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Why Providing Excellence in Customer Service is Essential to Every Business

By Myron Curry

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Curry

Customer service is the end-all to any company's success or failure. The customer is what provides the income that a company needs to thrive and determines whether or not a company can continue to stay in business. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that a high level of customer service always be something to strive for. Without continued excellence in customer service, a company's success is over before it starts.

GET TO KNOW `EM

So many times we see a company provide what the customer is looking for and then send them on their way. In a bicycle shop, for example, a customer walks in and is obviously searching for something related to a bicycle. He or she mentions that a desire to purchase a new bicycle is what has brought them into the store that day. The shop owner has plenty of bicycles for sale, lets the customer find one they like, receives payment, and lets the transaction end there.

One thing to remember is that, often, the businessman or woman knows more about the product or service they are providing than even the most informed customer. Suppose that the customer in the bicycle shop picked out a street racing, ten-speed bicycle and the shop owner, neglecting to develop a personal relationship with the customer, let the customer's choice be the beginning of the transaction and the payment for said bicycle be the end of it.

Now, suppose that the same customer with a new street racing ten-speed bicycle was planning on taking that bicycle on a mountain trip through rugged and desolate trails. Obviously, the street racing ten-speed is not the best of choices for doing so. If the shop owner had taken the time to talk to the customer and asked questions such as, "So, planning on doing some riding? Where at?" the shop owner would have been able to suggest a better product for the customer and, hence, developed an appreciative bond between the business and the customer, causing the customer to, more-than-likely, make a return visit.

MAKE IT SPECIAL

Sometimes, excellent customer service calls for the unusual. Make an effort to go the extra mile and provide what is known as "customer-led services". Some customers might work until 5:00 p.m., which is just when your store closes. Offering to let the customer shop after the store closes is catering to a customer's special needs and goes a LONG way in the relationship department. This sort of action also goes hand-in-hand with developing a personal relationship with the customer, as mentioned earlier. This example of customer service is something that can be used anywhere, from a small storefront business to a large corporation. The point is, pay attention to special needs of your customers, whether a customer is a casual shopper or a corporate client, and you will be rewarded with continued business from that customer again and again.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STARTS AT HOME

It is important to remember that good customer service starts with employees that are happy to serve the customer. Take care of your employees and they will take care of you. Make sure their needs are met and do what you can to create a workplace free from negativity and full of motivation and recognition for creativity. Happy employees love their job and it shows when they provide a service or product to your customers.

TIME'S UP!

If an idea, plan, or strategy is not working, bring it to an end. So often, managers are faced with the realization that perhaps the system which was put in place to increase customer service is not going to produce positive results after all. Still, they are reluctant to drop the curtain due to pride or hoping that with just a little more time the plan could still be effective. Forget it. If it's not working, move on to something else. Shut it down and start something else. There is no use in wasting customers' time and business in the hope that whatever method is being used will eventually work out. Out with the old, in with the new is good advice.

Above all, remember that customer service is the single most important thing to consider in your business, second only to taking care of your employees. Be willing to be flexible and get involved in the process of customer service in any way possible, no matter how high on the food chain you are. Not only will this serve as a good example to your employees but it will increase the level of service that your customers receive.

Myron Curry is President and CEO of BusinessTrainingMedia.com a leading corporate training and development company based in Encino, California. Myron has over 20 years of successful management experience with leading fortune 500 companies and has written numerous articles. You can contact Myron at: myron@business-marketing.com or visit his company's website <http://www.businessstrainingmedia.com>

Customer Service – A Lost Art?

Why Providing Excellence in Customer Service is Essential to Every Business

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 ETIQUETTE – 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

overlook the all-important "Good Customer Service".

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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?

Make An Action Plan To Improve Customer Service

The Top 10 Reasons Your Business Needs a Web Site

Communicating Value

Top Ten Strategies for Delivering 5–Star Customer Service

Build Your Own Mail Order Empire

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

AX Gold Web Security Kit

Profitable Crafts Vol 4

Profitable Crafts Vol 2



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