

Part One

THE PURPOSE OF YOUR BUSINESS

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Chapter One

THE GENIE AND THE ICE CREAM SHOP

Once upon a time, a genie paid a visit to the town square of Businessland, where he met three entrepreneurs, each of whom wanted to open an ice cream stand.

“I will grant each of you one wish—give you anything you ask of me—if, and only if, granting your wish will *truly* ensure the success of your venture,” the genie promised. As he floated sedately on an orange puff of smoke poised about three feet above the center of the town square, the genie stared ominously at the three entrepreneurs. “Speak your wish,” he said, pointing at the first entrepreneur, “and speak well.”

The first entrepreneur thought for a moment and then said: “My wish is the best possible ice cream to sell here in Businessland—the most delicious ice cream on earth.”

“I shall not grant it,” said the genie with a frown. “The best ice cream on earth would not guarantee your success.”

He turned to the second entrepreneur. “Speak your wish—and speak well.”

4 THE CULT OF THE CUSTOMER

The response came quickly: “My wish is that you should grant me the very best location in Businessland, in a place where my ice cream shop will be noticed by all who pass through the city.”

“I shall not grant it,” said the genie, frowning again. “The best location on earth would not guarantee your success.”

The genie cast a doubtful eye on the third entrepreneur, saying: “Yours is the last wish. Speak it—and speak well.”

The third entrepreneur smiled confidently. “I have ice cream,” she said, “though it may not be the best on earth, and I have a storefront in mind, although it may not be the best location. My wish,” she continued in a firm voice, “is that I should have a never-ending supply of *loyal customers* lined up outside the door of my ice cream shop every day.”

The genie grinned broadly.

“You have spoken well,” the genie said. “Your wish is my command.” With that, he cast his spell, and from that moment on, the third entrepreneur’s business thrived (much to the chagrin of the first two).

Without customers, it doesn’t matter how good the ice cream is.

Without customers, it doesn’t matter where you put the ice cream shop.

Without customers, you don’t have a business.

Now, I may not be a genie, and I can’t grant you any wishes. But what I *can* do is give you the tools and information you need to deliver a customer experience that creates *loyal customers*—the kind of customers who not only keep coming back for more ice cream but also refer their friends and associates to your ice cream stand—or whatever your business is.

If you’re interested in finding out what will help you transform *customers* into *evangelists* . . . read on.