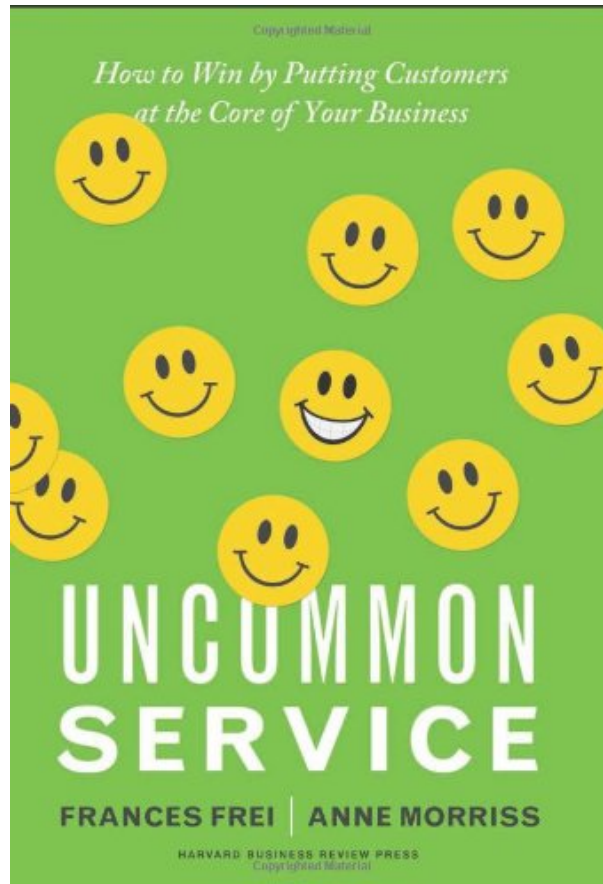
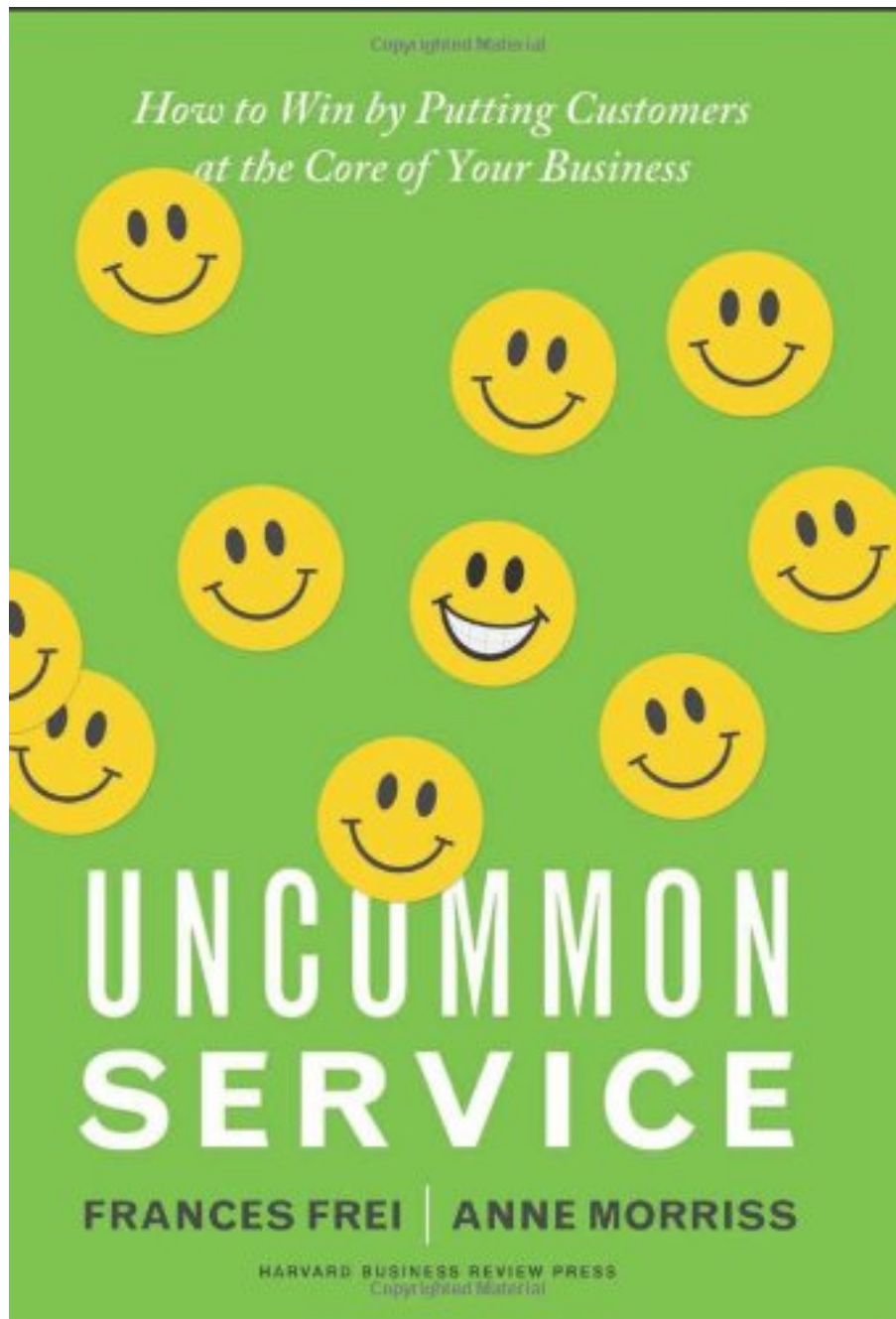


# UNCOMMON SERVICE: HOW TO WIN



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## Review

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“I found *Uncommon Service* to be a refreshing, frank and honest look at how any organization can increase profitability, satisfaction and competitive advantage by delivering consistently outstanding service.” — American Express Open Forum

## About the Author

Frances Frei is UPS Foundation Professor of Service Management at Harvard Business School, where she developed the school's successful Managing Service Operations course. Anne Morriss is the Managing Director of the Concire Leadership Institute, a consulting firm that helps leaders to surface and remove performance barriers.

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Most companies treat service as a low-priority business operation, keeping it out of the spotlight until a customer complains. Then service gets to make a brief appearance – for as long as it takes to calm the customer down and fix whatever foul-up jeopardized the relationship.

In *Uncommon Service*, Frances Frei and Anne Morriss show how, in a volatile economy where the old rules of strategic advantage no longer hold true, service must become a competitive weapon, not a damage-control function. That means weaving service tightly into every core decision your company makes.

The authors reveal a transformed view of service, presenting an operating model built on tough choices organizations must make:

- How do customers define “excellence” in your offering? Is it convenience? Friendliness? Flexible choices? Price?
- How will you get paid for that excellence? Will you charge customers more? Get them to handle more service tasks themselves?
- How will you empower your employees to deliver excellence? What will your recruiting, selection, training, and job design practices look like? What about your organizational culture?
- How will you get your customers to behave? For example, what do you need to do to get them to treat your employees with respect? Do you need to make it easier for them to use new technology?

Practical and engaging, *Uncommon Service* makes a powerful case for a new and systematic approach to service as a means of boosting productivity, profitability, and competitive advantage.

- Sales Rank: #47060 in Books
- Brand: Frei, Frances/ Morriss, Anne
- Published on: 2012-02-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 6.25" w x 1.00" l, 1.06 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

## Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

31 of 34 people found the following review helpful.

If you care about your customers, you need to read this book...

By R. Buell

When I was an MBA student at Harvard Business School, one of the most difficult classes to get into was Frances Frei's Managing Service Operations elective. I was one of her lucky students, but demand was so high that even those who ranked it as their first choice often failed to win one of the prized seats in the class.

If you read this book, you'll understand why...

Frei is a world-renowned guru in service management and a Harvard teaching legend. In "Uncommon Service," she's partnered with Anne Morriss, a leader in strategy, leadership and institutional change. Together, they distill the principles of service excellence into an intuitive road map that any executive, with the appropriate conviction, can follow to improve customer experiences, and in turn, firm performance. Not a bad value proposition when you think about it - developing a sustainable competitive advantage by making your customers' lives better.

What I loved about the course, and indeed this book, is that it is full of real world examples of service successes and failures, used to masterfully illustrate a system of interconnected design principles that lead to service excellence. The stories are compelling and their implications are clear, and by the time you're finished reading, you'll be able to diagnose what's right, and what's wrong with the service design of your

company, as well as those of your competitors.

On their own, the principles of service excellence make "Uncommon Service" a must-have for any entrepreneur interested in deploying a world-class service operation from the ground up. Having been a service entrepreneur myself, this aspect of the book appealed to me deeply. However, Frei and Morriss, who themselves have considerable experience working with many of the world's largest and most complicated service organizations, have crafted the book to speak as well to executives interested in improving pre-existing operations. The book tackles implementation issues in the context of a complex organization in motion, as well as how to develop a service culture, and how to scale service excellence as the enterprise experiences growth.

If you run, or aspire to run a service organization, and you're concerned at all with the experiences of your customers, you need this book. It is exceptionally engaging, devoid of jargon, brutally honest, and a joy to read. It is simply a masterpiece, and I cannot recommend it more highly.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Serving 4 impact

By F. J. G. Zimny

[...]

It is an understatement to claim that technology has revolutionized the way that companies perform. That same technology enables professionals within customer service to develop individualized relationships with customers or pure encounters. Supported by advancements in management science, operations management and marketing, companies are able to improve both profits and financials.

But technology is not the critical success factor. In my opinion, the mindset of meeting the customer demand for great service - and saving money at the same time - is more important.

Frances Frei and Anne Morris wrote a book covering some recommendations how to design customer service.

In UnCommon Service, Harvard Business School Professor Frances Frei and coauthor Anne Morriss bring their provocative argument to the table: that companies must dare to be "bad" in order to be great, choosing strategic ways to underperform while fueling a winning service advantage.

The authors claim that uncommon service is created by specific design choices made in the very blueprint of a business model. And it not merely about making customers happy; instead it is about creating an organization where all employees - not just the star performers - provide excellent service as a matter of routine. These outstanding service organizations create offerings, fund strategies, system and cultures that set their people up to excel casually.

The authors claim that they introduce a decidedly fresh view of service. An organizational design model is presented built on tough services one must make about four dimensions of any business.

Frei and Morriss illustrate the power of their approach with examples from a wide array of industries. Uncommon service makes a powerful case for a new and systematic approach to customer service.

The core

These are the four dimensions of your business:

Your service offering: How do customers define "excellence" in your offering?

Your service funding mechanism: How will you get paid for delivering excellence?

Your employee management system: How will you prepare your employees to deliver excellence every day?

Your customer management system: How will you get your customers to behave in ways that improve their service experience - without disrupting anyone's else's?

Your service offering (which specific attributes of service are you competing on) is determined by its funding mechanism, the employee management system and the customer management system.

Leverage of trade-offs is essential.

As the authors explain, there are four service truths:

You can not be good at everything;

The authors claim simply that dissatisfaction is a predictable outcome when you try to be great at everything. To put it into practice you have to undertake various steps (e.g creating an internal attribute map, creating and external attribute map and analyzing your performance. In this way, one can identify wasted edges and wasted profits. The next step is redefining value.

Someone has to pay for it;

Four ways are identified to pay for excellence:

Charge customers extra for it;

Make cost reductions that also improve service;

Make service improvement that also reduce costs;

Get customers to do the work for you.

To put it into practice these steps are recommended:

Examine your cost structure;

Monetize your strengths;

Unleash your customers.

It is not your employees fault;

In a service model that works, employees are reasonably able and reasonably motivated to achieve excellence. The able part is made possible by selection, training and job designs that set up real-world employees to succeed. The motivated part is facilitated by a performance management system that makes them want to do their job effectively.

You must manage your customers;

Their basic message: if you are in the service business, you do not know which customers are showing up, when and what they are going to do once they get there. And so you need plan for managing this uncertainty. Customer chaos can be managed in two ways: by reducing (tends to favor efficiency) or accommodating it (supporting service).

To create a successful customer management system, one has to select customer and train them applying well designed customer jobs. And just like with employees, the customer performance should be managed.

The authors use as formula: Service Excellence = Design X Culture.

When your service model is designed right, it produces the same sensations among the people who interact with it. But like an empty building it is missing the critical element of people interacting with each other. Or culture. The authors refer to other authors to sharpen your insights with regard to culture.

My rating



4,0 stars on a scale 0-5.

The authors wrote a very well structured book with lots of examples.

For those who are looking for non-American service examples. Not too many.

There are many professionals that advocate in designing service technology and processes are essential to create transformational innovation or other strategic avenues to growth. The authors stress the importance of the human element.

This book is recommended reading for anyone who is interested in reflecting about the management of customer service. It is to you how that knowledge and information will be applied by you to achieve business or professional growth

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Pick what you do best and excel at it

By BHFL

I am an entrepreneur. I make things, create things, and want to bring new ideas and products to people. But I am terrible at managing people. So why would this book help me? Because no matter what you are making, managing, growing or building - you need viewers, customers, loyal followers and this book tells me how to give these integral consumers what they need from me most. You can't do everything brilliantly they tell me. Focus on the service you do best and on what your consumers need from you. The book is easy to digest, clear, decisive and encouraging. Knowing these two authors, and having been lucky enough to get their feedback on my projects, I can say their enthusiasm for building businesses that are cutting edge and lasting makes this book a must read for anyone who wants to see their company, project, film, start-up succeed.

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