RECEPTION

Good customer service

Customer service is more important than ever

In modern times, we have more opportunities than ever before to both acquire relevant information and familiarize ourselves with it, as well as, as a rule, to choose between many options if it concerns a product or service.

For the supplier, this already places high demands on a competitive range, but it also gives customer service and, by extension, relationships greater importance than before.

Good customer service is an important part of modern business.

Good customer service leads to better business and more enjoyable work

Companies (and people) with good customer service usually experience the following:

- Customers do business with them - **repeatedly.**

- Customers make 'bigger' deals over time

- Customers raise their problems and complaints with them (instead of choosing another supplier!)

- It feels better to work towards the customers - *the whole job thus becomes more satisfying*

- It becomes easier to work with customers

- Own business develops more and faster - *as a result of better customer knowledge (feedback)*

The effect of a simple 'Thank you' - case

As an attempt at unusual marketing, an expert advised a medium-sized firm to use its employees to call all customers from the past 18 months and thank them for their business. Nothing more - just say thank you. They encountered many answering machines, but in each case the caller gave an honest and genuine 'thank you', not a rehearsed speech or prepared script.

After a few weeks there was a surprising effect, which could be traced to the thank you calls.

Order intake increased from existing customers, the increases were upwards of 10%.

The vast majority of customers also did not refer to the thank you call, but simply ordered.

The marketing expert believes that simple things like showing personal appreciation or care can carry a lot of weight, perhaps much more than having a sharp app or other things that are seen as obvious costs today. Although the time spent on a phone call is not free, it can be very profitable. An old-fashioned handwritten message (letter) can also be appreciated, and an email, albeit more impersonal, is better than no thanks at all.

(Thank you for sharing this information...)

Common 'good' behavior is often 'good' customer service

What constitutes 'good customer service' depends in part on industry and culture, so always be aware of these unique elements when planning your customer service.

In addition to the unique characteristics and behaviors you take into account, there are several general things to consider. Among the main ones are what we generally consider positive qualities such as;

• **Fit times** (culturally)

• **Be clean and fresh** - i.e. proper clothing, well-kept, clean and neat

• **Good manners** - polite manners, good table manners (equivalent), respectful treatment

• **Listen to the customer** - (active listening)

• **Promise less and keep more** - don't make promises you won't be able to keep, it has a doubly opposite effect. (not least as a result of loss aversion and that we value lost opportunities more highly)

• **Treat every customer as valuable,** no matter how 'small'

  • Some call our time "the Thank You Economy", and suggest that only those companies that manage to adapt to the good manners of the past will survive. In other words, companies that rely on general behavior towards customers, often via an anonymous website and standardized responses in communication - will lose a lot. Instead, you have to take care of each customer, not least because you don't know who will be responsible for the biggest deals of the future.

Seven tips to make every customer experience as good as possible

In addition to basic courtesy and focus on the customer, there may be other things to keep in mind, here are seven modern tips from Sophia Bernazzani, one of the many experts in the field:

- **Show compassion and empathy**

- **Be conscientious and thorough**

- **Be open and communicative**

- **Ask for and act on feedback**

- **Surprise and 'delight' the customer**

- **'Where' the customers are**

- **Talk like a human**
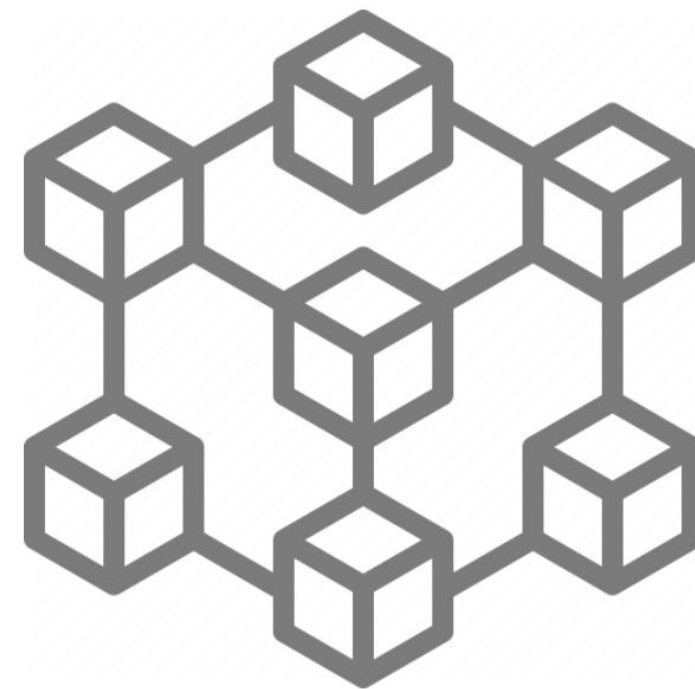
show Compassion and Empathy - rather exaggerated than the opposite

The golden rule - do unto others as you would have them do unto you - also works well when dealing with customers. How would you like to be treated yourself in the same situation, that is probably a good starting point.

Thank the customer - often and preferably too much. Thank them, for example, for taking the time to get in touch, for being patient with waiting, for doing business with you, etc. It gives more than it costs, but beware of transparently fake thanks. (At some fast food restaurants, the employees *have to* say thank you to everything, which gets a little odd)

Be empathetic and emphasize compassion for the customer when you can, and it's appropriate. Take the opportunity to excuse things, if, for example, the customer has to wait or something went wrong, or otherwise show compassion for the customer: "I understand that this must feel frustrating for you..."

Accuracy and attention to detail is useful

New employees, juniors and temps are often more careful and conscientious than seasoned permanent employees. In terms of the customer's appreciation and perspective, it is always good to work with a high level in this area. This means taking the customer's problems, questions and other needs seriously and giving feedback, not just when they expect it.

Four simple things to remember for this;

• If you cannot solve a customer's need immediately - give a clear and precise time frame for when they can expect a solution. Put the responsibility for follow-up with you.

• If you have solved a customer's need - follow up after a week or two to make sure everything is working Good.

• If possible, obtain information to proactively contact a customer as a problem they are likely to face facing shortly.

• If you have contact with several customers in a similar industry, or size, or need - get into their business or industry (etc) and contact them from time to time with facts, statistics or to congratulate them on some major result.

Correct communication and openness - builds trust

Getting the right information at the right time has a great effect. Consider a simple example; the water must be turned off for 30 minutes and you will find out two days in advance - or alternatively that the water is turned off just as you are standing in the shower with your hair full of shampoo.

When something has gone wrong, we usually have a great understanding of how it both came about and how it was handled if we get an open and honest description of the error, but if we don't get it, or even worse, we find out that there was another reason that darkened, we lose confidence. We find it difficult to trust our supplier, both in this case and in the future.

Feedback is also a powerful tool for customer service

We would like to give our customers the image that they are "a valued customer" - but then we also have to act on that and do something. A good method is to take feedback from the customer and then act on it - by changing or reinforcing, preferably preventively.

Some companies have more established procedures for this, it can be in the form of a survey (paper or online) or a phone call after contact. Other companies work in a more unstructured way but still take in feedback in various formats - it can be as simple as asking the customer at the end of a meeting what they think could be done better.

Think about how you yourself would react if you received an email about filling in a customer satisfaction survey after you had been in contact with a company? It takes 3 minutes and is your chance to make an impact.

Over time, you expect feedback or change

How do you know if anyone else is taking this survey at all? (Tip if you want to know more about a single customer, make a 'general' survey that only this customer can answer.)

Simple and small things can bring great delight

When we get something extra, something unexpected or that is not normally included - we are both happy and feel flattered.

The impact is often greater than the cost, so it's an easy way to improve customer service.

Examples of this are that;

• say thank you - (especially when the customer doesn't expect it)

• give a small gift - coffee, bun, candy, product sample, discount, etc

• over-ash in different ways

• use social media to highlight the customer

Meet the customer as it meets you - 'where' the customer is

Today, we have many different channels available for customer communication - and the customers towards us.

It can be devastating not to respond to the customer's contact with us - especially if it is visible to others, then it can have an effect on other customers as well.

If a customer writes on social media, eg twitter or facebook, they may look bad if they don't respond in the same channel. Referring to customer support with a phone number may seem effective, but perhaps not what the customer wants (then they would probably have called directly) and what does it look like for another customer with similar problems six months later?

Get into the habit of responding to customers in the same channel - call back, respond to emails, show up physically, etc. - it tends to be well received.

Speak like a human - that's what's expected

When a customer meets the company, they probably do not want to be answered by typical, rigid and prepared company answers.

The typical example of this is a telemarketer who quickly, regardless of what question we ask, finds his way into a prepared script and "reads out" benefits or details. "...and then we have a standardized routine that guarantees you delivery twice a month." etc

You should take into account which channel you communicate through and which 'basic style' is there, but also make sure to be 'human' in your tone. It is of course fine to be professional in your style, to use 'work language', especially in the middle of the most important parts of business details or problem solving. Before and after, it can be a good tactic to sound more spontaneous and 'authentic'.

Seven tips or two? nineteen?

It is perhaps not so important in itself to work with just these seven tips for good customer service. But by thinking about them, you can more easily find out which of your own tricks, methods or style can have an effect for you.

- Show compassion and empathy

- Be conscientious and thorough

- Be open and communicative

- Ask for and act on feedback

- Surprise and 'delight' the customer

- 'Where' the customers are

- Talk like a human

Perhaps responsiveness is the most important thing over time

What is good customer service today will probably be so in 10-20 years. Although perhaps not all and not in the same way.

We have highlighted, for example, the cultural elements - and culture changes all the time.

In the same way, the customers' own behavior changes so that the 'rules' change all the time, not least when it comes to different communication channels.

From this perspective, **responsiveness becomes the absolute most important characteristic for good customer service.**

A final example of change

'Speak like a human' - what does that really mean?

An example of change

China's 'first AI news anchor'