

If you wait long enough, everything is our top priority

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I always crack a smile whenever I hear or read someone say that “XYZ is our top priority.” The person may believe it at the moment they say it, but just wait a little while, and soon there will be a new top priority.

If you call the person out on their shifting priorities, they usually come up with some hand-waving explanation that the two “top” priorities are actually the same thing.

Last week, you said that customer satisfaction was our top priority, but just now you said that our employees’ well-being is our top priority. Which one is the real top priority? In other words, which is more important, customer satisfaction or employee well-being?

“Well, you see, if our employees are happy and healthy, that shows itself in the quality of service we provide our customers, so the two are really facets of the same underlying issue. Which is our top priority.”

But there can be a conflict between the two. For example, longer hours of operation improve customer service, but it also takes a toll on the workforce. Which goal is more important?

“That’s an interesting question. Obviously we would work very hard to try to avoid such a conflict. I’m confident that my leadership team will be able to address both issues without having to sacrifice on either one.”

Wait, now they are separate issues again? You said earlier that they were the same issue.

“I think I’ve answered your question. Anybody else have a question?”

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