

PEOPLE IN BUSINESS

Christine Hepburn



Soft Skills Are Serious Business!

A Launceston based trainer has co-authored a new book highlighting the real strength of soft skills in any business. Christine Hepburn, Director and Principal Trainer of The Defining Edge Training and Development, has written about a subject that every person faces daily. Customer Service or as Christine prefers to refer to it, a customer experience, affects each of us in every interaction yet is rarely done that well.

The book, *Training Works – Better People, Better Bottom Line*, offers an insight into the impact soft skills can have on every business, offering solid strategies businesses can put into practice to see results. Addressing eleven key areas, 'Training Works' provides a toolbox of helpful advice to create a compelling competitive advantage.

In addition to seeing this particular book come to fruition, Christine has been travelling extensively throughout Australia and New Zealand interviewing industry leaders and conducting a detailed survey on customer experience from both a business and a customer's perspective. Christine has appeared on television and radio as interest in the subject has induced a great deal of comment. The surprising results for this survey are to be outlined in her second book 'Passion For Excellence', which is currently in progress.

Christine decided to redirect her genuine and natural talent for making people feel extraordi-

narily special into teaching and training others, to reproduce the skills for making clients and customers feel valued through exceptional customer service.

"Extensive and proven experience in business utilising these principles, along with requests and recommendations from countless associates and clients, prompted me to explore taking my skills to the wider business world" says Christine, who is a certified Fellow of the Customer Service Institute of Australia.

No matter how large or small a business may be, customised training workshops designed to deliver results now, help owners and managers achieve so much more from their staff and businesses whilst enabling them to be more competitive in any financial environment.

As Christine has developed her business, people who have undertaken her workshops across Australia have found that by applying her effective principles and methods, their businesses have improved along with their customers or client's personal experience with them. This in turn has introduced improved overall outcomes for their businesses.

Mariana Suarez, owner of Lannex IT Solutions in Melbourne states "It is very inspiring to meet someone with such a level of congruence; Christine is the perfect portrait of excellence. It is an honour to have her as our mentor in this particu-

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lar area of our business and lives. I would recommend that anyone in business invest their time and resources on enhancing their customer service and do so with the best in her field."

With the Customer Service Institute of Australia indicating 68% of customers leave a business due to indifferent service there is a strong basis for that advice. The cost to a business from anything less than an exceptional customer experience can be up to 40% of their annual revenue.

The Defining Edge doesn't just offer training, they inspire exceptional results through experience and passion, states Benjamin Martin, owner of Glasshaus Couture Eyewear of Launceston. What makes them different? In order to follow their ethic of giving back or 'paying it forward' they offer an additional benefit from every training workshop booked through The Defining Edge Training and Development.

As staff perfect the skills to reach their peak performance in a business, a portion of the fee paid to The Defining Edge is donated toward the education of a child in a disadvantaged environment. Christine sees this as a combination of a powerful emotional connection and a practical contribution.

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