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Ms. von Uhl

Confessions of a Cashier

As much as I told myself that it was a professional interview, it was hard to concentrate when the interviewer was one of my close friends at CVS. Frank and I work as cashiers in a small CVS store, located in the center of a shopping plaza. The surrounding stores include a nail salon, a pizzeria, a deli, and a Dunkin Donuts. I enjoy having a variety of places nearby, especially when it comes to the food I get to eat on my breaks. The store has two small break rooms, which are shared between cashiers and pharmacists. I asked Frank to be a part of my interview because he understands the pressure there is to perform excellent customer service. I also asked him because he is honest and sincere. Frank also attends college as a full-time student and works part-time. I perceive Frank as one of the best workers at our store, since he always pays attention to the customer. Overall, I perceive my workplace as a fun environment, since I get along with all my coworkers. CVS cashiers know that customers receive emails with a survey. This survey allows the customer to share their experience while they were shopping at the store. They answer questions on how friendly the cashier was, and if they were offered help. This puts a lot of pressure on cashiers. The work that goes into keeping a good score for customer service at a CVS store is demanding, and I wanted to understand Frank's perspective on this.

Me: What do you think is your greatest strength as a worker?

Frank: Well, my greatest strength as a person is my ability to be open and friendly with people. I think this has helped me be a good worker here because, it helps me start conversation with customers. I am not a shy person and I enjoy asking customers about their day, so I think this helps me maintain a good score in checkout.

Me: Why do you believe you were hired to work here?

Frank: I was very open with Chris through the interview process. I told him I needed the money for college and told him that I am good with people. He saw that I was a charismatic person, and told me that I had potential to be a good worker if I always remembered to be that way with customers.

Me: What part of the job is most stressful for you? Have you dealt with rude customers and how did you handle that?

Frank: The work is manageable and there is nothing hard about the job, other than dealing with rude customers. The majority of the customers are nice, but there are also a good amount who are not. If it's not in my heart, then it is hard to be nice to a customer who is rude. I have dealt with many rude customers, and it left me feeling as if I had no control over the situation because the customer has to always be right.

Me: Has there ever been a time when you were willingly rude to a customer who was being rude to you, and what was the response from your manager?

Frank: It is hard for me to fake a smile, especially when the other person is being unreasonably rude. There has been a few times I had to call a manager, because I could no longer handle the situation. One of the customers had yelled at me because none of her coupons were working. You know that cashiers have no control over how coupons work. So, I called Chris and he let the coupons pass because he wanted to please the customer and avoid future problems. I thought this was unfair because the manager should enforce the policy on everyone, and not just let it slide for a customer who throws a “tantrum”.

Me: How do you feel being scored by customers and what impact does this have on your work ethic?

Frank: I think that it can be unfair at times because customers can be wrong in specific situations, so this affects the score I receive. However, it is my goal to receive a full heart on my impact because, this means I would receive a perfect score in areas such as friendly at checkout and offer help to customers. This pressure makes me want to work harder. I am trying to be excellent with customers because I really want a full heart and want Chris to acknowledge this.

Me: Do you think the my-impact scores create competition between cashiers?

Frank: It is the complete opposite. I find it better for cashiers to work as a team and understand that we share a score with everyone. Therefore, if one cashier is really good with customers, they help the score. However, if there is one cashier who is not performing his/her best, then they

lower the overall score. This is one of the unfair parts of working at CVS. because I want to keep a higher score and not worry about anyone else lowering the score.

Frank's insight on customer service and working as a team with coworkers gave me a lot to reflect on. Prior to this interview, I assumed that Frank felt the same way about customer service as I do. It turns out that he is willing to please customers in order to advance in his position and receive good scores. This made me realize that I need to perform my best with customers, since I am sharing a score with my coworkers. I realize the importance of the my-impact score, as it represents the work ethic of our store. Of course, I know that there are other important parts of the job and I do not want to fall back on those parts either. Overall, I am pleased that I am not the only one who feels pressure dealing with customer service.