

Introduction: Welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer Podcast. The show that walks you step by step to improving strategies you can use today to grow your business. We show you how being kind, useful, and, of course, enchanting will bring you more clients and build a thriving community.

Now here's your host from sunny San Diego, Jacob Sapochnick.

Jacob: Hello everybody, this is Jacob Sapochnick and you're listening to the enchanting lawyer podcast. This is the show where we interview the most inspiring entrepreneurs, business people. Just interesting people all over the world that inspire us to do our job better.

Today I'm very honored actually to have a very special guest. Our guest today is John DiJulius. John is considered to be the authority on world-class customer service. He's an international customer experience consultant and author of many books. He works with world-class companies like the Ritz-Carlton, Lexus, Starbucks, Nordstrom, Nestle, and many, many, many other companies.

He's not just talking about it, he lives it; a very successful entrepreneur himself. Two companies: John Roberts Spa, a chain of upscale Cleveland locations, repeatedly named the top 20 salons in America; and The DiJulius Group customer experience consulting firm that he uses his methodology to provide world-class customer service.

John, welcome to the show. I'm very excited to have you here today.

John: Thank you, Jacob. I'm thrilled to be here.

Jacob: Very good.

One of the things that I do in addition to having the podcast, we have a boutique law firm here in San Diego, about 30 employees. One of the things that we've been doing in the past few years is actually focusing on the service, how we actually treat our clients. Hopefully we're doing good legal work. But customer service has become really something that I've been obsessed about. When I looked at your book, to me it was kind of like, wow, this is really what I was talking about all these years. Your latest book is the Customer Service Revolution: Overthrow Conventional Business, Inspire Employees, and Change the World.

I want you to, first of all, tell us a little bit about yourself and explain to us what is a customer service revolution.

John: Well, Jacob, I think you introed me pretty well. I'm an entrepreneur. I started my first business 23 years ago and out of necessity of like you wanting to differentiate ourselves through the customer experience. I just became a student

and then our business just started growing so fast as a result and we're expensive.

[Audio breaks] wrote my first book Secret Service that came out in 2003 and then it just propelled me in originally first to speaking industry and then now we have consulting firms. [Audio breaks] differentiating themselves to the customer experience.

Jacob: Right. And so when you mentioned in the book customer service revolution, why they call this revolution and what it is.

John: It's designed to transform what employees and customers experience. This shift produces a culture that permeates into people's personal lives at home and makes price irrelevant. That's naturally fine. The companies that submit to this don't have to chase price; they don't have to be worried about the bottom feeders. As you said, they better be great at the expertise but there's a lot of smart lawyers out there, there's a lot of smart consultants out there. If that's all you are, you're a commodity. But if you can build that customer experience, we're not just talking about obviously the service provider to the client, the lawyer to the client. It's everyone that's touching the client. The receptions, anyone I'm coming in contact with is consistently exceeding my expectations.

Jacob: One of the things that I notice that you've been talking about in your presentations is that you continue to point people to the fact that the state of service, the rules of customer service are constantly changing. It's not something that you have to evolve with times. I'm curious to get your take. 2015, what is your state of service today. Some of the new rules that you observed in your book and beyond that we need to be aware of.

John: Listen, the first thing that we as business [audio breaks] and leaders have to understand is how could any of our businesses, customer services in that level comes down to one thing and one thing only. The service aptitude [audio breaks] associate that may be starting next week.

Here's the paradigm shift that we have to have. None of us, myself, you Jacob, none of us have high service aptitude when we entered the work row. Service aptitude gets dictated by three places: One, previous life experience. Most of us growing up didn't stay at five star resorts, didn't fly first class, didn't drive [audio breaks] what that looks like. Yet when we clear people, we tell them to go out and treat customers well or exceed expectation. They don't know what that is.

The second place, service aptitude gets dictated is previous work experiences. Unless you have a pipeline directly to Disney, Nordstrom's, the Ritz-Carlton, everyone is working for us [audio breaks]. They may have been brainwashed to not trust customers and not do the stuff that we want them to do.

We can't control the first two. The third place that people get service aptitude shaped is current work experiences. What I mean by that is when we hire someone, I don't care if that's a lawyer, receptionist, whomever. How much training are we giving them the hospitality side of how we greet, how we treat, the non-negotiables, the customer interaction, the engagements to be expecting it that Jacob is going to be walking in at 2 o'clock. Greet him. Know that he likes Diet Pepsi. Ask him how his trip to Europe was, whatever that may be.

Let me wrap up a long answer. It is not the employee's responsibility to have high service aptitude. They won't. It's our responsibility to make sure they have it.

Jacob: I feel that it's something that ... it's hard to put in the head of a company owner and trickle it down to the entire team because it's something that has to be consistently, consistently talked about. You don't just say we got to be great at customer service. We got to be doing this. It has to become part of the culture.

John, I heard Peter Shankman speak several times. One of the things he says kind of stuck in my mind is he says, "Treat your customer one level above crap." You probably heard that. It kind of stick in your head because most people are doing the minimum. If you do just a little bit more and consistently do that, you may reach a certain level of customer service that people remember you buy it, right?

John: Yeah. No, I absolutely agree.

What I don't prescribe to is my frontline employees, my new employees want to be treated. Because if you think about it, most of the time there's a disconnect between who we're serving. A lot of times it's a different age, different economics. I don't want that.

To be honest, and this is not going to be a surprise to you. This is why we're having down the call. We can pick on frontline employees a lot, weakest professional service people that have low service aptitudes is any business industry that deals with medical, financial, technology and legal.

You ask yourself why. What are lawyers, doctors, CPA's and IT people have in common? Well, they're smart. That's not the problem. But they had to put it [unclear 00:09:26] of schooling to just get in. Law school, be on medical school. It's not like once you entered and pass the bar, you are done. Things are changing seems by the day. So it's not like you can, "Sarah, I got my license and I can stop," you know.

Two things: one, there wasn't a whole lot of time to learn the other stuff. The second thing is in those industries, because of the high intelligence, doctors, lawyers, accountants, we could become, you know ... Clients should just be

happy that how smart we are. To be honest, my accountant who saved me \$25,000 last year on some tax loophole. While I appreciate that, I'm pretty sure most accountants I would choose to go to would know that same tax loophole.

Your financial brilliance or your [unclear 00:10:33] brilliance by itself, it's just a commodity. I need a relationship. I need [unclear 00:10:38] that you treat me like a human being.

Jacob: Absolutely.

Again, we can find many, many, many good professionals but the service, feeling comfortable being able to pick up the phone and call them whenever it's convenient, these are extras that customer service is actually allowing us to do.

You mentioned in the book something interesting and maybe you can explain that. You said build your company's customer experience as if no customer has bad intentions. What did you mean by that?

John: Most people do it the opposite way. They create all these policies and agreements, whatever it may be. Because they're so worried about the 1%, 2% taking advantage of them. So now they have all these ... you walk in any store and the bathrooms are only for customers. If you bounce a check either it'd be \$30 fee; all these crazy stuff really turns people off.

When you're building your customer experience model, build as if no customers had bad intentions and treat them with respect and all that. Obviously, you can have some filters. Here's my thing. Don't punish 98% of the customers for what you're afraid 2% are going to try to get away with. Personally, I'm not smart enough to know which 2%. Instead of being suspicious with everyone, I'm okay if I get taken advantage 2% of the time. Because what I get back from the 98%, they can't believe how well we treated them, handled them, trusted them.

Jacob: It feels that it's different than other companies that have all these rules and say, "If you do this, you do this." We give them the credit from the start. This is great. I like that.

John: Absolutely.

Jacob: In the previous books, talking about customer service and we mentioned in the beginning of the show, we can't do this alone. How do we get our employees to be part of this? I said in your book, you have a chapter that talks about how do you get employees out of bed in the morning and rushing to work because if they are not happy to come, they're probably not going to be very good customer service experience for our clients. How do we do this, the vision and the motivation? I'm curious myself running a small practice here.

John: That's a great question. We have to, you know. I'm sorry. The currency for millennials is purpose. I get so sick of everyone beating up on millennials. I'll be honest. I think the millennials are the greatest generation to come along [audio breaks].

Jacob: I agree.

John: As long as you connect them to the purpose.

Working at a law firm and whatever it may be, that's a job. A job is a job but what we have companies do, there's a chapter there. Before we create the customer service division statement, we create a day in the life of a customer.

We all get numb. We all get numb to our customers. We're dealing customers all day. Law firm is dealing with customer's answer [unclear 00:14:08]. Where we at with this? Where we at with this? Some trivial compared to others but to them that trivial [audio breaks] an argument over \$250 bill, or whatever heck it is, is important to them.

So what we do is we help companies create a day in the life of a customer, stories in only a few minutes of each of your client what they may be going through at home, at work.

Jacob: Now, are you talking about actual clients or [unclear 00:14:47] of the clients?

John: Yeah, hypothetically. Listen, a lot of times they are actual clients, right, but the stories are.

Jacob: Right.

John: But you create this video, and I have a law firm that did this, and they created a video of a day in the life of a customer. You watch this video of 12 short [audio breaks] of his and what's going on in his life. It will make you cry when you watch these. It's an emotional rollercoaster. But what happens is it makes the employee have empathy and compassion.

When that client calls, you're more present. You're not treating him just as next. You're thinking maybe that could be ... the Jacob in that video I saw who found out his wife is sick or his kid has this or whatever [audio breaks] creating a customer service vision statement which is not something gets advertised to the public, the clients. It only gets advertised to the employees. And as you said, it gets them to jump out of bed and want to come to work because they're part of this. Customer service vision statement is what we are here to do for our clients on a daily interactive basis.

Jacob: The reason you're saying that their customer shouldn't see it is because there are some things there that only employees should know.

John: Well, we don't want to create it as this marketing slogan that we put on a billboard, right? We have those and that's great. It's more, yeah, it's more for me to understand as your employee what's my responsibility when I interact with the client be it on the phone, in an email, or face to face. That's really what it's for is to get me to understand that I have a responsibility to do every time with everyone. Not just once in a while. It might be owning the moments and providing piece of mind, right?

One of my law firms has their service division. Own the moments. It's about the moment. So when you call and you're checking and maybe it's the fifth time you've called this week. I told you I'd call you next week, right? You guys have that all the time.

Jacob: Of course.

John: If I understood what you were going through and the bills piling up, whatever your situation is, man, I'd be doing the same. So it's about be it presence.

Jacob: Yeah, walking in the shoes of the client.

John: Right.

Jacob: Now, this is very powerful because, again, once the service provider understands what the customer is going through, it's going to be much more difficult for them to not give him the service they deserve because they're going to be ... they could be in their shoes. Very powerful.

John: Exactly.

Jacob: In your previous books, I think Secret Services and the previous writing you've done, you talked about the creation of the emotional connection between the customer and the server provider that creates the loyalty. Are there any things that you can talk about that and maybe some tips or how do we do that?

John: Yeah. In a law firm, or any professionals, we got to build the relationship. Everyone thinks they have a relationship with their clients. Here's how you prove it. [Audio breaks] two or more things of FORD, like the car. What that stands for is [audio breaks] recreation and dreams. Family, Occupation, Recreation, and Dreams. If you know four more things of my FORD, of your client's FORD, you owe me. Everyone's FORD is what's most important to them. That's what they get excited to talk about. That's what gets their eyebrows [audio breaks] often we just treat people as a transaction.

We have a law firm that we work with Carter Mario out in Connecticut. They are world-class. They do things my spa doesn't do. They have a pre-shift huddle every [audio breaks]. They share FORD. So they say, "Alright, if you happen to see Jacob ..." They'll have Jacob's picture on the screen. "Carter Mario welcomes Jacob for his 10 o'clock appointment."

So now when that door opens, the receptionist knows who Jacob is. She'll be like, "Welcome back, Jacob." whatever. "Hey, he likes Diet Coke," or "He's a snowboarder" or whatever he is. We got to build those little relationships that don't take any longer but definitely build the relationship and the emotional capital that ... it doesn't matter how many lawyers I ever meet out at parties, business. You're my guy. You know me. You care.

Jacob: You remember that.

John: Right.

Jacob: Wow, this is beautiful. These are little things. Most people don't think about it. But people will remember that. I love that.

John, as we come to the end of our show, there's a couple of things I wanted to ask you. First of all, maybe one or two tips for dealing with unhappy customers. We try to give customer service but things fall through. What do we do when they are not happy?

John: Well, first thing is respond, right? Respond. Just that right there we don't do. With clients enough but especially people who aren't happy. Respond, take ownership to try to get away with something.

Jacob: Absolutely.

John: You could have more of a loyal customer from fixing something that went wrong than if nothing went wrong. Right? You're disappointed, we didn't handle stuff well, or one of my attorneys didn't call you back, whatever it may be. I reach out to you and I'm like, "Jacob, I apologize. That's unacceptable. Blah, blah, blah. [Audio breaks]. Thank you for sharing that with me." You might be more impressed now with me and my law firm than had nothing gone wrong because I demonstrated that I'm zero [audio breaks]. Does it mean we'll never screw out? Zero risk means that you never have to worry about it if we screw up. We'll always take care of it.

Jacob: We own it.

John: Exactly. We don't give them he said, she said, and make the customer wrong. Not happy.

Jacob: Perfect. I love that.

John, as we end our show right now, one thing that you want to leave our listeners with. It could be a tip, it could be a suggestion, or anything that you want to share with us as we end our show.

John: I love this quote. "Hospitality is not an act, it's a lifestyle." Sometimes I'll bring up the hospitality word to lawyers and accountants. They're like, "Oh, we're not in the hospitality business." Yes you are, right? Everyone is in the hospitality business. What we need to focus on is be world-class at delivering genuine hospitality. Just happen to have smart, really smart attorneys versus the other way around, right? Be in the hospitality business.

What if the Ritz-Carlton tomorrow decided to get in the law firm. What would that be like? You know what that would be like. It would probably scare the hell of a lot of people because they find and hire really smart attorneys but, man, they'd be like concierges and bellman and just ... world-class experience.

Hospitality is not an act, it's a lifestyle. It's how we treat each other, it's how we should be treating a stranger in the elevator and at home, to our spouses and kids and neighbors.

Jacob: I love that. Beautiful.

Thank you so much, John, for taking the time to be a guest on the show. We're going to link the book in our show notes as well as the website of your company. I wish you a beautiful Friday. Look forward to staying connected.

John: Thank you so much, Jacob. I appreciate it.

Jacob: To our listeners, thank you for tuning in every week, sending your emails and questions.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at enchantinglawyer.com. That's www.enchantinglawyer.com.