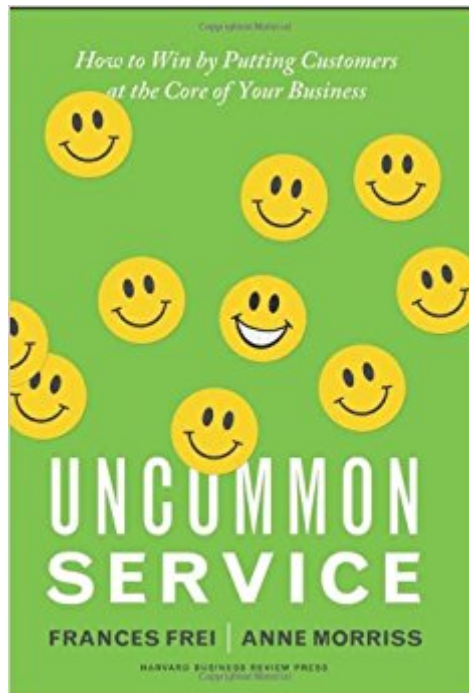


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# Uncommon Service: How To Win By Putting Customers At The Core Of Your Business



## Synopsis

Most companies treat service as a low-priority business operation, keeping it out of the spotlight until a customer complains. Then service gets to make a brief appearance; for as long as it takes to calm the customer down and fix whatever foul-up jeopardized the relationship. In *Uncommon Service*, Frances Frei and Anne Morriss show how, in a volatile economy where the old rules of strategic advantage no longer hold true, service must become a competitive weapon, not a damage-control function. That means weaving service tightly into every core decision your company makes. The authors reveal a transformed view of service, presenting an operating model built on tough choices organizations must make:

- How do customers define excellence in your offering? Is it convenience? Friendliness? Flexible choices? Price?
- How will you get paid for that excellence? Will you charge customers more? Get them to handle more service tasks themselves?
- How will you empower your employees to deliver excellence? What will your recruiting, selection, training, and job design practices look like? What about your organizational culture?
- How will you get your customers to behave? For example, what do you need to do to get them to treat your employees with respect? Do you need to make it easier for them to use new technology?

Practical and engaging, *Uncommon Service* makes a powerful case for a new and systematic approach to service as a means of boosting productivity, profitability, and competitive advantage.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I was an MBA student at Harvard Business School, one of the most difficult classes to get

into was Frances Frei's Managing Service Operations elective. I was one of her lucky students, but demand was so high that even those who ranked it as their first choice often failed to win one of the prized seats in the class. If you read this book, you'll understand why...Frei is a world-renowned guru in service management and a Harvard teaching legend. In "Uncommon Service," she's partnered with Anne Morriss, a leader in strategy, leadership and institutional change. Together, they distill the principles of service excellence into an intuitive road map that any executive, with the appropriate conviction, can follow to improve customer experiences, and in turn, firm performance. Not a bad value proposition when you think about it - developing a sustainable competitive advantage by making your customers' lives better. What I loved about the course, and indeed this book, is that it is full of real world examples of service successes and failures, used to masterfully illustrate a system of interconnected design principles that lead to service excellence. The stories are compelling and their implications are clear, and by the time you're finished reading, you'll be able to diagnose what's right, and what's wrong with the service design of your company, as well as those of your competitors. On their own, the principles of service excellence make "Uncommon Service" a must-have for any entrepreneur interested in deploying a world-class service operation from the ground up. Having been a service entrepreneur myself, this aspect of the book appealed to me deeply.

[...]It is an understatement to claim that technology has revolutionized the way that companies perform. That same technology enables professionals within customer service to develop individualized relationships with customers or pure encounters. Supported by advancements in management science, operations management and marketing, companies are able to improve both profits and financials. But technology is not the critical success factor. In my opinion, the mindset of meeting the customer demand for great service - and saving money at the same time - is more important. Frances Frei and Anne Morris wrote a book covering some recommendations how to design customer service. In UnCommon Service, Harvard Business School Professor Frances Frei and coauthor Anne Morriss bring their provocative argument to the table: that companies must dare to be "bad" in order to be great, choosing strategic ways to underperform while fueling a winning service advantage. The authors claim that uncommon service is created by specific design choices made in the very blueprint of a business model. And it not merely about making customers happy; instead it is about creating an organization where all employees - not just the star performers - provide excellent service as a matter of routine. These outstanding service organizations create offerings, fund strategies, system and cultures that set their people up to excel casually. The authors

claim that they introduce a decidedly fresh view of service. An organizational design model is presented built on tough services one must make about four dimensions of any business. Frei and Morriss illustrate the power of their approach with examples from a wide array of industries.

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