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# UPLIFTING SERVICE

The Proven Path

*to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues,  
and Everyone Else You Meet*

RON  
KAUFMAN

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and Everyone Else You Meet*

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## CHAPTER 9

# Service Recruitment

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It's estimated that Google receives more than half a million resumes each year. It's no secret that the company is one of today's most sought after employers and most enviable work environments. Google wants to hire the best employees in the world. To help Google choose the right candidate, the company has developed an interview process that is widely recognized as one of the most rigorous employment screenings in the world.

Imagine you choose to apply. First, your resume is reviewed by the recruiting department. Keep in mind the vast majority are screened out on first pass. Second, if your resume survives the initial reviews, you will be contacted for a 30 to 40 minute telephone interview. If you make it past the telephone interview you will be invited to the Google office for onsite interviews with team members and managers of the department you are seeking to join. You will be carefully assessed for appropriate knowledge, innovative thinking, problem solving skills, and technical abilities.

Finally, if you are still in the running, you will be asked to return again for another round of interviews. You will meet with at least four different members of the Google team, including managers and potential colleagues, to see if you're the right cultural fit—to assess if

you are sufficiently “Googley.” Google believes that great people are attracted by, and attracted to, other great people. So, by involving so many people in the hiring process, Google is more likely to find, select, and invite employees who will thrive and stay at Google.

Google is a unique kind of service organization, dedicated to delivering all the information in the world in the best, fastest, and most accessible manner. Google’s first core principle is “Focus on the user and all else will follow.” Everything they do is to provide the best possible user experience.

But very few of the company’s employees personally interact with customers. Imagine a brilliant programmer who sits behind a screen all day writing unbeatable code or inventing the next world-changing algorithm. Maybe he or she never has to crack a smile, shake a hand, or meet a user or an advertiser face-to-face. But this employee does need to work smoothly with his or her colleagues. That’s why Google puts such a premium on recruiting and hiring only those who fit with the company’s brilliant and “Googley” culture. Getting the right people on the bus is especially important when you are driving an extraordinary bus.

Zappos is as exceptional as Google, but has a completely different company culture. The online shopping company is widely recognized for providing intensely personal service and for cultivating a wacky service culture. The company’s ten core values include not only “Deliver WOW Through Service,” which is not unusual, but also “Create Fun and a Little Weirdness.”

To make sure new hires fit into their curious culture, Zappos asks job seekers to be a little weird in their job application. Read this copy from the jobs page of the Zappos website; it’s easy to see how its recruitment strategy is reinforcing the service culture.

## JOBS.ZAPPOS.COM

The Zappos Family currently has career opportunities in 2 fabulous locations. One location is in the “City of Sin.” Yep, Las Vegas, Nevada. Our other location is home to the Jim Beam Distillery and the Zappos Fulfillment Centers. You got it, Shepherdsville, Kentucky. We do not currently have any work from home opportunities. (Sorry!)

Please check out the Zappos Family’s 10 Core Values before applying! They are the heart and soul of our culture and central to how we do business. If you are “fun and a little weird”—and think the other 9 Core Values fit you, too—please take a look at our openings, find the one or two that best fit your skills, experience and interest!

Why consider opportunities with us? In January 2011, Zappos.com, Inc. and its affiliates were named #6 on the 2011 Fortune: 100 Best Companies to Work For List.

And. . . we’re hiring like crazy right now, and looking for smart, forward-thinking problem solvers to join our world-class, and fairly wacky team.

PS: At the Zappos Family of Companies, over-sized egos are not welcome. Over-sized Eggos, however, are most welcome and appreciated!

**Oh, and one more thing! Cover letters are soooooo old-fashioned, don’t you think? Show us who you are with a cover letter VIDEO! You will be able to upload one when applying for a position.**



Google, Zappos, and many other service leaders know it is much easier to build a strong culture by hiring new people with the right attitude than to hire people for their skills alone and then try to align them around a common service vision. That's why Service Recruitment is such an important building block of service culture. Each new hire either makes your culture stronger or makes your challenge to build a great service culture a little harder. The right people pull naturally in the right direction. While cultural misfits may be incredibly talented, well-connected, or experienced in a specific area, their impact on the team can be confusing or downright disruptive. Every new hire sends a message to everyone else. Either you are committed to your service culture and hire good people to prove it, or your commitment is shallow lip service only, and your next hire also proves it.

### **How to Attract and Recruit the Right Service Talent**

There is a time-tested maxim: what you think about expands in life, and what you focus on becomes clearer. What you see and say repeatedly will shape the way you live today and who you will become tomorrow.

You can apply this principle when recruiting new team members by following these five steps to hire the right talent for your service culture. Start by making it easy for candidates to consistently see, hear, and understand what your organization thinks about service. Those who align with your vision and values will be drawn closer and want to learn more about your spirit and purpose. Those who think, feel, or believe differently won't be attracted, and will naturally select themselves out. Both are positive outcomes for your culture and your future.

## 1. Share Your Engaging Service Vision

Use every opportunity to explain your Engaging Service Vision to prospective candidates. Place an uplifting message about your company culture on the website, in your employment ads, and in all the literature. Stress the importance of your service vision with your staff when you ask them to make new employee referrals and recommendations.

When job seekers apply, ask them to share in their own words what your service vision means to them. You can quickly check if candidates are aligned with your service vision by asking good questions and listening carefully to their answers.

For example, if your vision includes being proactive in adding value, you might ask, “What do you consider great service when helping new customers?” If an applicant says, “Giving them exactly what they ask for and doing it quickly,” that’s different from a candidate who says, “Giving new customers what they ask for, but also making recommendations to help them understand what might help them even more.” If your vision includes going the extra mile, you might ask, “Tell me about a time you were most proud of your service achievement.” If an applicant proudly explains how he or she delivered a project on time and on budget, that’s different from someone who tells you about things he or she did for someone else that were never planned for in the first place. If your vision involves working closely as a collaborating team, you could ask, “Tell me how you achieved one of your greatest service successes.” If the candidate responds with lots of “I,” “my,” and “me,” that’s different from someone who tells you about “us,” “our,” and “we.”

## 2. Involve Your Culture Leaders

As the service culture in your organization grows stronger, some of your team members will become culture leaders. These people

are like tuning forks—vibrating strongly, keeping everyone else in key, and helping your symphony of employees, managers, and departments serve more smoothly and skillfully together. In a recruitment situation, these tuning forks can easily assess who will resonate with the culture and should be hired, and who is far off-key. That’s why Google requires so many on-campus, in-person interviews for candidates with its already “Googley” employees.

Deeply loyal customers can become brand ambassadors and leaders of your culture, too. That’s why Southwest Airlines involves its most loyal frequent flyers in final stages of new executive selection. This makes a powerful statement to both sides. To loyal customers it says that Southwest Airlines will only hire people who are absolutely dedicated to serving and delighting the customer. And to new employees this sends an even more unmistakable message: that they must be genuinely dedicated to uplifting customer service. After all, who made the final recommendation to hire you?

### **3. Ask Your Candidates to Get to Know Your Service**

For real insight into your applicants’ service mindset and understanding, ask them to experience your service, evaluate your competitor’s service, and then make suggestions to improve your current service. If they can’t see anything you might do better, you might be happy with their performance for a while. But if your candidate comes back with constructive ideas, or suggestions for a new best practice, you will be more successful—and for much longer—when that person joins your team.

### **4. Involve All of Your Staff as Recruiters**

Your people already know and understand your service culture. Ask them to make recommendations of people they know, or who they have worked with in the past, who would be great additions

to the team. That's why Starbucks gets and keeps so many successful new employees—because their current *baristas* are deeply involved in the local recruiting, screening, and selection process. Your best customers already know and appreciate your service. You can ask them for new hire recommendations, too.

## 5. Be Patient

Having a staff position vacant can be uncomfortable and costly. But don't let the "empty seat syndrome" drive you to fill that position with the wrong person too early. The impact of a misfit climbing onto your bus can make the ride unpleasant for everyone. And when that person ultimately quits, or stays on and others quit in frustration, you will go through another round of disappointment. You only want to hire the people who make your service culture even stronger. So ask yourself this question: "Will we be happy if we hire this person and they stay with us forever?"

### Questions for Service Providers

- What are you doing to attract the best people to join your organization?
- How can you more actively participate in your organization's Service Recruitment process?

### Questions for Service Leaders

- Is your recruitment process reliably selecting new team members who help to strengthen and deepen your service culture?
- What questions are being asked in your recruitment interviews? What other questions would help you identify candidates who are more perfectly aligned with your service vision and values?
- Who is involved in your Service Recruitment process now? Who else could you involve to make this vital process even more effective?

# Meet Ron Kaufman

Ron Kaufman is the world's premiere thought-leader, educator, and motivator for uplifting customer service and building service cultures. Ron is the author of 14 other books on service, business, and inspiration.

Ron provides powerful insights from working with clients all over the world in every major industry for more than twenty years. Ron is an inspiration to leaders and managers with his content rich and entertaining speeches, and his impactful, interactive workshops. He is rated one of the world's "Top 25 Who's Hot" speakers by *Speaker Magazine*.

Ron has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*. He is passionately committed to uplifting the spirit and practice of service worldwide.

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A breakthrough book  
that will surprise, delight, and uplift you,  
your organization, and your team.

**In *Uplifting Service***, Ron Kaufman takes you on a journey into the new world of service. Through dynamic case studies and best-practice examples, you will learn how the world's leading companies have changed the game, and how you can successfully follow this path to an uplifting service transformation.

“Read this book, apply the steps. Watch your culture transform and your perspective on service change forever. Ron Kaufman has unlocked the mystery of service. Get ready for a magnificent journey into a new world.”

**Marshall Goldsmith**

Bestselling Author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

“Ron Kaufman has pinpointed a massive wound in society, and offers a strategy to uplift the world around us. For mankind, it's transformational. For business, it's a clean and clear path to a sustainable competitive advantage. This book is long overdue, and will create a legendary shift.”

**Thomas Moran**

Director, Customer and Partner Experience  
Microsoft Operations



**Ron Kaufman**, the founder of Uplifting Service, is the world's premiere thought-leader, educator, and motivator for uplifting customer service and building service cultures.

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