



# Are You Being Served?

**J**oe DeLorenzo and I are a mother, son-in-law couple looking to make routine purchases — or, at least, ones pretending to be. It's a profession of mystery shopping. I'm a journalist, and he's an ex-restaurant manager determined to find out what's best and worst of customer service.

## Can't You See I'm Ignoring You?

The first employee we encounter at a supermarket chain looks at us, but

pretends not to hear. There are shopping baskets to be had, but they're not well-stocked; we don't even know such things are available until a team of female staffers immediately busts from the change machine long enough to acknowledge us.

Such indifference was rampant enough a generation ago, but the hubbub of everything seems today's customers are more impatient, says DeLorenzo, principal of Ontario-based Con-

A look at the best and worst in customer service.

petition. He can't wait to be studied by state disks, but makes people feel ignored in ways. "Just acknowledge someone," advises DeLorenzo. "Say hello and let them know of your presence — and do it quickly."