

LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

[« Parentography | Main | If They Go Elsewhere, We Lose »](#)

A Starbucks Moment

It will come as no surprise to most everyone that I am a Starbucks users. I've been a real fan of their stores for several years now -- sure there's better coffee in some select smallcoffeeshops around the country, but if you want a consistently good brew then I think Starbucks is your best bet. Yesterday I went to one of my regular Starbucks (Mill Creek Starbucks across from the Mall of Georgia) to find the friendly young womanbarista all alone behind the counter. She had about seven or eight people waiting on the pickup side of the bar and I was third in line to order. I'm always fascinated when I see situations like this. I used to work retail (Barnes & Noble way back when) and I would float between the book and thecoffeeshop side of operations and I remember several times when i was left all alone to server both as barista and cashier, but never did I have more than ten people waiting on me. So I immediately began watching this experiment/display to see how she handled it.

I was amazed. First, she already knew some of the people in line, so as soon as she saw someone she welcomed them by name. Those she did not know by name she gave a friendly hello and asked their name. Then, as she was swinging between the espresso pump and the blenders and syrups I would hear her use the name two or three more times in quick conversation. "How's your day been, Michael?" "What can I start for you, Michael?" All the while she was reassuring the waiting customers, but not in a panicked way. She made quick and light conversation with everyone, never slowing down, never forgetting to balance thebarista side with the cashier side. She would deliver one drink, go to the counter, take the next order, and then go make the next drink on her list. Always using names, often times quietly repeating names in an obvious attempt to remember them.

Watching all of this fascinated me. Here was this young person all alone behind a very busy counter and she was not only diplomatically and lightheartedly handling what could have been a bad customer service experience for the many waiting customers but she was also using the experience to learn new names! She was composed but she moved quickly. Everyone present knew she was working as fast as she could and I doubt anyone felt anything but respect and admiration for the way she handled what otherwise could have been a terrible situation. And what an excellent lesson in customer service.

Posted by Michael on January 31, 2007 08:34 AM | [Permalink](#)

➔ Comments

I avoid StarBucks as much as possible. I always use locally owned and non-franchise coffee shops when I can.

Your story is still a good one!

Posted by: [Bill Drew](#) | [January 31, 2007 05:03 PM](#)

Oh, I agree Bill, and I do try but there simply are not that many non-franchise shops in my suburban area. Now if I can get into Little Five Points or down to Decatur then I have a ton to choose from, and they are almost always excellent and friendly.

Posted by: [Michael Casey](#) | [January 31, 2007 06:57 PM](#)

➔ Post a comment

(If you haven't left a comment here before, you may need to be approved by the site owner before your comment will appear. Until then, it won't appear on the entry. Thanks for waiting.)

Name:

☐

Post