

Small steps to strengthen
the relationships with
people you serve

SERVICE HABITS

JACQUIE
SCAMMELL

*Who you serve is irrelevant;
it's how you serve that separates the
ordinary from the extraordinary.*

About the author

Jaquie Scammell makes service engaging and effortless. She helps businesses remember that great service is not always about the systems and processes, but about the simple, everyday interactions you have with real people.

In over 20 years, Jacquie has worked with thousands of frontline employees and their leaders, in hundreds of public and private sector organisations, to deepen their emotional intelligence and help them transform into high performers in the service sector.

Her techniques and tools for engaging and motivating large service teams have evolved from her experience of working in organisations such as McDonald's, Wembley National Stadium (UK) and Melbourne and Olympic Parks (for the Australian tennis Grand Slam).

Jaquie teaches a service mindset based on a set of service habits to those seeking growth in their organisations and themselves. She has worked alongside numerous organisations over the past six years as resident customer service mentor, master workshop facilitator and keynote speaker – in particular, AusNet, Origin Energy, Melbourne Airport, Marvel Stadium, Suncorp Stadium, Bank Australia, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, CSIRO, Emirates Leisure, Quest Apartment Hotels and Volkswagen Australia.

She lives in the CBD of Melbourne, Australia, with her partner Costa, and loves nothing more than escaping to the

Mornington Peninsula for nature, meditation, yoga and a nice glass of pinot noir.

Service Habits is Jaquie's second book published by Major Street. Her first book, *Creating a Customer Service Mindset*, was published in 2018 and made the Top 50 Business Books for 2018. Now available under the new title of *Service Mindset*, it has a fresh new look as part of Jaquie's *Service* series.

Superior service means transforming from a transactional mindset to a relational one. That's what this book will help you do.

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Acknowledgements

One of the simplest ways to serve people is to first acknowledge them.

Acknowledging people when they give you their time, their attention, their knowledge and their love is such an easy, humane thing to do, and it's a practice I try to live each day as the moment presents itself. When I am extraordinarily present, the moment always has something to offer me, to teach me, to allow me to experience. I have a whole lifetime of acknowledgements to capture up until now and I would like to think that I have expressed gratitude and love privately to those in my life who help shape me and my work every single day.

With the little space allowed to me here, I'd like to thank everybody who has made this book possible: my Partner, Costa, first and foremost, whose undeniable love for people and life makes him a living, walking example of what it takes to deepen relationships. He's always encouraging me to follow what makes my heart sing and providing me with exceptional perspectives to help me further shape my points of view. My father has been a stunning role model in my lifetime of discipline, service and curiosity. He also kept me abreast of current affairs and worldly news when my head was down and I was only focused on writing the book and nothing else. My closest and oldest friend Taryn Pieramati has helped facilitate many Service Habits workshops over the years, providing me with interesting insights and perspectives and an abundance of love and support during a phase

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Finally, to my teacher, Maharishi, who always loves me and helps me stay focused on what best serves me: to stay in the stillness of my mind as much as possible and to play a bigger game in life, for all of humanity.

Praise for *Service Habits*

The quality of being present to others as the foundational service habit is the very definition of leadership. Service habits may be good for business success and profitability, but they are perhaps more powerfully good for culture; something that goes way beyond annual performance metrics.

In this book and all her work, Jaquie infuses a quality of consciousness and respect to the art of business. *Service Habits* is a way to get the spirit of service deeply embedded in your culture. Absorbing the habits should feel as much at home on the front-line as it should in your leadership team.

Matt Church, Founder, Thought Leaders

If you are a service professional, this book will become your new bible.

Jaquie Scammell, Australia's leading expert on customer service and preeminent voice in the business of service, breaks down what world-class service looks like – and, more importantly, what baby steps we can take to achieve it.

Rather than advocating a massive organisation-wide transformational effort (which rarely works), this book takes you through the 27 habits that will create a service mindset, and grow the organisation (and you, personally).

Practical, accessible, engaging and profound, *Service Habits* is compulsory reading for anyone in the business of service.

(And make no mistake, if you are in business, you're in the business of service.)

Peter Cook, CEO, Thought Leaders

One of the most important legacies a leader can leave is a culture that supports its people and clients. This is often the main challenge facing organisations, particularly human service organisations, and one that leaders and boards grapple with constantly.

I met Jaquie when I was trying to make sense of organisational culture and customer service and how to build an enduring platform for change that was going to work for both our people and our clients. What was different about Jaquie's approach was her ability to make service culture clear and simple, and translate this for all people in the organisation. *Service Habits* talks clearly about the value of relationships in service culture and this alone makes it extremely insightful. It is so topical for today's businesses and will help you develop a strategy for service culture for the future.

Jennifer Lawrence, CEO, Brightwater Care Group

Service Habits has something for everyone. It shows how small, simple steps create habits that build long-lasting relationships that underpin what service is all about. Whether it's using people's names always, understanding your impact on others, building rapid rapport in conversations or making first impressions your superpower, Jaquie explains how these and other habits are the foundations of service. Through practical examples, Jaquie challenges us to reflect on how our values show up in our behaviours toward others and gives helpful steps to embed small changes so they become service habits. If you care

about people and service, this is a book you will devour and then want to talk about with colleagues, leaders and friends.

*Jane McAloon, Strategic and Corporate Advisory/
Non Executive Director*

Easy to connect and relate to, practical with simple anecdotes, Jacquie's book weaves a seamless narrative which identifies that to give great service is a more integrated concept than we might think. *Service Habits* prompts us not only to think and understand ourselves first and foremost, before we can improve the customer service, but also to be more cognisant and present with our customers and the environment in which we operate. More than a service manuscript, *Service Habits* is a tonic for improving the interactions we have with everyone we engage with.

Mario Volpe – Commercial Manager, ALH Group

Service excellence brings a value position to life in a world that has moved from products to promises. Jacquie's book intelligently captures the essential steps to reflect on our service habits and to remain relevant. It also helps us feel a strong connection and meaning with our work and makes it more valuable for our clients.

Ephraim Patrick (Partner, Leading Global Consulting Firm)

Introduction

- ‘I have sales targets to meet and a job to do; the fluffy stuff about service can wait.’
- ‘If my staff thought about what the person on the other end of the phone could be feeling, we might have half a chance of making the customer happy.’
- ‘I get frustrated and often get caught in a process-driven cycle, rather than getting to the bottom of the solution for the customers. No wonder they get frustrated.’
- ‘We’re so driven by technology; we’re under pressure to work to a deadline and meet a target. I don’t have time for idle chitchat with people.’
- ‘I’ve become so busy at work, with critical tasks to be done, that customer service is a mere fraction of my priorities in a day. Besides, can we really ever make them happy?’

These are things I hear from service professionals, every day – frontline staff, employees, team leaders, leaders of leaders. Whether you’re in finance, telecommunications, events, hospitality or transport, one of your biggest problems is the never-ending effort to keep people happy.

We all want more connection, meaning and ease in our day-to-day lives. We want less effort and drama and fewer obstacles – not to mention less work! Employees want employers to serve them with excellent employee benefits and working conditions, opportunities for growth and development, and a workplace

that's positive and supportive of their wellbeing. Customers want businesses to serve them with urgency, genuine care and basic common sense, and to provide solutions that help them achieve what they're looking for.

The needs of colleagues and customers are like the weather – they can change at any moment.

SERVICE TODAY

Once upon a time, service was easy. There was less pressure and fewer expectations to meet in order to provide what we'd call 'quality service'. Being responsive was simple and satisfying – both internally and externally of the organisation. In the 21st century, however, we've become so focused on systems and speed that we've forgotten service still is, and always will be, about building long-lasting relationships.

If we look at the current customer-service model, it's easy to see why:

- The majority of businesses externalise customer service as a project or key focus area – looking at dashboards and algorithms to help implement and enforce customer service strategies, and labelling customer service as though it were separate to the rest of the relationships in the business.
- The majority of leaders prioritise financial results and process efficiencies, which reduces opportunities for the less planned, more unpredictable human interactions and investing in relationships throughout a day.
- The majority of frontline employees are conditioned to follow the rules and procedures, allowing very little room for intuitive judgement in social interactions.

Today, good service is in danger of disappearing altogether behind a barrier of organisational protocols designed to achieve efficiency rather than strong, sustainable relationships and results. Yet two-thirds of the jobs created between now and 2030 will be reliant on soft skills. Much of the boring, repetitive work will be performed by technology, while humans undertake interpersonal and creative roles that require uniquely human skills, like customer service.

Good service was once about competitive pricing and quality products, but it's now about creating a connection that cuts through all the noise and nice-to-haves. We've evolved from transactional needs to relational needs, from providing commodities to finding commonalities with others.

Relationships are higher-order representations of a business, a leader and an individual – they have greater long-term impact than lower-order representations such as systems. They're a direct influence on:

- workplace culture
- productivity
- connections and networks
- identity and reputation
- self-esteem and confidence
- a sense of belonging and of value.

If you're in the business of service, then you're in the business of relationships.

SMALL STEPS

The biggest myth about improving service in today's world is that you need to make a large transformational effort to see a positive shift. This is simply not true. Over the past few years, I've been fortunate to work with some brilliant organisations led by some extraordinary CEOs, and to have developed long-term relationships with frontline leaders and frontline teams who are achieving incredible results by strengthening their relationships with people.

I asked myself, 'What is it that these leaders have been taught, and what are they teaching their teams? What allows people in service to be extraordinary with people in an era of digital distraction, system-based thinking and noise?' What I found was that people who can establish an emotional connection with others are often focused on how they behave, and understand the impact their behaviour has on their performance towards service. Businesses and service professionals that take small steps to enhance relationships have the biggest positive results. I've seen this time and time again.

Take small steps to strengthen the relationships with people you serve.

Professor B.J. Fogg, who founded the Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab and wrote the book *Tiny Habits*, has been studying how to change human behaviour for the past twenty years. He's learned there are only three things that change people's behaviour for the long term:

1. having an epiphany
2. changing their environment
3. taking baby steps.

In this book, I'm choosing to look at number three on this list: taking baby steps as the way to change behaviour. Having an epiphany and changing the environment seem like quicker solutions, but taking baby steps is the most reliable and practical way to approach behaviour change in the modern-day workplace.

This idea of taking baby steps towards continuous improvement has been known for centuries. In the mid-20th century, *kaizen* – the notion that small, continuous, positive changes can result in major improvements – became a management concept:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{KAI} & + & \text{ZEN} & = & \text{KAIZEN} \\ (\text{change}) & & (\text{good/better}) & & (\text{continuous} \\ & & & & \text{improvement}) \end{array}$$

WHY HABITS? WHY THIS BOOK?

One of the reasons people find it difficult to positively transform their service culture is that they haven't been realistic about the time it takes to make ongoing positive changes. There's a minimum time period for installing a habit (as explained later in this chapter), and perhaps past efforts have not felt significant or grand enough to lead to such critical outcomes as employee and customer happiness, but the truth is that you simply haven't stuck at the habit long enough. Regardless of what has or has not worked in the past, however, service is everyone's responsibility, and it's through small steps over time – through daily habits – that you'll improve the relationships that matter to you and the business.

So, what do I mean by small daily habits? And why do they work? Habits experts like B. J. Fogg and James Clear (speaker and author of *Atomic Habits*, who has taught more than 10,000 leaders, managers and coaches) explain that we are drawn to

repeat behaviours that make us feel good. Once you repeat a behaviour many times, it eventually becomes automatic and a habit is formed.

In service, in work – in life, even – it's not what you do but how you do it that determines the impact you have on yourself and others. This book is about the *how* of service. It uncovers the habits at work that will limit your effectiveness as a service professional and those that will leverage it. You'll learn how to sustain behaviours to form new and improved habits.

To create service habits that deepen your relationships with those you serve, you need to make continuous improvements in three areas, which are discussed in detail in the third, fourth and fifth sections of this book:

- *Habits 3 to 11: Know how you serve best.* Becoming aware of how you can show up as your best professional self is the foundation for improving what transpires between you and other people.
- *Habits 12 to 20: Learn how others want to be served.* Deepen your understanding of others and you'll improve your read on people and inspire them to take action effortlessly.
- *Habits 21 to 26: Balance your actions when serving.* The way you manage yourself during a busy day is where the rubber hits the road. You want to master your behaviour when you need to serve at your best.

The service habits I'll explain will help you gain greater awareness of your own behaviour and a better understanding of others, so that you can manage yourself in a world full of ambiguity and change. As a result, you'll:

- feel more energised and be more productive at work, despite the many distractions, triggers and addictions of the modern workplace
- make fewer decisions from a place of fear and more from a place of confidence and heart
- become more self-aware, a better listener and more empathic, helping you connect with your team and customers in a more meaningful way
- increase trust in you from those you serve (both internally and externally) and increase the value you bring
- reprogram your default behaviours to give you greater sustained results and create relationship-strengthening habits for life.

In this book, I ask you to soften, slow down and be gentler with people. I invite you to be less controlling and more convincing, less head and more heart, less outwardly focused and more inwardly focused.

The practices I set out aren't theories or guesswork: they've improved thousands of people's relationships at work, with their customers, and at home with their families and loved ones. This is a practical handbook on human relations in a world that demands service like never before.

So, let's begin.



GETTING STARTED



1

How to learn and leverage new habits

THERE ARE DIFFERING views about how long it takes to embed a new habit. I like to follow Robin Sharma, one of the world's top leadership experts; when I visited Sharma at a leadership summit in Stockholm back in 2013, he told me that it takes 66 days to wire a new habit. The habit-installation process sees you go through three phases to reach what researchers call the 'automaticity point', where the habit feels easier and more automatic:

- *Phase one.* In the first 20 days, what Sharma calls 'destruction' occurs. You're destroying the old neural pathway in your mind, destroying an old habit, and it feels hard.
- *Phase two.* In the second period of 20 days, you experience confusion because the habit isn't yet automatic. You're growing, and you're disrupting your old habits, but you'll feel like giving up. It's important to stick with it in this messy middle phase.

- *Phase three.* In the final 20 days, the new habit is integrated and feels like a new way of being. It feels easy. You've wired new neural pathways in your mind and have reached automaticity with the new habit.

Sharma helped me to realise that installing habits takes time, and if you want to master something, you have to stick to it. I've kept this phased installation idea in mind for the past seven years whenever I want to introduce a new habit, and have noticed that it happens every time.

A certain level of motivation is required to stick at something for 66 days – a commitment to making the change or improvement is paramount to you sticking with it. In addition, I do four things to make a new habit stick:

1. actively reflect
2. start somewhere
3. repeat, repeat, repeat
4. track progress.

I've created tools for these four things in the *Service Habits* offering – that is, this book and other resources – to assist you to establish new habits as easily as possible.

1. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

To help you actively reflect, at the end of each chapter in the book is a series of questions under the heading 'Reflect now'. These are crafted to get you thinking about a habit more deeply and considering specifically what that habit means to you in your current work.

2. EMBED THE HABIT

Sometimes, not knowing where to start with a new habit is a barrier, so after the reflection questions I've included an 'Embed the habit' exercise to help you kick off.

3. THE SERVICE MINDSET ACADEMY

You can't over-repeat the explanation and instructions for a new habit. So, to support you and your team further, I've created a premier training platform called The Service Mindset Academy for individuals and organisations interested in embedding the service habits. The Academy's *Service Habits* course is an additional guide for those who want to reprogram their service habits and deepen the relationships with the people they serve immediately.

The lessons are practical, and the format is simple. There are:

- six sharply focused modules, each with a cluster of service habits to learn
- six downloadable worksheets to help you put what you learn into action.

You can complete the lessons anytime and on any device, at your own pace, forever. To subscribe to the course, go to: servicemindsetacademy.teachable.com/p/service-habits.

4. THE SERVICE HABITS JOURNAL

My Service Habits Journal is a downloadable resource which makes it easy to track service habits in small chunks at a time. It's a simple tool for recording whether you did a habit, and is designed for you to carry in your back pocket or handbag or keep at your workstation, so it's never too far away.

The most common way to use a habit tracker like the journal is to focus on a few habits each month. The idea is to become aware of how well you're implementing these habits and staying consistent over time. You can choose which cluster of habits to focus on – or maybe your team or workplace is focusing on the same few habits each month to support each other?

To download the Service Habits Journal, go to: jaquiescammell.com/service-habits-journal.

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Now, let's briefly look at the bad customer service habits you may have, which you'll need to let go of.



2

Breaking bad service habits

BEFORE WE GET into the service habits you need to learn and leverage, it's important we talk about the ones you need to let go of. You need to become mindful of some of the things you may be currently doing that are working against you. These habits and behaviours usually make you feel safe and comfortable, but, in many ways, they prevent you from deepening relationships with those you serve. Often, they're unconscious, so it's important you become conscious of them.

I call these habits collectively 'The Path of Obstacles'. Why? Because these habits are like stones – and in some cases, boulders – that impede or stop your colleagues or customers getting what they need.

The habits on this path may have been created with the right intention – for example, you may do these habits to achieve a guaranteed sale or a specific outcome – but you may not be aware of the cost, and how these bad habits are impacting your working relationships.