

Bill Gushulak/Fort Frances General Supply

By Stephen Challis



RRFDC Board Director, George Emes (left) presents the 2007 Customer Service Challenge plaque to Bill Gushulak of Fort Frances General Supply

Some readers might think the term "General Supply" went out of fashion around the time doctors stopped doing house calls. Granted, methods such as niche marketing and e-commerce are now widely adopted, but one local business has found a way to continue to use the phrase successfully. Fort Frances General Supply is a source of industrial and household cleaning products plus a niche market provider of workplace safety items, keys, tags, locks, trophies and engraving services as well as related promotional items.

"People are surprised at what they find when they come in here." said Bill Gushulak who along with his wife Mary Jane purchased FFGS in 1984. Mary Jane is a fulltime school teacher while Bill manages the store. "People come in for one item and often go out with additional purchases that caught their eye. We service the industrial, food service and household markets," said Bill, "everyone is welcome. "

Regardless of a customer's requirements - large or small - the staff knows that servicing their need is "key", said Bill.

"When you walk in, you are the most important part of the day." This is the approach he takes and imparts on his staff through "leadership by example. " Treat your customers as you would like to be treated" is his "Golden Rule Motto".

Many highly trained business analysts and writers have pondered the questions: "What is good customer service?" And: "How can it be implemented?" And, while studying these theories can be fruitful, Bill Gushulak knows that it all comes down to three key points: listen, care, and deliver.

Bill was born and raised in Fort Frances and has worked in service related enterprises most of his life, first as a paperboy, then as a grocery clerk, 14 years as a funeral director and now as a retailer. Few people know the needs and requirements of the district consumers as well as he does.