



Closing the Deal

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*A shining
example of
good service —
communicate!*

EXPERTS SAY there is a list of events in life that are said to be the most stressful on the average person. If you research the topic, you'll find things like the death of a spouse, divorce and changing jobs high on the list of the most stressful life experiences. Also high on that list is buying a new home and moving.

I had the opportunity to experience buying a new home and moving last week. Was it stressful? Amazingly, the actual move itself was the only stress I experienced.

One aspect of buying a home that tends to make grown men cry is the actual mortgage process that occurs before you close. For many people, the amount of work that is required to make the transaction go through is overwhelming. Mortgage companies require you to provide information that at times appears to be absolutely ridiculous. Nevertheless, if you want a mortgage, you don't have much of a choice.

It's not uncommon for people to get a phone call days or even hours before the closing with information they need to provide to make the deal go through. Most people who have purchased a home can relate to this period of chaos.

During my recent home purchase, I was fortunate to have been referred to a mortgage company that not only went above and beyond, but handled

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the entire process in a way that made it stress-free and painless. I've purchased other properties in the past, but this was far above expectations.

The entire process contained textbook examples of how companies should manage customer experience.

My first communication with Lynne Haney at Schaefer Mortgage was what you'd expect. She gathered all the information she needed and sent me a list of information, documents and other things the underwriters required.

Schaefer Mortgage really stood out as the process carried on. We had a very aggressive closing date — which happened to be the busiest closing date of the year. Lynne was upfront: Schaefer would do everything it could to close on or before the date, but it was unlikely on such a busy day.

Of course, I'm in sales and don't like to take no for an answer, so I challenged the reality that we may not be able to close when I wanted to. I spoke to one of my friends who happens to be a personal friend of Ken Schaefer, the owner of Schaefer Mortgage. He suggested I call Ken, reference our mutual friendship and see what he could do to help. Although Ken never called me back, I later learned that he called Lynne and asked what she needed to make the deal work.

He offered his support and any resources that were needed. Did he have to get involved? Absolutely not. But

he understood the value of referrals, rolled up his sleeves and made it happen. Not every CEO would do that for an average customer.

The other aspect of the transaction that shined was the level of communication that occurred during the very short period of time between the application and closing. In addition to constant communication with Lynne, I also dealt directly with the underwriter, Shelly Goodrum, a master communicator who kept me updated every step of the way.

While communication is a basic aspect of customer experience, it amazes me how so many companies are so horrible at it.

It's simple, free and one of the most important elements of keeping customers satisfied. The staff at Schaefer Mortgage has certainly mastered this critical piece of their sales process.

I could carry on and give more details and examples of how well the entire transaction was handled. At the end of it all, though, one thing matters. We closed on the busiest closing day of the year, the service was outstanding and the entire team at Schaefer Mortgage handled it all flawlessly.

I wish every company I dealt with had the same focus on positive customer experience.

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