

# 38 Spending Money & Keeping the Change

I once heard about an American chain of hotels that gives each of its staff a \$5 a day allowance for customer service – 25 dollars a week. Each staff member has to account for this spend, but can choose to spend it any way he or she sees fit, so long as it adds value to the customer experience.

Some examples...



... as clear a mark as there could be that the organisation trusts & wants to empower its staff.



A receptionist overheard a couple checking in discussing where to eat that evening, since it was their 25th wedding anniversary. The receptionists pooled their week's allowance to send a bouquet of flowers to the couple's room.

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As a bell hop was taking a couple's luggage to their room, he overheard the husband moaning to himself that he had left his golfing magazine on the table at

home. The bell hop popped out to the local paper store, bought the magazine and delivered it to the husband.

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A power cut wiped out a major New Zealand city, an hour before a key world cup rugby match, featuring New Zealand, was about to be played. One fan contacted the desk, almost in despair, asking how long the power would be down. The receptionist didn't know, but had an idea...her brother

lived on another part of the island. She phoned him, and the power was on where he lived. She got him to video the match, and get on his motorbike to bring the tape to the hotel - 50 miles away.

Her dollars allowance would pay for the fuel. She told the guest what she had arranged, and asked him not to listen to any radio commentary....!

The guest got to watch the whole match, as if live, two hours later...

People will often step up to the mark, and provide exceptional service, once they have a say it what 'exceptional' means. The \$5 a day may seem a lot, but it is as clear a mark as there could be that the organisation wants to empower its staff, and will trust they will come up with a worthwhile spend. And how much would the hotel have had to pay to get this kind of publicity!



“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten” (R. Kipling)

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