

AT YOUR SERVICE

Autumn was almost better than summer and now winter is finally making its grip felt.

I have just returned from a three-week holiday in South Africa where I was blown away by the lack of customer service. In a number of instances I entered stores where I wasn't acknowledged at all – and I was the only customer! I almost had to beg one sales person to let me try on a pair of shoes. I might as well have been invisible - the bored, disinterested looks on some of the staff's faces needed to be seen to be believed. I would've thought that in these challenging economic times people would've been going out of their way to court business. Not so.

It was so refreshing to arrive back in New Zealand just after midnight and receive a warm welcome from the Customs official! Kiwis are spontaneous and friendly and it was good to be reminded of that because it can so easily be taken for granted.

The ongoing challenge however, is to maintain the standards we have set and go a step further and exceed customers'/clients' expectations. It's often the little things that make the difference and provide a memorable experience – a compliment or an unexpected helpful gesture can go a long way. And there's no cost involved!

Inner city businesses endeavour to provide consistently superior customer service. We don't always get it right, but it remains a priority and important focus for us.