the products, services, experiences, or ideals that resonate with their customers. Without doubt, creating long-term and meaningful connections with consumers is far from easy. While people cry at commercials featuring newborn babies or reunited relatives, and kids get excited about the latest toy from a blockbuster movie, the brands that become part of customers' lives evoke far more passion and loyalty than simple tearjerker advertising or tie-in marketing.

A fine example of brand passion is all about doughnuts: The mere fact that consumers can find inspiration in a hot doughnut truly is a remarkable thing, but it is also remarkably true in the case of Krispy Kreme. The once-small Southern chain has emerged as one of America's most beloved brands by tapping the natural enthusiasm of its loyal customers and their endless delight at talking about doughnuts. Largely through word-of-mouth, the company has been wildly successful, with more than 200 stores in 33 states (and now growing internationally). Importantly, even with its tremendous expansion and success, Krispy Kreme remains true to the homespun brand and its dedication to community giving, inspiring its loyal customers to continue talking and consuming.

Inspiration moves consumers to be both long-term and loyal. Here are a few of Mooney's guidelines your company can employ to inspire customers.

- **Have a heart.** Support philanthropic organizations relevant to your customers. The Avon Breast Cancer Crusade has raised more than \$150 million since 1993 – it's the right cause with the right message – we care about our customers and their lives.
- **Connect with me.** Stand for something meaningful that reaches consumers on an emotional level. Krispy Kreme's brand promise of "magic and memory" achieves this beautifully.

- **Create the theater.** Offer a sensory-driven environment that engages consumers. The House of Blues, whether it's in the Vegas hotel or the New Orleans nightclub, offers an authenticity of experience whereby consumers are immersed in a world of blues music and genuine memorabilia rather than just a staged setting.
- **Motivate me.** Provide encouragement and stimulation for achieving self-enhancement and positive results. The astounding effect of Oprah's Book Club has rejuvenated the flagging book publishing/selling industry across North America.

Companies able to reach and inspire the spirits of their consumers deliver experiences that extend beyond simple consumerism and commercialism. Products and services can garner experiences that are deeply felt, genuine and enchantingly memorable. Just as true believers are not born but rather are inspired, so too are loyal customers inspired. Don't just try to grab your customer's attention, seek a real connection with them.

### **Demandment #8: Exceed My Expectations**

Managing expectations can be a tricky business: set them too high and they're hard to meet, set them too low and undersell what you offer. From the consumer perspective, **Exceed My Expectations** is about sending consumers on an exciting journey that takes them from trust to loyalty, from expectation to delight. In forging an invisible but tenable bridge to the opposite side of the transactional equation, you prove that your company delivers on its original promise, and then goes above and beyond. Doing something out of the ordinary, even far more than necessary, proves again and again that your customers will get more than they pay for, or even anticipate, each and every time they do business with you.

Exceeding expectations encompasses things such as offering an apology before anyone even complains about a minor problem, being proactive rather than reactive, fixing those little things that aren't quite right, and making amends in big ways when even a small response would suffice. In Mooney's words: "it's about being better than you have to be, not only because your consumers expect or demand it, but because they deserve it."

Mooney presents several methods for successfully exceeding your consumer expectations.

- **Overcompensate.** Put services and features in place to make up for channel or competitive deficiencies or weaknesses. For example, Mooney's favorite local toy store stands out from the industry giants by offering free gift-wrapping on all purchases year-round.
- **Do more than you should.** Make "delivering more than we promise" the philosophy of your company. Remember the idea of the "baker's dozen," giving a regular customer thirteen instead of twelve rolls? Little things can

go a surprisingly long way like the little static sticker Jiffy Lube puts on your windshield as a reminder of your next oil change.

- **Surprise me with extras.** Promote extras designed to delight consumers even when they seem happy and satisfied. Small, on-the-spot incentives can inspire spending — one successful "extra" was Victoria's Secret offering \$5 off any purchase simply for trying on a Body by Victoria bra.
- **Uncommon courtesies.** Have employees willingly extend apologies and have definitive guidelines for immediately satisfying a customer. In other words, turn on the charm, dial up the sincerity, and you will win customers over. And train your employees about the importance of customer appreciation. Target's sales associates are trained to make eye contact and offer a warm "Thanks so much for shopping with us."

Exceeding expectations is about delivering an experience that transcends the actual purchase or service — it's that intangible "WOW!" And, exceeding expectations isn't about providing perfection, but rather it's about enthusiastic, relevant responsiveness to consumer needs.

### **Demandment #10: Stay With Me**

The final demandment brings these guidelines full circle, with the concepts of follow-through, follow-up, and maintaining a following — even during the quiet periods when companies and consumers are apart. One of the most difficult demandments to achieve, Stay With Me is the most open-ended and the least defined in terms of specific time-periods, traditional tactics and experience drivers.

At the same time, it's one of the most critical elements for success as it's all about retention — keeping the customers inside the loyalty loop as long as possible. Wrap things up neatly and beautifully and you'll set the stage for further interactions. Research indicates that improving retention rates can increase profitability by 25 to 50 percent.

In order to improve your customer retention rates, Mooney presents five methods from the consumer's point of view.

- **It's not over until it's over.** Make returns hassle-free, including gift returns, and issue immediate credit. Stores such as Sears, Old Navy and The Gap offer gift receipts, as well as providing 30-day return policies.
- **Keep your promises.** Make promises and honor your warranties without hassle or delay.
- **Give me an out.** Clearly communicate easy options for customers to cancel transactions or relationships with your company.
- **Keep up with me.** Provide a way for consumers to easily update their information, lodge complaints or offer suggestions. Offer user-friendly websites that promote contact with your company. Quarterly newsletters, such as Ford's No Boundaries or Nike's NikeGoddess, which offer

information based on the target audience's interests help maintain relationships.

- **Be there for me.** Evolve to meet customers' ongoing needs through innovative products and unrelenting helpfulness. With the aging population and changing demographics, a hip clothing company, for example, could market roomier yet stylish clothing to accommodate the "middle-aged spread." Reinvent your relevancy in consumer lives and find ways to celebrate the things that matter to you and your customers.

One iconic American company that embodies the concepts of retention with persistent and persuasive branding is Hershey's. This simple, inexpensive chocolate has emerged as a brand with a legacy, a destination and an experience. Consumers can't pay for groceries, buy gas, or rent a video without being tempted by a Hershey Bar or Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. There are Hershey's Kisses wrapped in colorful foil to match every holiday and season. Guests can visit the spa at the Hotel Hershey, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and be treated to whipped cocoa baths and chocolate fondue wraps. Visitors can wander down the streets of Hershey, named Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues, explore the Hershey Amusement Park, and delight in the Chocolate World Visitor's Center, topped off with free samples.

#### **The Nutrition and Health Promotion Team Contact Information**

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