

A Warning

Written by

Tuesday, 04 October 2005 16:00



Yesterday, while we were in [White Rock](#) , we walked along Marine Drive, the waterfront business hub, looking for a place to eat where lunch was still being served at 3:00 in the afternoon. We perused the various menus of the many cafes and eateries until we found one that offered something that appealed to both of us. The first place we tried, [The Pearl](#) , had stopped serving lunch and suggested we return at 5:00 when they reopened for dinner. The second place, Charlie Don't Surf, seemed like it would be good; the hostess welcomed us and told us to pick a seat, and said that they would be right with us. After we sat there for 10 minutes with not so much as a menu offered to us, we left and at the third place, Iguana's Beach Grill, we were cheerfully seated and served right away. Our waitress immediately identified the establishment with the lousy service and told us they were known for that. For the life of me, I cannot understand how people manage to stay in business with such poor customer service.

It never fails to amaze me how customer service has slowly deteriorated over the past 25 years. There was a time when looking after a customer was the number one role of anyone who served the public from wait staff to store clerks to airline employees. These days the customer is often made to feel as if they are an inconvenience and they are treated with disdain. With automated phone answering systems and Internet shopping, caring human contact is becoming extinct so we really treasure it when we find it. If we find an establishment where we are treated with respect and our business is valued, we return to it often and we tell others about it.

It is too bad that our society has become so busy and so invested in themselves that they just accept poor service as a fact of life. Friendliness, and good customer relations should be an essential part of our culture and anything less is unacceptable. The best way to get good service is to be a good customer, being gracious and polite regardless of how we are treated. We chose to leave Charlie's rather than make a scene and hence we enjoyed a good meal elsewhere where the food was great and the staff was very accommodating. Hopefully in due time, unless things change, Charlie's will go out of business and in the meantime if you go there, be prepared to be ignored!