

## McDonald's Corporation Rocked by Poor Customer Service Ratings

*Could your practice be a McDonald's?*

By ERIN SOMERS

Good help is hard to find regardless of what type of business you are in. But in today's economy, even McDonald's is having *major* trouble finding employees who can give good, strong service with a smile. Twenty percent of their complaints were related to worker's attitudes and *the number is increasing*. As a medical consultant who visits more than thirty offices per week, I have found that too many practices have become the "McDonald's" of medicine when it comes to how they treat their patients. Some of the things I have seen would knock your socks off (and *not* in a good way.)

Among the practices with these staffing challenges, some do recognize that there are customer service issues within their practice but many others have absolutely no clue. Either way these issues will cost patients and income if they are not rectified, because strong customer service is vital.

(Let me hop in and tell you that I *don't* like to call patients "customers." *They are patients*. However to make my point, it is easier to use the term *customer service*.)

In the survey that hammered McDonald's, *rude or unprofessional employees topped the list of complaints*. In another survey of the Top 10 food chains, McDonald's came in *last* in the "Friendly, Pleasant Service" category. McDonald's has a major

problem and they know it.

As medical professionals, we are here to help, heal & serve. Is your team serving your patients with kindness, efficiency and professionalism? These traits are more important than ever in today's difficult times, as Central Florida has been hit especially hard during this global recession. *We need to be aware and we need to be kind in our dealings with our patients*. On the business side, *patient retention is especially imperative in this challenging economy*. If your team isn't treating your patients well, they will go to your competitor where they will be welcomed and cherished.

How strong is the customer service at your practice? As a CEO, office manager or managing physician *do you honestly know?* Customer service starts when your patient (or potential patient) calls your office inquiring about an appointment. A high quality of care and service *must* be maintained throughout the patient's visit. Your team is only as strong as its weakest link. This weak link could be your schedulers, front desk, MA's, billers, checkout or even your providers! Yes, I said even your providers!

Within the medical practices that I consult for and train, all the physicians, ARNPs & PAs know that their bedside manner matters. They know that they need to have a smile on their face and warmth in their voice during their patient exam. When I promote my clients



I assure the referring offices that their patient will receive great patient care *with compassion*. No patient should have to put up with an employee with a bad attitude or a doctor who is arrogant and uncaring. I don't care how good they are supposed to be, there are always other excellent providers to choose from.

Also remember that when you refer out to another physician, the quality of their practice is a *direct reflection on yours*. If your patients are coming back with complaints regarding a doctor or the customer service of the facility you referred them to, *listen to your patient*. There may be something going on that you need to be aware of.

So here is the million dollar question:

With physicians being in clinic and practice managers being so busy, *how do you really know what your team is doing when they think no one is watching?*

Here's the million dollar answer.... Mystery Shop your practice.

Mystery Shopping is not a massive financial investment, it's probably much less than you think. However, your return will be *priceless*.

When I Mystery Shop for a client, the practice gets a complete report from the time I call to schedule the appointment until I'm out the door after my visit. You receive a full and accurate overview of what is happening with your entire team from start to finish.

Once you get your report you can go from there. It's your starting point in straightening out any customer service issues and it will guide you in the right direction for training, reassignment or replacement of any staff member. If you find any "weak links", know that there are many good medical professionals who are in need of a job and willing to give 100 percent at work.

As for McDonald's, I wish them good luck as Ronald and company are going to need it.



Erin Somers has a diverse medical background which includes marketing, customer service training, recruiting and more. Marketing is at the forefront of Erin Somers Consulting and her expertise includes increasing revenue for practices and medical companies during these challenging economic times. Visit [www.erinsomersconsulting.com](http://www.erinsomersconsulting.com) or you can contact Erin at 407-451-9567 or [erin.somers@gmail.com](mailto:erin.somers@gmail.com).