There’s an amazing story about a woman called Zoe Shaw who became a millionaire receptionist. How did she do this? Well, quite simply she delivered five-star customer service and it was noticed. When a management member left to set up his own company, he asked Zoe to go with him and run reception. He couldn’t pay her a high wage, instead offering her shares in the company. In 2005 the company, New Star Asset Management, floated on the stock exchange and Zoe’s shares were worth a massive £1 million; changing her life forever.

The moral to this story is your front of house role is significant, you are important, you can build your career and like Zoe, you never know who you are meeting, talking to or impressing. But how do you truly deliver five-star customer service? We believe there are six points to ‘sparkling’:

1 **Moments of truth** – this is the attention to detail, the little things, delivering the best customer journey possible. So be customer and client focused. Ask yourself what you can do to exceed expectations, what your last word will be – impressions count.

2 **First impressions** – it takes a few seconds for a customer to make an impression so this places the pressure on you to shine. Assumptions made about you reflect the whole organisation so think about how you look, personal hygiene, the way you greet customers and say farewell.

3 **Communication skills** – this encompasses oral, written and non-verbal (ie body language). The way we communicate is vital to delivering excellent service. Be clear and honest, making sure your body language is warm and welcoming. And remember there’s a difference between hearing and listening – express a genuine interest and listen to what you are being told. Only then can you identify the needs of your customer and fulfil them.

4 **Organisational skills** – organisation is key so live by the ‘touch it only once’ rule. When you receive a piece of work deal with it and then file it away. Also, stay calm; front of house is a high-pressured and busy environment; being stressed will not help. Take a deep breath and handle the situation.

5 **Complaints** – the art of dealing with complaints is to adapt to the different situation and remember it is an opportunity to create a more loyal customer. Your communication skills play an important role, so listen and explain the ‘what will happen’ clearly.

6 **Attitude and pride** – you can understand moments of truth, good first impressions, you can have great communication skills, but if you don’t have the right attitude, if it doesn’t seem genuine, it doesn’t really mean anything. Take on a ‘can do’ attitude and go out of your way to make a lasting impression. Think PERFECT – professional, efficient, responsive, reliable, flawless, exceed expectations, be confident, creative and tactful.

learnpurple helps organisations to gain competitive advantage through their people by helping them to engage, develop and retain the talent needed to grow and prosper. For more information, or to attend our five-star front of house learning bite, please contact Ben on 0207 836 6999 and quote Uni Caterer June for a 10% discount.