
How to provide Superior Customer Service

Contributed by Amy
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As many of you know, I have made it my mission to change the world's view point of customer service. Too many people today have just accepted the fact that no matter where they go, they will receive less than acceptable customer service. **THAT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE!**

When we work so hard for the money we have, why spend it at a business establishment (no matter what type of business) that provides you less than superior customer service? Does it really make sense to hand your money over that way? Still not clear... okay, let me present this to you in another way. You go to a restaurant and ask for a steak. The waitress brings you out a piece of chicken. You shrug your shoulders and say, "okay, that's fine." Furthermore, you eat the chicken and still leave the waitress a tip...would you really accept that? No, of course not! But that is the type of unacceptable customer service we are receiving in other places of business and just nodding our heads, and saying okay! **STOP THE MADNESS PEOPLE!**

For all you customers out there (which means everyone), it is time to reclaim your God given right to receive Great Customer Service. It's called Free Will people, and I'm going to use my free will to change the world's view on customer service. One of the ways I plan on doing this is by refusing to do business anywhere that I receive poor customer service. Are you willing to help me in this mission? All you have to do is this: stop doing business in places that don't appreciate your business. And, let them know that you are no longer going to do business there and why. Sometimes business owners or managers do not know there is a problem until you let them know, so make sure you tell them. Once we start changing our views on what we accept as customer service, the businesses will adapt to start pleasing us better. It makes sense, doesn't it!

As for all of you employees and employers out there, there are certain steps you can take to make sure your customers receive the best customer service around. And, when you start providing that type of customer service, your customers will keep coming back for more. In fact, if you provide them with the best service they can get anywhere and with a little flair, they will come back more often because they can't get enough of it.

So, what are the steps? Follow these certain steps to assure your customers will be coming back for more: (I have broken this down into two stages. One for employers and one for employees please read both!)

Employers

- Provide training to your employees on how to treat your customers. If you are unsure of how this should be done, please email me and I will set up a training class for you. Think of it this way... what do your customers' expect to get from your business. This is obviously different for every business and also depends on the type of business you have. But put yourself in your customer's shoes...If you were the customer, what would you expect to see in terms of customer service? Once you have clearly defined that, you can then train the employees on how to provide it.

- Set the standards high for your employees and make sure they stick to it. However, don't just use this as a tool to "write up" or "fire" your employees. Let me be clear... if you have an employee who you need to fire then by all means do so. But I don't believe in the type of management that only uses negative reinforcement. I believe that you should also use positive reinforcement with your employees as well. In fact, you'll find that the more positive reinforcement you use, the more you'll get out of your employees. Don't use fear management. It breeds negativity and bad morale and eventually your customers can feel and sense it. This will only further lead to poor customer service.

- Having Mystery shops of your business is a great way to find out how your employees are doing. Now, having said this again I go back to my last point, do not use this as a fear management tactic. I have worked for a business that did this and believe me it only breeds negativity and poor morale and again only leads to poor customer service because the customers sense the tension with your employee. Now, if you do not know what mystery shopping is, let me clear it up for you. Mystery shopping is where you have someone pose as a customer or potential customer to see what kind of customer experience they receive when they come to your business. Again, the standards that are in place all depend on your type of business and what you have trained your employees to provide to the customer. Obviously if you haven't trained them yet, do not do this until you have. Now, mystery shopping can be done in several ways. You can hire a company to do this for you. You provide the company with the criteria that your employees should meet and what you want the mystery customer to do and say. Then, they will hire a mystery shopper to come in posing as the customer and the mystery shopper will report back to the company you hired on how your employee did with full details on each of the criteria and an overall grade. The company then gives you the details on the mystery shop. It is a great way to test your customer's overall experience and further train your employees. Now, a few things I recommend. Do not tell your employees that you are doing this. If they know, they will be nervous and treat your customers differently. It is more natural if you just have them doing what they always do to grade the normal customer experience. Once you have received the feed back, use it as a training tool for not just that employee but all of them so everyone is on the same level. And reward the employee for a job well done. If you don't want to hire a company to do the mystery shopping, you can ask a friend or family member to pose as the customer and grade the experience. Or, survey your customers on how well they thought their overall experience was, what they liked about it, what they didn't like about it, and what they thought you could do differently!

- Lastly, and I can't stress this enough, the only way to provide great customer service is to have a customer service standard, have a plan on how your employees will deliver your standards, and test the standards. Also, pay your employees what they deserve and provide them rewards for going the extra mile. If your employees are making minimum wage and not getting any incentive to "go the extra mile", then you won't get anything extra from them and neither will your customers. Your employees are the face of your business. The service your business receives comes directly from your employees, so make sure your employees are getting a fair deal.

Employees

- First of all, when you are working with customers, no matter what your occupation, think of it this way...How would you want to be treated if you were that client?

- If you are unhappy about your current job, don't take it out on the customer. Remember, it is not their fault that you are unhappy with your job and it's not their fault that you're in the situation you are in, whatever it may be. Again, remember, what would you expect if you were the customer?

- When talking with a client, first of all, smile! Say Hello, how can I help you? If you are not behind a counter of some kind, shake their hand, introduce yourself and ask their name. Then, ask them how you can be of assistance.

- If your employer has a standard for customer service, make sure you know what it is and abide by it. And, at the end of the year, when you get your annual review, make sure you remind your boss in writing how you met that standard and ask that it be added to your annual review.

- If you work in a store of some kind, like a grocery store, department store, etc...why do you ignore customers as they walk by you? Why do you try to run them over as you are wandering around the store? When you go into a store do you expect to be run over, run down, or ignored? And when you are, does it bother you? Here's my point - it should not matter where you work, you should never ignore a customer walking past and you are never more important than a customer. This is a valuable lesson to learn. No matter who you are or where you work, you have to learn to appreciate your customers! Think of it this way - not only that you could be that customer getting the poor service but more importantly, if it wasn't for that customer, you wouldn't have a job! Remember that the next time you ignore a customer.

The fact of the matter is that customer service is ignored or takes second place to growing a business and increasing profitability. When in fact, great customer service will do just that, grow your business and make it more profitable.

If you survey a room of 50 people, 94% of the people in the room would tell you that they have not received good customer service lately. Furthermore, they would tell you that they have received extremely poor service recently, more than they wish to recall.

I believe that together, we can change the way we are treated as customers and the way we treat customers. If we all work together to change the view point of everyone, then maybe we can bring back the days in which customers were respected and could recall more examples of "Great Customer Service" rather than poor customer service.

Please feel free to email me at whatcustomerservice@gmail.com. I'd love to hear your thoughts and comments not only about this article but examples of customer service you have received lately. Thank you in advance for assisting me in my mission.

About the Author:

Amy Rodgers is an independent writer who writes to help people and for the pure joy of writing. Amy has made it her mission to change the world's view on customer service. To read more customer service stories and ideas, visit my blog at

what-customer-service.blogspot.com.