

*New York Times* Bestseller

# UPLIFTING SERVICE

The Proven Path

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

RON  
KAUFMAN

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“UPLIFTING SERVICE: The Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues, and Everyone Else You Meet”

ISBN 978-981-07-1832-9 — hardcover (Singapore)

Published in Singapore by Ron Kaufman Pte Ltd.

Printed by Tien Wah Press (Pte) Ltd

Originally published in the USA by Evolve Publishing, Inc.  
[www.EvolvePublishing.com](http://www.EvolvePublishing.com)

ISBN 978-0-9847625-5-2 — paperback

978-0-9847625-0-7 — hardcover

978-0-9847625-9-0 — ebook

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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## CHAPTER 22

# The BIG Picture



Why is Amazon successful? Why are its sales hitting record numbers with market share rising and customer satisfaction scores climbing every year? Is Amazon successful because it was first to market? Is it because it offers so many books in different formats? Or is it because it now sells so much more than books?

Or is Amazon successful because it is available for you to shop at your convenience anytime from the comfort of your home, your laptop, or your phone? Is it because you can order instantly with its patented “1-Click,” or because it will deliver in a week, overnight if you prefer, or allow you to download a digital version right now?

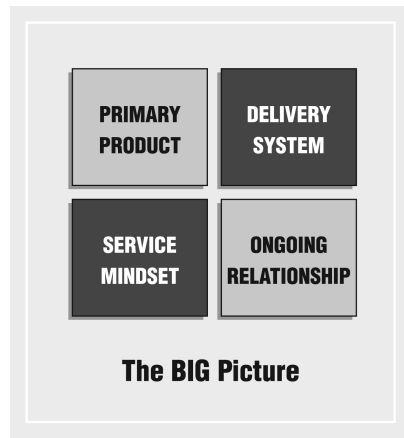
Maybe Amazon is successful because it is service-minded, even if you never see their employees in person or speak to them on the phone. Try returning an item you bought, or sorting out a billing issue. The written messages you receive will be helpful, often personalized, and always friendly.

Or maybe Amazon is successful because it remembers so many things about you, recommending new things for you to read, review, or consider. It knows what you browsed, what you bought,

what credit cards you use, the people on your gift list, the reminders you need, and even the gift you sent on Mother's Day last year.

Amazon is successful because the answer to all these questions is "Yes!" Amazon knows that service means creating value. And it understands that different people value different things. Amazon is not just selling useful products; it is providing a powerful service *experience* loaded with customer-pleasing *value*.

Customers shop at Amazon for the products, the low prices, the speed, the convenience, the friendly service, the comfort of what Amazon remembers, and the pleasure of what it recommends. Customers come back to Amazon in increasing numbers for the *surprising experience* of all these areas combined. Amazon consistently delivers, and its many customers appreciate "The BIG Picture."



You can become a better and more-valued service provider by improving the experience you provide in the same four categories of The BIG Picture: your primary product, your delivery systems, your service mindset, and your ongoing relationship.

## Your Primary Product

Everyone is a service provider to someone else. Your Primary Product is the main reason people come to you for service. Why

do people come to you in the first place? What is the Primary Product you provide?

In a retail store, Primary Products are easy to see on the website or on the shelf. In a factory, Primary Product is found in the quality of raw materials or the craftsmanship and design. At a restaurant, the Primary Product is food and drink. For a technology developer, Primary Product includes form, function, and features. In a bank, it's minimum balance, annual fees, interest rates, and other terms. For a doctor, it's the accuracy of diagnosis and treatment. The Primary Product for a government agency is useful policies and regulations. Primary Products are very important, which is why they are called primary. But in almost every case, Primary Products can be easily copied.

Internal service providers also deliver important Primary Products to their colleagues. The finance group manages budgets, payments, and collections. The legal team creates contracts and agreements. The human resource department handles recruitment, compensation, and career development. The information technology team keeps your computer systems up and running. These essential internal services are the Primary Products of these departments.

Whatever you serve or sell, create or produce, design, develop, or deliver, your primary product will be seen as stepping up—or sliding down—the Six Levels of Service. Consider your own experiences when trying a new product. Have you ever been delighted by great quality and surprising features? Have you been disappointed by bad workmanship or poor performance? Price is also a feature of the Primary Product. Have you ever enjoyed a package price with an unexpected bonus? Have you been sold a “special bargain” that ended up costing you a great deal more?



What level of quality and what amount of value do you provide with your Primary Products? You don't have to be the biggest or the most expensive to be successful. But you do have to offer what someone else will pay for. How can you create more value in this essential category? You can provide a better product, a wider range of choices, a better package, or more attractive price. As an individual service provider, you can learn and share a wider range of product knowledge.

## Your Delivery Systems

Delivery Systems are the processes, methods, and tools you use to get your Primary Products to those you serve. It helps them make a choice, confirm and track their orders, deliver and install the items, invoice and collect the payments, and manage any need that may arise for returns, replacement, repair, or refund. High-value Delivery Systems provide convenience, speed, flexibility, easy choice, and easy access.

In a retail store, Delivery Systems include websites, store locations, opening hours, display of goods, and speed and ease of checkout. In a factory, Delivery Systems include production scheduling, order processing, pallets, containers, warehouses, and trucks. For technology developers, Delivery Systems may include distributors, value-added resellers, retail outlets, online stores, and direct download to your devices. At a bank, Delivery Systems are changing every day: branch locations, ATM networks, online payments, and mobile touch-and-go. With doctors, Delivery Systems include clinics, hospitals, bedside house calls (common in the past), and virtual visits (likely to be more prominent in the future). The Delivery System used by a government agency may be in the office or in the field, over the counter, the web, and on the

phone. At a restaurant, Delivery Systems include menus, counters, buffet lines, drive-throughs, pick-ups, and home delivery.

Internal service providers also use a wide range of Delivery Systems: email, voice mail, phone calls, messages, schedules, online forms, dashboards, hard copy reports, handouts, conference rooms, meeting space, and so much more.

Delivery Systems are important, creating value people appreciate and pay for. But like primary products, others can easily copy most improvements in delivery systems. You build a new website shopping cart and your competition quickly follows. If you extend your weekend hours, others will do it too. You open up another branch and guess who opens right next door? You buy an extra truck, and before you know it, they have bought two. Adding value in this category is a perpetual opportunity and a challenge, because customer expectations are rising fast. The Six Levels of Service are always sliding down.

Why is the distinction between Primary Product and Delivery System so essential? It's because people receive one type of value from your Primary Products and a different kind from your Delivery Systems. If you want to keep stepping up as a service provider, you need to work on both.

## Your Service Mindset

The first two categories in The BIG Picture focus on your products and your systems. The remaining two categories rely more on the spirit and the actions of your people. How important are these “softer” categories in the *experience* people value? Have you ever walked out of a store that has what you want because the person

serving you was rude? Have you ever made a purchase because you really liked the salesperson, not because you needed what he or she was selling?

Service Mindset is the way you meet, greet, and treat other people. This is the realm of professional attitude and spirit, friendliness in the face of frustration, genuine enthusiasm, commitment and care, and compassion for other people. This is a person who gives you his or her undivided attention and tells you to take your time. It's the doctor with a healing bedside manner, the professional from technical support who makes you feel successful, and the colleague who is consistently helpful, optimistic, and upbeat.

The Six Levels of Service apply here too. Someone with a criminal Service Mindset is rude, insulting, and offensive. Staff members laughing at customers with problems. Employees complaining loudly about their jobs. Colleagues making promises they do not keep. A basic Service Mindset is not much better. Service providers who only care about getting paid and leaving early. Untrained employees who show no interest in new learning. Colleagues hoarding information they should share. Expected Service Mindset is routine and nothing special. Service providers who say hello. Employees who say thank you. Colleagues willing to help when you have a question.

As we climb to higher levels, the value of Service Mindset grows. Service providers remember your name and sincerely thank you for your business. Employees are delighted to answer all your questions. Colleagues go out of their way to help each other. Leaders truly walk the talk and demonstrate service passion.

Which of the Six Levels of Service have you recently encountered? Which do you deliver?

## Your Ongoing Relationship

An Ongoing Relationship includes your efforts to build connection with customers and colleagues over time. This means staying in touch and thinking longer term, being proactive with recommendations, and following up for feedback. An Ongoing Relationship means recognizing returning customers, rewarding frequent buyers, and expressing your appreciation with loyalty programs, better discounts, and other incentives.

Your commitment to an Ongoing Relationship enriches the present and enhances the future. It is a reliable promise to serve today, and an offer to continue serving tomorrow. Customers get more personalized service, more relevant suggestions, and better product selection. Colleagues get more helpful assistance to succeed in their jobs, receive more appropriate education to grow their careers, and become more satisfied with the work they do each day.

At the criminal level of Ongoing Relationship, a service provider pretends to be concerned about your future, but only cares about his or her own profit. One colleague lies to another. A company sells your personal information without permission. At the basic level, service providers make no effort to remember you or appreciate your business. A colleague takes all the credit instead of sharing it with the team. At the expected level, companies keep track of who you are and what you've purchased. Colleagues help each other using all normal means and methods. At the desired level, you enjoy a membership program, or a coupon for your next purchase. Service providers ask if you are pleased with what you purchased. Colleagues make an extra effort to help each other when really needed—at the end of the month, in a new product launch, or on an important service recovery. At the highest levels of Ongoing Relationship are people

deeply committed to your satisfaction and to your success. Colleagues are as interested in your achievements as in their own. Companies will refer you elsewhere if a competitor's offer will serve you better.

The value you enjoy in the category of Ongoing Relationship should not be taken for granted. Many people will serve and sell to you throughout your life. Some will cultivate an ongoing connection and earn your repeat business. These are service providers you want to keep, and the kind you want to be.

### Up the Loyalty Ladder

Why is Amazon successful? Because it is creating more value for you in every category of The BIG Picture. Its product range is constantly increasing, its online store is always improving, and its understanding of you and your interests is steadily growing. And, while Amazon cannot provide the same face-to-face attention as Singapore Airlines, Nordstrom, or The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, it demonstrates an attitude of welcome and appreciation for its customers.

This persistent commitment to giving you greater value delivers solid business results: growing volumes, increasing share of market, and record-setting service, satisfaction, and customer loyalty scores.

Loyalty is a special prize in any relationship. It's a hot topic when it comes to customers, but it is equally important when attracting, managing, and retaining great employees. And loyalty delivers substantial benefits with allies and business partners, too: investors, vendors, suppliers, distributors, and resellers.

Different people value different things, but everyone values the same four categories in The BIG Picture. To move anyone up

the Loyalty Ladder, the same rules of loyalty apply. Everyone wants fair value for his or her investment of time and money. People want to get what they have requested or think they deserve. Everyone wants to feel welcomed. Everyone wants to be recognized, appreciated, and rewarded.



Moving everyone up the Loyalty Ladder makes sense, because anyone can influence people's perception of you and your organization. Anyone can trumpet from the heights of advocacy, or become a horrible adversary overnight. Let's take a closer look.

**Adversary:** As far as loyalty goes, adversaries are loyal to finding your demise. They are former or current employees who are toxic forces to your other employees. They spread negative rumors about your working conditions, about other people inside your organization, or even about your services and products. Your adversaries may also be customers who feel they have been genuinely wronged. They loudly and publicly complain, post negative information about you online, and actively seek to harm your reputation and your business. Adversarial employees and customers will be highly supportive of your competition, simply because they are your competition. Is recovery of this group worth your energy, time, and investment? What are the costs of doing nothing?

**Defector:** Defectors have granted their loyalty to someone else. They may be customers who once were complimentary of your service but have since moved on, or they might be employees

who left and discovered greater value elsewhere. Defectors won't necessarily say negative things about you, but they promote your competition to anyone who asks. This is the group where a good recovery can transform your former fans into your current evangelists. Refer to chapter 16 on Service Recovery and Guarantees. Your defectors are worth wooing and winning back. Put in the effort and *bounce!*

**Neutral:** Neutrals aren't loyal to anyone. They may be employees who once loved working for you, and still may work for you, but will leave if they receive a better offer. Because this group is neutral, you can often entice them up the Loyalty Ladder with just a bit of extra value. The key is discovering which bit to offer so you do not waste your resources. And that means paying closer attention to this group, getting to know them better, understanding what they would appreciate in each category of The BIG Picture.

**Supporter:** Supporters like doing business with you on the inside and the outside. They will promote your business if anyone asks. Employees will say it's a great place to work. Customers will refer you to their family, friends, and business acquaintances—if asked. This group is just one step away from actively promoting you to others, and could easily be converted to genuine ambassador status. But getting them to take that step up means you must step up, too.

**Ambassador:** Ambassadors are your evangelists, your loyal advocates, and trumpeters. They are the employees who tell others how much they love their job and invite the best of those they meet to join your organization. They are the customers that love you and what you stand for. They give you feedback when you are wrong and defend you when you are right. They will promote you to complete strangers and they will celebrate

with you like good friends. Ambassadors will go many extra miles to help you grow and thrive. How far will you go to appreciate and value them?

On every level of the Loyalty Ladder, the next step up comes from creating greater value in at least one of the four categories of The BIG Picture. The next step up always requires action. In an uplifting service culture, responsibility for taking that action belongs to every service leader and every service provider.

### **Questions for Service Providers**

- What is the next step to improve your product knowledge?
- How can you demonstrate an even better Service Mindset?
- How can you deliver more conveniently or quickly?
- What can you do to build a better Ongoing Relationship with your customers and colleagues?

### **Questions for Service Leaders**

- In each category of The BIG Picture, where are you now on the Six Levels of Service? What do your team members say? What do your customers say?
- What percentage of your customers and team members are on each step of the Loyalty Ladder? Which groups do you want to move up the ladder the most? What new action steps will create that uplifting value?



# 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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