

[How Your Client Service is Measured](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on September 5th, 2013

As you likely know, I fly a lot for business. I have spent a lot of time on planes and in airports throughout my career. I have been on airplanes with hundreds of flight attendants. I given my ticket to hundreds of gate agents.

While I would not be able to teach anything about passenger safety, security or how to work behind the counter, I could teach flight attendants and ticketing and gate agents something about service. I don't pay much attention to how I get treated. I have close to 5 million miles on [American Airlines](#) and I think most American flight attendants and gate agents know I am a frequent, loyal flyer.

Instead, I watch how flight attendants and ticket agents treat the most infrequent flyers. You have seen them. They may be a little confused. They don't know the rules. They ask questions that most flyers already know the answer.

I also watch how the flight attendants and ticket agents treat difficult passengers. You have seen those also. They are the ones who yell at the ticket agent when the flight is delayed, or drink more than they should when they are on the plane.

Sherry Buss, a now retired ticket agent with American Airlines in Omaha, was one of the best I ever encountered. She worked for American for 28 years, during which I made many trips to and from Omaha.

I watched her smile when passengers approached the desk. I watched her explain things to passengers. I watched her help older or disabled passengers get on the plane. I watched her when things were not going well. She was always smiling and always treated every passenger with dignity and kindness.



Sherry recently joined [Green Acres Market](#) in Wichita. Right away Green Acres featured Sherry in a blog post: [Customer Service: You can't give too much, too often!](#) and on the [Green Acres Market Facebook page](#). They picked a true winner on customer service and she described her work with American very well.

I was fortunate to have worked for American Airlines for 28 years. That company taught me that all individuals need to feel recognized, their needs met and most importantly to know they've been heard.

In [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#), [Stephen Covey](#) wrote:

I have found that the key to the ninety-nine is the one—particularly the one who is testing the patience and the good humor of the many...It's how you treat the one that reveals how you regard the ninety-nine, because everyone is ultimately one.



You see, client service is not measured by how well you treat your best clients, or your clients with

whom it is easy to work. Instead, client service is measured by how well you serve your smallest clients or those clients who are difficult. It is how you treat that small or difficult client that reveals how you regard your very best client, because every client is ultimately one.

As Sherry might have put it:

All of your clients, big or small, pleasant or difficult, need to feel recognized, their needs met and most importantly to know they've been heard.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.