

Abilene Area Chamber of Commerce

500 North Buckeye
Abilene, KS 67410
785.263.1770
visitus1@sbcglobal.net

Experience Abilene!!

September 2009

Today is the first day of the rest of you life!
What will you do to make it a great day?



Chamber Update...

Greetings from the Abilene Area Chamber of Commerce. As your new Chamber President, I want to thank everyone for their support, encouragement, and faith in me.

I will be sending out a monthly newsletter and hope you find the articles helpful. If there is something you would like more information on regarding your business, organization, employees, customers, etc., please feel free to give me a call or email here at the office and I'll see what I can find on the topics for you.

As for my plans for the Chamber Membership, they include the following:

1. Guest Speakers on various

topics—Customer Service, Employee Training, Marketing, etc.

2. Develop a way to highlight outstanding employees.
3. Business to Business mentoring program.
4. Quarterly Chamber Net mailing—members can send out flyers with information, coupons, updates, etc.
5. Previous promotions the Chamber has been involved in will remain on the calendar.
6. Assist Businesses with their marketing, commercial copy and promotion ideas, distribute informa-

tion to the newcomers in town or individuals visiting our community.

7. Spread the word about events taking place in and around Abilene.

I'm excited to be here and continue to be a strong advocate for Abilene!

P.S. If you are interested in volunteering some time at the Chamber, please call or stop by! Your help will be appreciated!!

Have a great day!

Cindy Issitt
Chamber President

In This Issue:

Chamber Update—monthly column...	1
How To Deal With Customers	1-2
Sharing your information...	2
Community Development Column—James Holland ...	2
Ways To Keep Customers	3
What's Up Dk Co Coffees	3
Abilene Jingle and Board of Directors...	4

How To Deal With Upset Customers...

1. It costs six times more to obtain a new customer than it does to retain a current one. Keep the customers you have.

2. Realize complaints are good. Only 4% of upset customers complain. The other 96% simply leave and never come back.

3. Create a customer for life.

When you solve a problem by meeting or exceeding expectations, you develop customer loyalty.

4. The customer is always right. Remind yourself that this person is a valued customer, and you need to do whatever it takes to satisfy them.

5. Offer alternatives. Instead of saying, "This is the only thing I can do," try saying, "here are two options." The customer may not be thrilled with the selections, but at least they get to make the choice.

-continued next page

Special points of interest:

• **Bluegrass Festival; September 12th; Little IKE Park Abilene.**

• **Bakers & Quilters Wanted! Turn-of-the-Century Competition; Sept. 19th, Eisenhower Presidential Library & Museum.**

Continued from page 1....How To Deal With Upset Customers

6. Laugh—after the customer leaves. In the end, most of these incidents are funny. Look for the humor after the situation is resolved. Laughter is a great way to reduce stress and relieve tension.

7. Do Not solve the problem right away. What?!?! Fight the urge to jump in and solve the problem, The customer's initial objective is to "vent" and express emotion. Listen first, then offer solutions. If you interrupt too soon, the person will not be ready to listen to you or to accept your resolutions.

8. Do not get defensive. When you hear the words "upset customer," it is natural to put up your guard. Instead, keep an open mind. You'll be more receptive to listening.

9. Do not take it personally. This is easier said than done! Keep in mind that most people have not been taught how to complain properly. "Customers know they are upset, but they do not know how to tell you nicely. Even if it sounds as though you are being attacked, customers are not mad at you personally. They are upset at the situation.

10. Keep it in perspective. You may have served 50 cheerful people today Do not let one bad-tempered person ruin the whole day.

Author: Kelly J. Watkins, MBA



A smile confuses an approaching frown.
Author Unknown

Share information about your business....

After just a few weeks on the job, I am amazed at the traffic that comes through the door or phone calls received for information on Abilene attractions, stores, jobs and more.

Do you have information about your business, such as: store specials, job openings, flyers, or upcoming events? Bring them to the chamber office. We will be happy to hand that information out to potential customers, clients, or employees. This is one benefit to you as a chamber member that will bring awareness to your business.

The Chamber also has a large supply of phone books. Please feel free to stop by and get yours today.

Upcoming editions of Experience Abilene will feature Employee of the month. Members are encouraged to start keeping track of employees that go above and beyond the call of duty. You will be able to submit nominations to the Chamber office and each month we will highlight an employee along with your business in the newsletter.

So we are asking members to provide 12 items from your business to put in the prize packages for these outstanding employees. We will highlight one employee per month. Call the chamber office for more details.

785-263-1770

clissitt@gmail.com

Community Development Update—James D. Holland, AICP

Hello. This is James Holland – the Community Development Director for the City of Abilene. In my position with the City, I become aware of and in some cases become involved in development activities within the City. In this column, which will be a regular feature in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter, I will provide news, numbers, facts, events and other information concerning the economic vitality of the community.

The economic vitality of a community is a function of many things—one of which is the efficient and

timely dissemination of information to aid in business owners and workforce processes. This column will have information on local and regional business training events that your business or organization may want to take advantage of. Business development often times requires land, buildings and equipment. I will provide information on available building sites and other local real estate trends.

In addition to the topics previously mentioned, I will be providing information on business and construction incentive programs offered at the local, regional and state levels. So if you are con-

templating a building expansion, adding personnel, adding manufacturing for export to your business or purchasing another business, you might find this information helpful to making that decision. Feel free to contact me regarding community and economic development in the Abilene area. 785.263.2355 or citydevelop@abilenecityhall.com



“Ways To Keep Customers!” from the book “What Mother Never Told Ya About Retail” by T. J. Reid

The Consumer Service Institute suggests that if you can increase your customer keeping rate by as little as 10%, you can increase your long-term revenues by more than 50%. Sounds easy, doesn't it? The following are their suggestions for achieving this task:

1. Find out what your customer really wants and needs from you. Invest time and money in research to gather this information.
2. Put into effect what the customer's "must have" suggestions were. Listen to what they told you.
3. Have a plan to handle customer con-

cerns when you goof. Show how well you can handle problems and bounce back to take care of customers needs.

4. Handle customer complaints quickly. This is the key to keeping a customer.
5. Invest money in training personnel. Every employee from gift wrapper to sales manager should be well-trained in their field of expertise.
6. Measure performance to ensure your customers are getting the kind of service and products they deserve. Set goals and inform employees if goals are reached, or if they've fallen behind. Make

employees feel a part of the store's success and the setbacks. Involvement creates care and concern.

7. Constantly measure your customer's response and their perception of quality of your company's service. Register new customers in the store and send them a questionnaire. There you'll find another customer to keep!

Next issue: “Why Customers Leave”

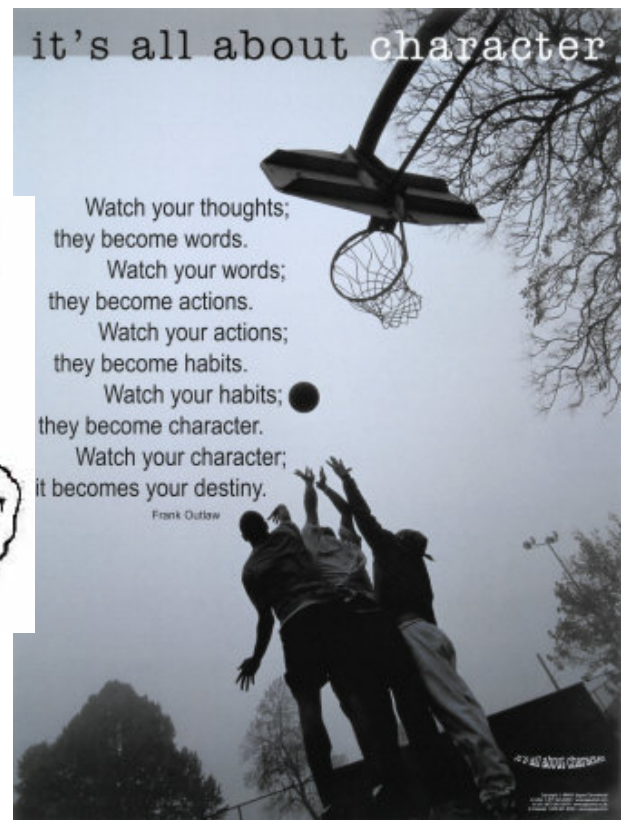
- Every customer is a guest in your store, and should be treated as such.”

All residents and groups are invited to the “What's Up in Dickinson County Coffee” from 7:45a-8:45a; Tuesday September 22nd, at the Sterling House Bld #2, 1102 N. Vine and then on Tuesday, October 13th at the Seelye Mansion in partnership with the 1-63 from Fort Riley. Please plan to attend both coffees.

The hosts will provide refreshments and prizes. Come before work, **bring friends** and any announcements you, your club, church, civic group, business or government entity would like to share with the community.

This program is a partnership between the Abilene Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce. It will provide opportunities for all ages to network connect and share information about events and services in their part of the county with all residents and to meet and greet neighbors, new and old.

Don't forget to bring your Coffee Card and get it stamped punched to be entered in the year end drawing with prizes donated by local businesses.



Today is the first day of the rest of you life! What will you do to make it a great day?

Experience Abilene!!

Abilene Area Chamber of Commerce
500 North Buckeye
Abilene, KS 67410

Phone: 785.263.1770
Fax: 785-263-1536
E-mail: clissitt@gmail.com

What's in it for me to be a chamber member?? I've heard this question several times over the past six months. As the new Chamber President that is a priority for me. What is in it for you as a member? I do know your investment in our Chamber provides you with a Proven Marketing Specialist with over ten years experience in advertising, commercial copywriting, human resource professional and a true believer in Abilene. With a new leader, now is the time I ask you...what you need ...influence?...information?...support?...someone to just talk to when times get tough? No matter what it is you need assistance with, we are here to help in every way we can.

All I ask is that you give the Chamber a fresh new opportunity and let the past be just that...the past. Let's welcome today with a new beginning.

- Volunteers are needed to help with a variety of events and event planning, data entry, organizing of the back room, answering the phone, assisting visitors with their questions, helping to man the office so it can be open over the noon hour, weekdays until 6pm and Saturdays. As your new President, you can rest assured we will be involved in just about everything that takes place in Abilene. So if you're an advocate of Abilene, like to be involved and want to have a good time! Please stop in and see me!



Helping Brand Abilene—Helping Brand You!!

The City of Abilene has a new “musical concept” or jingle to help brand your business and provide a constant reminder of what’s available in Abilene.

For information on using the jingle with advertising your business, contact the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau at 785.263.2231.

You can insert your own message-commercial content and the music lets the potential customer know its in Abilene.

If you're not sure how to use the jingle or need assistance with commercial content, contact Cindy Isstt, Chamber President at 785.263.1770. Another

benefit of your chamber membership!

Please welcome the following new members to the Abilene Chamber:

Jay Copeland Ins, Sheldon Jones, 204 N. Broadway, Abilene. 785-263-8255

Scott Dawson Builders, Scott & Maureen Dawson, 2458 Gulf Road, Abilene. 785-263-7731

Express Employment Professionals, Phillip & Lisa Heath, 2326 Planet Ave, Salina. 785-825-4545

Maddy's Pub, Steve Maddy, 311 N. Spruce, Abilene. 785-263-2459

Your Abilene Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors:

Kevin Sweatland, Pinnacle Bank—
Chairman of the Board

Jackie Bailey, Bailey Truck Lines

Bruce Dale, Individual

Allan Dinkel, City of Abilene

Craig Dodd, Green Ford

Steve Gieber, OCCCK

Bill Marston, Individual

Ron Preston, Alco Stores

Dr. Rocky Rorabaugh, Individual

Jeff Sheets, Heritage Center

Ron Shivers, Ron Shivers Realty and Auction

David Walters, First Bank Kansas