

by Mark McCully  
CEO, American Angus Association



## Turning Customers Into Fans

*We can probably all share stories and lament about the apparent disappearance of customer service today.*

I once had a reasonably high expectation of what defined great service at a restaurant; now I am just thankful someone shows up to take my order. But in this world of disappointing service, there is an incredible opportunity. Companies that have picked up on this and put a laser focus on delighting their customers are winning big.

Our staff in Saint Joseph recently had a chance to go to a Savannah Bananas baseball game in Kansas City. If you have never heard of the Savannah Bananas, check them out on YouTube. What you will find is a minor league baseball team that has reimagined the game of baseball and mastered the art of creating unforgettable experiences for their fans. Owner Jesse Cole shares this journey in his book, *Fans First*, and I think many of his insights cannot only be applied to baseball, but to a breed association or an Angus seedstock outfit, too.

The first thing Cole did when he purchased the struggling baseball club was look at eliminating friction points. He put himself in his fans' shoes, and focused on removing every possible frustration.

Games too long? Implement a two-hour time limit. Pace of play too slow? Make a bunch of new and unorthodox rules that keep things moving. Boring? Add dancing grandmas (the Banana Nanas), pitchers on stilts, and all sorts of stunts to keep the crowd entertained.

While his solutions were unique to baseball and entertainment, I suspect we should all look at our businesses through our customers' eyes more often to find friction points. At the Association we continually look at our processes and procedures to identify those that frustrate members and see if we can make adjustments.

If you have some suggestions or things that frustrate you when doing business with Angus, please let us know. We can't promise to make all the friction go away, but we will do our best. In the same way, you can ask yourselves how you can eliminate friction with your customers. Is doing business with you easy, or do you frustrate your customers from time to time?

The Bananas continuously innovate to enhance the fan experience. They experiment with unconventional ideas and show a willingness to take risks and think differently. There isn't a game that goes by where they don't try a new crowd interaction. Some work. Others don't. But that's expected when they innovate constantly.


Organizations can learn from this approach. Encouraging a culture of innovation leads to unforgettable experiences. In agriculture we tend to be conservative and stay with the tried and true, yet we know the world

is changing quickly. Staying open and receptive to new innovations is a key to success. Some would suggest that if you aren't failing from time to time, you probably aren't taking enough risks. As an Association,

we strive to be as innovative as the pioneering members we serve.

The Savannah Bananas prioritize building genuine connections with

their fans. By cultivating authentic relationships and showing genuine care for customers, businesses create loyal customers that become advocates for their program or brand. I know this is well understood across the Angus family. This is largely still a "people business" and having deep and meaningful relationships with customers remains a staple ingredient of success.

Exceptional customer service is not just about providing a service, but about creating an experience that leaves a lasting impression. Reimagining your business to eliminate friction, embracing innovation and establishing genuine connections can turn your customers into raving fans. 

Exceptional customer service is not just about providing a service, but about creating an experience that leaves a lasting impression. — Mark McCully

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