

How About Some Customer Service. Please!!

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How About Some Customer Service. Please!!

By Danny Wirken

Communication is one of the most important industries in the world. People have a need to talk, to get in touch with their friends and family, no matter where they are in the world. We started with letters sent with any individual traveling in that direction, which progressed to the postal system. With the advent of the Internet, we exchanged snail mail for email and later instant messengers

Somehow though, it just wasn't enough. We needed to hear their voices not just read their words. With the help of great inventors, we progressed from the telephone to cellular phone to again utilizing the Internet to make calls.

Skype has been among the pioneers of this system. Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP as they call it, has been instrumental in bridging the distances between people. It means a lot to people to be able to actually greet their special someone happy birthday on that very special day without the exorbitant costs that land line or mobile telecommunications company charge per call.

Skype has been a wonderful service, much appreciated and enjoyed by everyone who prefers voice chat to email or messages. It is easy to use: simply download, sign up, tell your friends to do the same and you can talk with each other for free! Who could ask for more?

Skype, apparently though has become a little ambitious. After they were bought by Ebay, things seem to have begun to slide downhill. They've announced new paid services such as SkypeOut and SkypeIn. They are great ideas, for sure. This is why some of the Skype users who have been very happy with the free service agreed to pay the premium.

Unfortunately, while they may be expanding their products' abilities to get new users, they have forgotten to take care of their existing subscribers. The service has deteriorated since I first signed up. Unfortunately, Skype doesn't seem to care.

Since I didn't want to kick up a fuss if there was a way for me to fix the problem myself, I checked out the Sykes home page again. I was happy to see that they had a help page with a trouble shooting guide. Unfortunately, even after following the various instructions and suggestions– it still wasn't

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working properly.

Usually when that happens, I call the company to ask for further assistance. So I looked for a phone number where I could reach Skype's customer service. I searched all over the page and didn't find any number that I could call. The link marked "Contact Us" lead to a page that basically said before contacting them, I should read the help pages. No problem I had done that.

It now said that if I didn't find the answer in their knowledge base I should contact their customer support. I now clicked on the link for that and ended up at an online ticketing system for complaints. Now, I'm glad they are taking down the complaints in black and white, and I do appreciate that it seems to be on a first in, first out basis. What upsets me is that absolutely nothing seems to be happening.

I told them how I was having some trouble with the service. I mentioned how more frequently it happens that the people I call can hear me but I can't hear them in the middle of our conversation. I

asked if they could please give me feedback on how to resolve the problem. After I filled out their form, I got their infamous acceptance message saying, "If your inquiry requires a response, we will get back to you within three days". What the?! I thought every customer deserved to get a response, even if it's just to get pointed to the right part of the forum!

Skype is so busy building up their new communication products that they've stopped communicating with their existing clients. They have obviously forgotten that great customer service is what will keep the numbers in their database up. If people don't get the assistance they need, they will leave; especially now that the service of the product itself is deteriorating.

Are they now so big that they can't be talked with? Is it too much to ask that they put in a few more people to take care of answering the support requests? Or have they already spread themselves so thin that they can't afford to hire more people? No wonder the service is beginning to suck.

I truly don't appreciate how impersonally Skype is handling customer service. I pay for SkypeOut, I got billed but to date, it still isn't working properly. I sent Skype both a support request (from their site) and an email, to the email address of their billing team (the address of which by the way I did not find on their website but through searching the web for other Skype complaints). I still have no action from them. Talk about wasted money!

What amazes me is that Skype doesn't even have "live chat" or some other similar help desk program so that we customers with concerns and who want to continue using Skype can talk with someone in Sykes who can help. Considering that Sykes is a communication company, I'd have thought that they would create one themselves. That little software for customer service is an absolute treasure!

I guess I shouldn't be surprised, after all the site is obviously geared to attracting new users only. Skype seems to be interested in just making more and more money; and bringing in more users. They obviously don't care if their subscribers leave because they get no assistance and maintenance services from them.

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Cardinal rule of any business, Skype, is to take care of your customers. Your repeat business usually in the long run can make you more money than new subscribers will. It would do your business a lot of good if you would pay attention to your subscribers and give them their money's worth. I know I'm disappointed in the service.....

For more information please visit

<http://www.theinternetone.net>

Customer Service – A Lost Art?

By Craig Binkley

Is customer service a lost art? Before you answer that question, take a moment and think about the last few times you have gone shopping or out to dinner. Okay, now that you have really thought about it, is your answer any different?

Why is it that when we actually DO receive excellent customer service that it makes such an impression on us that we usually choose to go back? Why – because the occurrences are so few and far between!!!

As a home business owner, it is imperative to my business that customer service is ALWAYS a top priority. Remember the saying: "If you don't take care of your customer, somebody else will". I'm sure you have read or heard it somewhere before.....and how true it is.

Here are a few ways to improve customer service at your business:

- 1) SMILE – Sounds too simple, right? As a customer, would you prefer to be serviced by a smiling face, or a scowl that would befit a guard dog?
- 2) LISTEN – Always be slow to speak and quick to listen. Let customers express themselves without you trying to do it for them. Nobody likes being interrupted.
- 3) DON'T BE TOO PUSHY – Yeah, I know – the bottom line is sales, right? There is a fine line between suggesting products/services and pushing them down a customer's throat. If you are too pushy, your customer will probably walk away and take their business elsewhere.
- 4) PHONE ETTIQUETTE – Whether you are answering or initiating a call, always remember who the customer is. Be polite. Try "Yes sir/ma'am" instead of "yeah" and "nope". If you don't have an answer for your customer – offer to do some research to find what they are inquiring about.
- 5) THANK YOU – ALWAYS thank your customers. Even if you could not help them or they decided not to purchase from you. Leave them with a positive impression of your business before they leave.

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6) TRAINING – Train your employees. Don't let an untrained employee ruin your track record of excellent customer service. Train your employees on–the–job for as long as necessary to teach them good customer service.

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise"
Luke 6:31

In conclusion: Customer service may be THE most important aspect of your business plan. I know of many people who are willing to pay a little more for a product or service in order receive excellent customer care. Price, advertising, and location are all vital to a business----- but whatever you do, don't

overlook the all–important "Good Customer Service".

Craig Binkley - husband, father and home business owner assisting in the restoration of the "traditional" family through home business ownership.

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