



**WOULD YOU DO THAT
TO YOUR MOTHER?**

**The "Make Mom Proud" Standard
for How to Treat Your Customers**

JEANNE BLISS

Bestselling author of *"I Love You More Than My Dog"*

**Your #MakeMomProud Quiz to
advance your customer experience
and culture transformation.**

Please join the movement to #MakeMomProud
at <http://www.make-mom-proud.com>

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“Be the Person I Raised You to Be.”

Empathy and humanity in how you serve.

Our humanity: our humanness, more than ever before, needs to show through in how we do business with customers and each other. But an app alone will not solve everything. With the stratospheric increase in high-tech solutions to “take care” of customers, the need for high touch has also escalated. Customers need a healthy dose of both.

The make-mom-proud companies find the people whose upbringing and values align with what they want their companies to stand for. And then they enable them to bring that version of themselves to work. Selecting who will, and will not, become members of these companies is job number one. But after that, the focus is to help them prosper: to enable them to achieve, and be true to how they were raised.

Make-mom-proud Questions:

Do we enable our people to prosper?

Do we make it easy, and a joy, to deliver care, empathy, and value?

Do We Honor the Dignity of Customers' Lives?

Do we show up as a "caring" company?

The Cleveland Clinic elevates everyone in its organization to "caregiver," giving people the tools, the authority, and the honor to work together so that patients rarely even have to ring that call light. It makes Mom proud by "managing the 360," uniting everyone to care for the total patient experience. And it leads to prosperity, ranking this hospital system as one of the top two in the United States.

- Do we guide cross-company behaviors to build a "caring" organization?
- Are we nurturing our frontline caregivers?
- Have we united everyone to care for customers, regardless of role?



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Do We Trust the Front Line to Extend Grace?

Can we enable policy and the Golden Rule to collide?

Oberoi Hotels hires people whose values align with their Dharma, their code of ethics. And then they make Mom proud by guiding, trusting, and enabling them to make the right call to honor and grow their customers with appropriate responses. Trusting and holding people accountable to take the right action leads to customer admiration, continued growth of "Promoters," and honor—it's one of India's best places to work.

- Do we prepare employees with customer data and training to make the right call?
- Do we recognize and reward actions that keep valued customers?
- Do we enable people to act with honor and make exceptions when warranted?



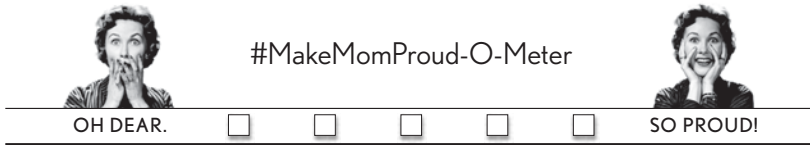
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Do We Hire People with the Ability to Care?

Is hiring our most important decision?

Pal's Sudden Service restaurant screens for the aptitudes and attitudes we learned as kids in their hiring process. They are zealots in ensuring that only those who fit their culture are invited to a place on the team. Taking deliberate steps to build a united culture through hiring makes Mom proud. And for Pal's it leads to employee turnover that is one-third the industry average. Pal's culture is their prosperity engine.

- Do our interviews go beyond questions or skills to know the human behind the résumé?
- Have we established the characteristics of those who belong with us?
- Do we have a process for selecting those who live our values?



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Are We Doing Any Survey Score Begging?

Do we focus on improving customers' lives, to earn the score?

Safelite AutoGlass focuses on coaching behavior that lifts up both employees and customers. By focusing on people first, the score is earned—but it's never the focus. Focusing on customers' lives and not that survey score makes Mom proud. And admitting that there is improvement to be had makes her even prouder. Building the Safelite spirit helps Safelite become the key player in their industry.

- Do we ever put our people in the position of begging for scores?
- Do we ever send communication to customers asking for a good score?
- Is our customer experience compensation only about survey scores?





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Do We Check Our Bias at the Door?

Is growth earned through inclusive and respectful behavior?

ThirdLove is a deliberately inclusive brand. They make Mom proud by recognizing every woman's skin color in their product offering. And earn their growth through respectful product design, and honoring all women. This approach contributes to how FirstLove has prospered, experiencing triple-digit growth while competitors experience market decline.

- Are we aware of and do we work to eliminate unconscious bias with customers?
- Do we actively work to remove any bias in our industry?
- Do we prepare our people to remove unconscious bias with each other?

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Do We Have Any Rules That Inhibit People's Ability to Serve?

Do we nurture frontline heroes, rather than policy cops?

Vail Resorts bans service scripts or penning people into rules that diminish their spirit. They work instead to foster joy. They make Mom proud by getting rid of rules and language that is more about policy than purpose. Vail Resorts earn their place as the premiere ski vacation because they nurture and free employees to deliver the "experience of a lifetime."

- Do we ever say, "Our policy is . . ." to customers?
- Do we give employees the tools to be communicators and problem solvers? To deliver joy?
- Do we work with employees to remove rules that inhibit and diminish their spirit?

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Do We Reward for Congruence of Heart and Habit?

Do we celebrate people for bringing the best version of themselves to work?

H-E-B Grocery Company is an irreplaceable fixture in the lives of the customers it serves because it recognizes and rewards honorable, gutsy, and noble behavior. H-E-B makes Mom proud because it trusts and praises people who take a chance. It honors congruence of heart and habit in how leaders lead. Prosperity of the human spirit earns its place on *Forbes's* 100 Best Places to Work list.

- Do we reward and recognize employees for their ability to care?
- Do we celebrate taking risks, doing the right thing, and making informed decisions?
- Do our leaders model, celebrate, and promote people for their human, caring behavior?

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Do We Nurture Memory Makers?

Can they deliver memories we'd want our mom to have?

Union Square Hospitality Group hires people for their humanity. Technology enhances, never replaces, the beating heart. They make Mom proud because they focus on how you feel when you are seated at their table. Sound like someone you know? USHG prospers by nurturing and keeping memory makers—its turnover rate for full-time employees is about 19 percent annually, compared with an industry average of 27 percent.

- Do we hire people for their intuition, spirit, and ability to deliver a memory?
- Are employees given the time, information, and permission to be memory makers?
- Do we know, prepare our people, and deliver the customer memories that matter most?

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“Don’t Make Me Feed You Soap!”

How easy is it to do business with you?

The Make-mom-proud companies are always on the lookout for “bar of soap” moments they can remove from customers’ lives. As customers, they’ve lived them, and they feel the frustration they create, so they work to eliminate them from the experiences they deliver.

And, of course, all “bar of soap” moments eventually roll onto the feet of your front line. Customers ask: Where is it? How long will it take? Why can’t you do that? What does this mean? Why don’t you have my records? Why was I charged this fee? Can you waive it? Will you really help me? Can you get me out of this contract?

“Make Mom Proud” Questions:

Do we have any “bar of soap” moments in our experience?

Do we make it easy or hard to do business with us?

Do We Honor Customers' Time, and Their Clock?

Is our business run on "customer time"?

Sweetgreen is on a mission to deliver healthy food fast, but with a dose of humanity. They make Mom proud because they honor people's time and their clock, not their own. Zealot customers who love their food, their approach, and their heart have grown their operation to more than seventy-five restaurants in ten years.

- Do we take customers' time to get basic services accomplished?
- Do we ever make customers wait for us?
- Do we give customers control of their time?
- Do our customers feel like we honor their time and their schedules?



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Do We Take the Monkey Off Our Customers' Back?

Are we reducing service exhaustion?

Virginia Mason's Spine Clinic puts all the pieces together for their patients so that the patients don't have to. They make Mom proud because they have taken the burden off of their customers' backs. They shoulder the work of uniting caregivers, actions, and records. Prosperity has followed, reducing unnecessary procedures and increasing revenue and productivity for both patients and health-care providers.

- Do we make it easy on the customer to solve situations?
- Do we make them do the work?
- Do they have to repeatedly call and research to find the answer?



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Do We Take Disruptions in Customers' Lives Personally?

Do we ever leave customers in the dark?

CenterPoint Energy in Houston delivers proactive communication when the power goes out and things go dark. They make Mom proud because they work to remove the emotional angst of not knowing, and instead inform, communicate, and support. As a result, they prosper—earning trust, high ratings, and raves from grateful customers.

- Are we actively communicating when the unexpected happens and the power goes out, planes are canceled, appointments are rescheduled, or shipments are late?
- Do we reach out first, before customers, when service is disrupted?
- Do we give customers options for how to communicate with and reach us?
- Do we keep customers apprised, and give them peace of mind?



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Do We Let Customers Depart Gracefully?

Would our departure experience earn an eventual return?

The Casper mattress company knows that a graceful departure can lead to an eventual return. They make Mom proud with their generosity in giving one hundred days to try one of their beds, and a painless and dignified approach to taking it back if it's not right for you. Their unexpected behavior earns prosperity, with growth to more than \$500 million in just five years. And kudos to the company as a runner up to *Inc.* magazine's Company of the Year, 2016.

- Do we penalize customers for departing?
- Do we give customers a seamless, simple, transparent way to depart?
- Would customers return to us, based on our treatment?



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Do We Make It Easy to Get Help?

Is our availability a reflection of how much we care?

Chewy.com knows that pet parents need reliability in service. They make Mom proud by providing always available, always informed service in every channel, delivered by people who care and know the answers. They prosper because they've built their operation from the perspective of pet parents, earning sales of more than \$2 billion, up from just \$26 million in 2012.

- Are we accessible to customers, based on their preferences?
- Do we ever put customers on hold for extended periods? Work them through phone trees?
- Do we make customers repeat the information they punched in?
- Do we give our people the answers and ability to help?

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Do Our Customers Ever Feel Like a Hot Potato?

Are we united in how we serve, without customer handoffs?

Wegmans never wants your mom waiting for someone to get permission to act, nor will they pass her on to someone else for service. They make Mom proud because they train people for their skills and for teamwork. Wegmans even slows their growth until they can hire the right people who can act this way. These actions breed customer admiration and employee retention. Full-time turnover is as low as 4 percent.

- Are our customers ever bounced around in our company?
- Do we ever bounce the customer to partners to solve his or her issue?
- Do we show up as a team to our customer? Are silos united?

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Would We Send Our Pile of Paperwork to Our Mom?

Do we deliver understanding—not lingo, jargon, and more paper?

USAA insurance decided to clean house on the paperwork trail it requires customers to deal with for every type of process. For example, they reduced the paperwork rigmarole for filing fraudulent credit card charges, reducing paper, process, and time required. This constant focus on making it easier for customers to do business with them continues to earn USAA a 98 percent customer renewal rate.

- Do we ever bombard our customers with paperwork?
- Have we eased the burden of what we require, and how we require it?
- Is our communication clear and understandable—wiped of lingo and jargon?



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Would Our Customers Say That We “Know” Them?

Do we deliver personal, relevant relationships?

Stitch Fix blends data with humanity and customization. They make Mom proud by automating with data “to a point” and then customizing and personalizing. Finding this blend and balancing it is their prosperity formula. Their business grows, while retail competitors struggle. Delivering a “you know me” experience, driven by data and honed by hand, has led the company to achieve profitability after just six years and sales exceeding \$730 million.

- Do our customers feel like we know them?
- Does all of our data connect so we can know and respond to needs?
- Are our people trained and enabled to customize?
- Do our responses, offers, and gestures = “We know you”?



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“Put Others Before Yourself.”

Achieve your goal by helping customers achieve theirs.

Like our moms the Make-mom-proud companies prove with their actions that they have their customers’ best interests in mind. This is at the heart of companies that grow most organically—earning ardent admirers who grow their businesses for them. They earn a bigger piece of the pie because they improve customers’ lives.

This is a simple idea to accept, but is oh so hard to execute. Operating at this level remains elusive until the paradoxical realization kicks in: To achieve your goals, you need to help others achieve theirs.

“Make Mom Proud” Questions:

Are we improving customers’ lives?

Do we achieve our goals through helping our customers achieve theirs?

Do We Have Clarity of Purpose?

Are we all connected in our purpose in improving customers' lives?

IKEA has never wavered from its purpose of “being there for the many people.” They make Mom proud by letting people know how it will be to do business with them. And then they unite every silo and every operation so that customers always know what they will and will not get from an IKEA experience. Clarity of purpose drives their prosperity, making them the largest furniture retailer in the world.

- Have we clarified why we exist, our purpose in improving customers' lives?
- Have we translated our purpose to our operation and behaviors, as IKEA does?
- Do we enable employees to deliver on our purpose?

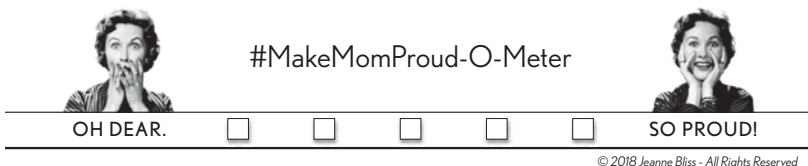


Does Our “Hello” Experience Focus on People or Process?

Do we honor customers by starting with their lives, not our action items?

Because Mayfair Diagnostics understands the emotions of the “hello,” they redesigned the welcome experience in their imaging clinics. They make Mom proud by looking into the eyes of the people who walk through their door, and they guide—never “process”—the human standing in front of them. Their personalized service welcome, among other gestures, led to accelerated profit for their redesigned clinics.

- Do all of our “hellos” start with honoring the human in front of us?
- Are our interactions first about people or the process and paperwork?
- Do we give our people the time and ability to recognize and welcome?



Do We Allow for Human Error?

Does customer empathy exist in our operations, our processes, and our rules?

The make-mom-proud companies stand out with empathetic responses when customers need them. Warby Parker makes Mom proud because they extend grace with every pair of glasses they sell, giving people thirty days to return a pair, even if the customers sat on them. They prosper, earning “goodness-driven growth,” primarily through word of mouth, and these practices that are part of their regular “operating procedure.”

- Do we allow a little wiggle room for human error by customers?
- Have we enabled our employees to extend grace when they see fit?
- Do we understand vulnerable customer moments, and design services and gestures to support them?

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Have We Earned a Place in the Story of Customers' Lives?

Are we improving lives in the experience we deliver?

When you focus on adding value to people’s lives, they will remember you. The Girl Scouts of Greater New York decided to benefit the lives of homeless girls by offering the benefits of scouting to them. They make Mom proud because they selflessly found a way to fund, create, and sustain this experience that these girls will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

- Have we identified a few experiences we want to be remembered for?
- Across our customer journey, does everyone in our organization unite to deliver?
- Do we design in memories as part of these experiences we deliver?

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Do We Understand Customer Emotions?

Do we design experiences to earn positive emotional responses?

The Starlight Children's Foundation found a whole new version of that nutty hospital gown, inspired by giving sick teens back the identity they lost in the standard-issue gown. They make Mom proud by not only acknowledging the emotion of these kids, but also by taking action to turn a negative to a positive. They deliver prosperity by improving the lives of more than sixty million sick kids in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the UK.

- Do we understand our customers' emotions as they work with us?
- Do we use this understanding to redesign existing experiences?
- Do we use this understanding to innovate new experiences?



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Do We Walk Customers Out of Trouble Spots?

Would our customers say that we "have" them when things go wrong?

Alaska Airlines has prepared everyone to take action when it's their customers' time for a Murphy's Law travel day. They make Mom proud by providing all employees with tool kits and sets of actions they can use to help customers out of tough situations—without asking permission. When customers are taken care of, prosperity follows; Alaska Airlines is frequently named best airline in the United States, according to many industry indices.

- Have we proactively identified regular customer trouble spots?
- Have we designed solutions that employees can take immediately?
- Do we reward behavior to make customers whole again?



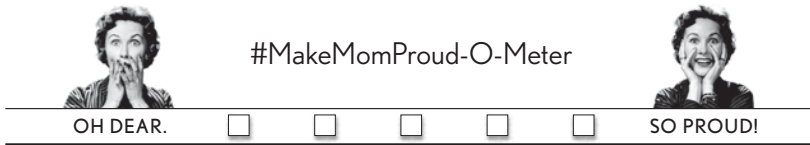
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Do We Dare Rethink What's Always Been Done?

Are we redesigning experiences based on customers' needs and lives?

The Dorchester Collection realized that by understanding their guests' attachment to their wardrobes and its importance in their lives, their laundry service was completely out of sync. They make Mom proud because they did not rest until their garment-care experience was redesigned to meet their guest goals for upkeep and preservation.

- Across our customer journey, are we clear about all customer goals?
- Have we oriented what we deliver, and how to meet them?
- Do customer goals drive innovation in products, service, and operations?
- Do we continue any practices because "that's how they've always been done"?



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Do We Give Customers Choices That Jibe with Their Lives?

Do we cater to customer preferences as we deliver to them?

Sephora knows what their customers want, and they know all of the different versions for how customers like to receive goods and service. They make Mom proud because they respect all of these needs, translating them into multiple options for service, sales, experiences, and communication. Their more than ten million zealous customers repay Sephora by returning to them again and again.

- Do we actively give customers choices in how to interact with us?
- Are we delivering relevant communications?
- Do we make it easy for customers to engage with us as they choose?



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“Take the High Road.”

Choose how you will and will not grow.

The make-mom-proud companies are choosing to reverse the trend on business practices that have defined their industries. Through leadership guidance and company actions, they are establishing more balanced relationships, where both sides win. Both customer and company are better off because they are in each other's lives.

“Make Mom Proud” Questions:

Do we take the high road?

Are we deliberate and steady in what we will, and will not do, to grow?

Do Leaders Inspire What They Want Delivered?

Do we align what we stand for with how we act?

REI's purpose is to get folks outdoors. Consistent with that purpose, they close their doors on Black Friday, urging families and friends to be together and head out. REI makes Mom proud because they deliberately take risks to grow differently than business as usual. Their clear purpose and aligned actions are magnets for attracting and keeping valued employees. REI has been on *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For list for nineteen consecutive years.

- Like the CEO of REI, do our leaders bring our purpose to life?
- Are employees involved in defining actions that define our purpose?
- Do we *live* our purpose with our actions and behaviors?

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Are We Honoring Customers as Assets?

Do we remember and value customers, and not take them for granted?

Bonobos takes the science of knowing and caring for their best customers seriously. They make Mom proud because their good customers are never taken for granted and never forgotten. They combine the science of knowing them and the art of service and experience to earn continued growth and increased lifetime value of new customers by 20 percent.

- Like Bonobos, do we know and manage customer lifetime value?
- Do we enable the front line to know customers' value, so they can decide on actions?
- Are we taking actions to honor our best customers?
- Do we do anything for new customers that we don't do for our best customers?

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Does Two-way Trust Define Our Actions?

Do we earn customer trust by trusting them back?

Lemonade Insurance wanted to remove the imbalance that sometimes defines the insurance experience. They make Mom proud because they have built processes that have trust as their foundation. For example, their claims process includes an honesty pledge, where they choose to believe customers' words. Prosperity follows, as customers gravitate to them for this foundation of trust.

- Do we practice two-way trust with customers?
- Have we created a customer relationship where both sides win?
- Do customers feel that we trust them through the language in our forms, our fine print, and as they work through our paperwork and contracts?



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Do We Have Any “Gotcha!” Moments?

Can we deliver “We’ve got your back” moments instead?

The Columbus Metropolitan Library decided to walk away from the “Gotcha!” experience of overdue fines. They make Mom proud because, with this act, they decided to stay true to their mission to help young minds grow and let people learn. The first major library in the United States to do this, they are creating a movement of “good-habit libraries” to keep people reading rather than worrying about those fines.

- Do we have any “if,” “and,” or “but” conditions in our experience?
- Do customers experience any surprises in conditions on products, services, fees, or offers?
- Are we working to flip “Gotcha!” moments to “We’ve got your back” moments?



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Are There Any “Gullibility Tax” Situations in Our Business?

Do we share all the facts, so customers can decide?

Luscious Garage in San Francisco turned the experience of getting a car repaired from one of fear and worry to one of honor and trust. They make Mom proud with completely transparent information, communication, and options that breed a partnership between technician and customer. And no “gullibility tax” ever. Always honestly giving customers facts, choice, and a say in the matter has earned them nothing but five-star reviews.

- Do we have “gullibility moments” in our experience?
- Do any customers ever feel like they’ve been oversold?
- Are customers guided fearlessly to the right options for them?
- Do our rewards encourage selling what’s best for the customer?

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Do We Ever Practice Nickeling and Diming, or Opportunity Pricing?

Are we charging what’s fair, not what’s possible?

Virgin Hotels decided to walk away from the practice of overcharging customers at the mini bar—just because they could. They make Mom proud because fairness rules how they price and what they practice. Charging the same price as you can get down the street at the market, and other fair habits, hoisted them to the number one spot on Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards for the United States.

- Do we practice any nickeling and diming to customers?
- Are we becoming dependent on these fees and charges to grow financially?
- Do we do the work to eliminate these practices from our business?

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Is Our Apology Our Finest Hour?

Do we show our humanity and put customers back together again?

Every day and after every shift, Four Seasons teams identify any glitches that might have occurred with customers. They make Mom proud because the focus is on the “why,” not on the “who.” Through digging into causes, getting rid of them, and letting the front line solve those glitches, content employees prosper, putting the company on the *Forbes* 100 Best Places to Work list for eighteen years straight.

- Like the Four Seasons, do we know what customer glitches occur every day?
- Do we have a recovery plan prepared that kicks into place when big mistakes happen?
- Do we guide and enable employees to take ownership and remove them?



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Are Truth and Transparency How We Sell and Serve?

Do we focus on earning the relationship, not making the sale?

OVO Energy decided that they wanted to show up like a trusted friend in how they sell and serve. They make Mom proud by making sure prices reflect the actual cost of doing business so customers always know and feel that they’re getting a good deal. This is driving their growth and trust among consumers, where they are rated 8.8/10 by Trustpilot, a new high for energy.

- Do we always deliver transparency in how we price and what customers receive?
- Is our selling experience uncomplicated and clear?
- Is our pricing easy to understand?
- Would customers describe their experience with us as truthful and transparent?



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Join the Movement to #MakeMomProud.

*This is a book with a funny title, but a very earnest mission.
And that is to improve our lives as customers.*



We all have it in us to take actions to “Make Mom Proud.” Yet our lives as customers are still filled with some squishy experiences we’d rather not have had.

The goal of this movement is to boost us up by taking actions, one at a time, and then sharing them with each other. This work is one-step-at-a-time work. And so is this movement. One action will lead to another, and then another, and then another.

You Have the Fixings to #MakeMomProud

So first, we invite you to honor your mom at make-mom-proud.com by **posting your mom’s picture** and a description of an action you’ve taken in business that makes the lives of customers or employees better. While you’re there, you can see what others have done, see their moms’ faces, and compare stories.

Here’s where we will buoy each other, celebrate progress, and keep taking those steps to move forward. And we will feature your progress on social media and on our blog so that we can all celebrate your success.

Post Your Progress at Make-mom-proud.com

Next, in social media, let the marketplace know you’re improving customers’ lives by using the hashtag #MakeMomProud. We learn and grow from each other, by standing on the shoulders of the people who came before us. We learn by fearlessly sharing our foibles, our journeys, our joys, and our successes.

To advance all of us in making this a movement, share the acts you take as you progress on social media using the hashtag #MakeMomProud. Share what you’re doing and why the act you’ve

taken is part of your march toward becoming a make-mom-proud company.

I wish you joy, success, and contentment in your road ahead.

As always, reach out if you ever need a hand in urging you on!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jamie Bliss". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned to the right of the main text block.

It is my pleasure to share the interviews, references, and source notes that contributed to this book's content and made it possible. Please go to <http://www.customerbliss.com/books>, where you can also access tools and the videos and comics from this book.