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Would You Fire a Person for This?

Let's say you run a company with a call center.

And one day, at the end of a long shift, one of your reps gets a call from a confused customer. This customer is asking questions that even the most technically challenged person would laugh at. And your rep rolls his eyes.

What would you do?

The customer never saw the eye roll. Only you.

The rep answered all of the questions according to the book and the eye roll was understandable considering the ridiculous questions he was being asked. Plus, it had been a long day.

So, what would you do?

A fireable offense

At Headsets.com, that little eye roll is a fireable offense and they will enforce it.

I read about them recently in the book [*I Love You More Than My Dog*](#) by Jeanne Bliss, which is one of the best books on service I have ever read.

In the book, CEO Mike Faith says, "The customer deserves our respect. Sometimes they could be wrong. But they always deserve our respect." And he and his team enforce that rule to the point that if a rep rolls his eyes, huffs and puffs, or treats a customer in a way that is not 100% respectful, they fire him. Simple as that.

That is leadership. They are willing to do an extreme thing to ensure the company runs smoothly. They know that one eye roll from one team member is like kudzu in the south. It spreads quickly and before you know it, it's everywhere.

Why it's rarely enforced - a lesson in hiring and training

You'd think that if something as simple as an eye roll can get you fired, that Headsets.com would be firing people left and right. But it's rarely enforced.

Why?

Because they are pickier than a 4-year old at a fancy restaurant when it comes to hiring. They don't just screen people well and interview them well, they put them through intense tryouts and training.

How intense? Check out this glimpse at the hiring process:

- Up to 8 interviews
- Studied by a voice coach for warmth, tone, and empathy
- Meet with a business psychologist to test for how they react in stressful situations
- Grammar testing
- Memory testing

And after all that...more interviews to see if they fit into the culture.

Why all this testing, training, and interviewing? Because Headsets.com trusts their people to make the right decisions. They don't have a rulebook. They have one simple rule: respect the customer and do what is right.

How can you trust someone who isn't screened and trained? You can't. So they go all out to make trust easy.

And they fire people who break that trust...even if it's just a little, teensy, itty-bitty eye roll.
The bottom line

Only 1 in 30 people who get to the tryout phase are hired. That's after the initial interviews weed out a large number of applicants. And you thought Harvard was selective.

The result is that Headsets.com grew from a \$40,000 investment in 1998 to a \$30,000,000 company ten years later...selling headsets.

All because they didn't compromise their main principle: respect the customer.

As a leader, are you willing to put potential candidates through a rigorous hiring process?

Are you willing to wait an extra month or two or even six to find the right person?

Are you willing to train them, drill them and test them to the point that you can truly trust them with no rules?

If not, what is stopping you?