



Kastle's World Class Service Is Ingrained From Top to Bottom

Since purchasing Kastle Systems from its original owner in 2007, Mark Ein, chairman and majority owner, has endeavored to not only continue the stellar service that has been the hallmark of Kastle's offerings since day one, but to make it even better. Recognizing that the key to success is satisfied customers, Ein has made it his mission and his passion to "be the best at what we do."

SDM Magazine recently spoke with Ein about his philosophy, methods and results of these efforts.

Q: What Is Your Philosophy on Customer Service and How Did You Develop It?

Ein: The founder of the company similarly had a belief that customer service was a top priority, so it has been part of the culture of the company since its inception. But the more I got involved, the more I thought there were even higher levels we could take the experience. My general philosophy in business is that the highest calling is to do the best job for the customers. Customers pay us good money, and they deserve to be treated extraordinarily well.

We start with our belief that providing world class customer service is the most important thing we do. Customers depend on us to protect both property and people. Delivering that service at the highest levels is the single most important objective that we have and something we have embedded into every part of the fabric of our business from recruiting to training to retention to culture to systems. Every facet of business we look at, we look first through the lens of how are we going to provide the best customer service in the world?

Q: What Role Has Customer Service Played in Your Efforts to Expand and Improve on the Original Business Mission?

Ein: Our core offering is managed service. We tell customers, "Let us manage the systems for you. We can do it more effectively and economically than you can yourself." If you are going to tell someone that, you really have to serve them extraordinarily well because they are deciding not to do it themselves and to trust you with it. We sell security as a service. "Service" is literally in the name. In the last few years we have expanded the scope. We have weaved video into our offering and for most of our customers we do fire services. The fact that we have traditionally provided such extraordinarily levels of customer service in the access control space enabled us to go to core customers and say, "Let's talk about what more we can do for you."

We are constantly investing in new products and services and expanding into new geographies and verticals. I would say a couple of the things we are very excited about right now are the new platform KastlePresence,

where access is built into mobile phone, and doing more with visitor management. In terms of verticals, we have really embraced multifamily with urbanization an important trend with both millennials and baby boomers moving into cities. There has been a wave of multifamily construction and we have really exciting technology and service offerings for those buildings where they can use their phones as access devices and also as a platform for other things.

Q: How Does This Focus on Service Affect Kastle's Own Culture and People?

Ein: It creates a lot of pride. We really instill in people that serving customers is the single highest calling. We have a quarterly "All Hands" meeting and at every meeting we recognize four or five employees who went to absolutely extraordinary lengths for their customers. It is one of my favorite stories to tell, whether they stayed all night, sleeping in the office to solve a problem, or went to heroic lengths to make sure a criminal was apprehended. It means a lot, not just to me but the whole organization. The round of applause the rest of the team gives is amazing. Nothing gets them more excited than paying tribute to our colleagues who have served our customers in an extraordinary way.

It really comes down to do you have great people who have a desire to serve your customers, who are trained well and work in an environment they enjoy, and who have the tools to be a great organization? If you fall apart on any of those things it is impossible to make it up in some other way. So we make investments and put the focus into that chain of hiring, training, retaining, culture and tools. One of the things that I instituted several years ago was that I require on every single hiring form that the person who wants to hire someone write a paragraph saying why they think this person has a desire to serve and a generosity of spirit. That is important whether you are in customer service or marketing or IT or technology. Every function has a role in delivering quality customer service. We need the company populated with people who care deeply about this.

Q: How Do You Know If You Have the "Best Customer Service in the World?"

Ein: Six years ago or so when I wanted us to double down on customer service and take it up to another level I had an interesting conversation with our executive committee and they said, "What do you want?" I said I wanted to be the best in the world at what we do and be the best in customer service. Our CTO, a numbers guy, turned to me and said, "How do you measure it? If you can't measure it, you can't claim it." That point had some merit. Being able to measure and analyze it is the only way to know if you have met your goals.

I decided to hire J.D. Power and Associates (the well-respected marketing and research firm) on a quarterly basis to see how well we are serving customers. We do it both regionally and nationally and measure all the components of our service offerings and how customers are feeling about us. It is not just how we are doing; J.D. Power also has a lot of ideas on how we can improve our service in areas they identify we need to work on. It is very comprehensive. We actually pay firm-wide bonuses that are tied to our J.D. Power scores.

Ein and the staff at Kastle are very proud of their scores, which are on par with some of the world's most respected and well known service-oriented marquee brands. Nine out of 10 customers say they would recommend Kastle to a friend or colleague!

For more information, contact your Kastle Account Manager, email info@kastle.com or visit www.kastle.com.