

THANK YOU, H. KEITH HUNT

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I first came into contact with Keith over 30 years ago. I had just created and been appointed to manage Israel's first modern complaint handling department in 1989, and needed to tap into as many resources as I could to figure out what I was doing. One of those resources was the ACR, and Keith gladly helped me out. I became a member and ordered a few volumes of the conference proceedings. He made it a point to write something witty or profound on the invoice. I knew then that Keith was a very special person.

Time went by, I finished my MBA and had written a thesis on the impact of word of mouth. I sent him a copy and he was very impressed, saying it was the kind of work which they publish in the journal. That was a bit out of my league at the time, as I was fighting for my job, and wondering why complaint handling was so ignored at the organizational level.

I quit my job, and moved the entire family to College Station, Texas where I enrolled in 1993 in the doctoral program at Texas A&M to study Service Quality with Len Berry. All those conference proceedings of CS/D paid off, as I tried to incorporate complaint behavior in every course I studied. I was able to answer a lot of the questions that I had regarding organizational handling of complaint behavior.

In 1999, I was finally able to meet my mentor in person at my first CS/D conference. Las Vegas and the canyons showed me how to combine satisfaction and dissatisfaction in one conference. Conferences in Jackson Hole (my out of my comfort zone picture of white water rafting still hangs on my wall), and Provo allowed me to further talk shop with the CS/D community, who became my family away from home. I learned a lot about managing my career based on my conversations with Keith. When my contract at the University of Haifa was not renewed, Keith was right there with some well-timed advice about embracing change.

I spent the next few years teaching a wide variety of courses at multiple colleges, and the more I taught, the more I learned. I discovered that all of these courses looked at marketing from different viewpoints, and suddenly I was looking at the common thread of taking care of the customer in all of these courses.

Complaint Management became my next research topic, enhancing the impact of handling complaints on the entire organization. Complaints have now become a strategic asset to the organization, incorporating complaint management into decision making. I was able to turn complaint handling into a positive.

Keith had already retired, but I can still hear his words of wisdom encouraging me to stay creative and to have fun while managing my career. I have been able to convince doctoral students to do research in complaint handling and have been able to convince students of the benefits of CS/D. I am paying it forward in every course I teach, and every paper I write. Thank You, Keith, for helping me to find myself, in helping others.