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**Is Your Customer Service Excellent?**

**By Claude Hopkins and Terry Dean**

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"The last person to buy from you is the most likely to buy again and soon." This quote is an old one and I do not know the author but I do know it to be true. After spending fourteen years of my life owning and running a retail art gallery, I was witness to this happening over and over again.

A repeat customer does not happen by accident. A repeat customer is the result of excellent customer service from you.

A man by the name of Harold Stanley Marcus was born on April 20, 1905 in Dallas, Texas. His family started an upper-end retail store in 1907 and called it Neiman-Marcus. Stanley started at the bottom in the family business in 1926 as a floorman. He began to work on the store's image and customer service. Mr. Marcus has been quoted as saying "Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten." His son Richard, who took over from his father upon retirement, put a different spin on his father's words of wisdom.

"Care for your customer and they will return... care for your merchandise and it won't."

Stanley Marcus retired in 1975 as a chairman who had shepherded the store to international prominence through a combination of uncompromising quality in merchandise and unwavering commitment to customer service. In 1984 Neiman-Marcus inaugurated retailing's first customer loyalty

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program, InCircle. If you have a few minutes, take a look at the InCircle program at <http://www.neimanmarcus.com>. At the middle of the page on the left, click on InCircle Rewards. It is a secure page but you can scroll down to see what they are giving their good customers.

Granted, Neiman–Marcus is an upper–end retailer and it is inconceivable for you or me to offer anything to compare with what they are doing for their loyal customers.

The point is... what are you doing to bring your customer back?

Your new customer will receive a thank–you confirmation electronically which will probably contain other URLs to your other programs or products. Correct? But what else?

Right now you have the perfect opportunity to send a very personal email to that new customer. You may be thinking "I don't have time to send out personal emails after every sale." Well, you can't afford not to. The next merchant will if you don't, and that's the merchant who will gain a loyal customer.

Offer your new customer your personal assistance and attention after the sale. Give them all of your contact information: email, phone number and address. Also, let them know that you have a "complimentary gift" for them as a "thank–you" for their purchase. Try to avoid the word "free." This word seems to have lost its power due to its being used in almost every ad on the Internet.

When you offer to give personal assistance to your customer, make sure you are available during certain business hours. Answer your emails as quickly as possible. An immediate response is impressive and creates trust.

"Once you have your customer's trust, you have won the most valuable prize in business."

"Care for your customer and they will return..."

Markay Vallario publishes "Scientific Internet Advertising" Claude Hopkins and Terry Dean. Visit:<http://www.01–advertising.com> Markay also owns Markam Designs: Web design and hosting, domain registration, advertising assistance and more. Visit:<http://www.markamdesigns.com>

## 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.
- 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

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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.

Customer Service – A Lost Art?

The Value of a Customer

Customer Satisfaction

Why Providing Excellence in Customer Service is Essential to Every Business

Customer Service Training Tips

Faith

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

Build Your Own Mail Order Empire

Expand Your Professional Coaching and Consulting Business

Instant Split Commissions



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