



Seller Handbook



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7 Essentials for Exceptional Customer Service

Communication is a vital skill for any online business. Get tips from an Etsy expert and experienced sellers, plus



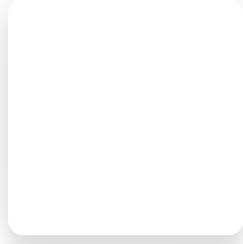
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by Lauren Weinberg



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Communication is one of the most important skills necessary to running a successful online business. In my role as VP of Customer Support and Services at Etsy, I oversee a team of specialists dedicated to supporting sellers at every step of their business journey. We understand that no two shops are the same, and I'm focused on creating support experiences that are tailored to your unique needs.

We also want shoppers to have a great experience when they make a purchase on Etsy. One way we do this: Shops that consistently follow our customer service standards are prioritized in search. We include factors like a shop's average review rating, message response rate, and case rate from the past three months into search ranking. Learn more about [How Great Customer Service Can Improve Your Search Ranking](#).

In this article, we'll cover seven essential considerations for communicating clearly with customers, and hear from experienced sellers about how they navigate customer service challenges.

1. Keep a consistent tone

It's no secret that the way you communicate says a lot about your business. Your communications with customers should convey professionalism and reliability, while still reflecting your brand. Look back at past conversations to assess your tone and make any necessary adjustments. Be sure to maintain a high standard for customer interaction—even during the busiest of times.

2. Focus on the details.

"I pay very close attention," says Jennifer Lyons, the designer and maker behind [Jennifer Helene Home](#), a home-decor shop based in Hamburg, New York.

"Everything is double-checked for mistakes before being shipped, and I include a business card with a handwritten note, thanking my customers by name and including a coupon code." For repeat customers, Jennifer often goes a step further with thoughtful favors, like rushing an order or including free shipping, tactics that have helped her build an exceptionally loyal customer base over the years.

3. Put yourself in your customer's shoes.

Understanding what information will be helpful for your buyers both before and after they make a purchase can help improve their experience as a whole. For Neda Staneviciute of Lithuania-based [One Era Late](#), selling vintage items requires

a heightened sense of empathy. "What's clear to me about items as a vintage collector can be difficult for a novice buyer to understand," she explains. "I often prepare care or use instructions for my buyers to make things easier."

4. Respond promptly.

Responding to customers' messages creates a reliable shopping experience and ensures your customers get the answers they need to feel confident making a purchase from your shop. That's why responding to initial messages within 48 hours is one of our customer service standards. We only look at the first message within a thread and messages sent through your auto-responder. And we exclude any messages in your From Etsy inbox as well as spam. Visit the [Etsy search visibility page](#) to see your current response rate.

Set aside some time each day for responding to questions. Download the [Etsy Seller app](#) for your Android or iOS device, so you can respond to Messages when you're away from your computer.

Want to respond even faster? [Quick replies](#) let you save bits of text for future messages so you spend less time retyping the same messages. When you're writing your message, just click the quick replies icon to create a new quick reply or add an existing quick reply to your message. Examples:

Custom order inquiry

Thanks for your question! Custom items do take a little extra time to create. Once we have a design, we'll set a price and you can buy your item. Can you please provide me with some more information on what you're looking for?

Post-purchase reviews

Thank you so much for your purchase! Please consider leaving a review—it would be much appreciated. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to get the latest on new items, sales, and more!

Shipping arrival time

Thanks for getting in touch! It will take <3-5 business days> for your item to arrive—you can request rush shipping for <\$5>. We ship all packages through .

Sizes

Thanks for your interest! We carry sizes - . Check out my measurements in the item details section to make sure you get the best fit.

Communicating delays

I wanted to keep you updated on the status of your order. Due to potential shipping carrier delays, there's a chance your package may not arrive on the originally estimated date. Rest assured I'll keep you updated along the way as I

get new information from the carrier. Please feel free to message me if you have any questions.

5. Keep an eye on shipping progress.

Shipping can pose another communication challenge. Because Neda of One Era Late sells internationally on a regular basis, she uses trackable delivery options when possible. She also keeps a close eye on the progress of shipments. "Every Friday, I track my shipped packages online and let customers know about attempted deliveries," she says. "Oftentimes, they tell me they never received a note from the post at all."

When bad weather hit the United States this past winter and caused shipping delays over the course of several months, close communication helped Neda maintain positive relationships with international customers. Every week she provided customers with updates on their orders in hopes of maintaining their confidence. She even went so far as to refund an order that was extremely delayed. Happily, a week later the customer received the order and submitted payment.

6. Learn from every new encounter.

As your business grows, you will likely experience some challenging customer interactions. "Customer service is a process," says Neda. "You improve it, perfect it, change it again. You never stop that process completely." As a result, she

updates her Shop Policies annually to reflect the year's best lessons learned, including everything from adjusting return windows to clarifying the extent of the warranty offered on her vintage watches.

7. Own up to mistakes.

No matter how careful you are, mistakes are a natural part of building a new business; how you handle unexpected challenges is what sets you apart. "I'm human and unfortunately sometimes I make mistakes, like when I embroidered the wrong date on a pillow cover someone ordered," says Jennifer. When a mistake happens, Jennifer apologizes immediately and talks to her customer about the best way to fix the situation.

In the case of the pillow cover, Jennifer sent a replacement with the correct date free of charge the next day. "The customer was pleased with my service and the quality of my work, and came back to shop with me this week for another gift item," says Jennifer. "People always respond very positively to kindness."



Words by Lauren Weinberg

As VP of Customer Support and Services at Etsy, I oversee a team of specialists dedicated to supporting you at every step of your business journey.

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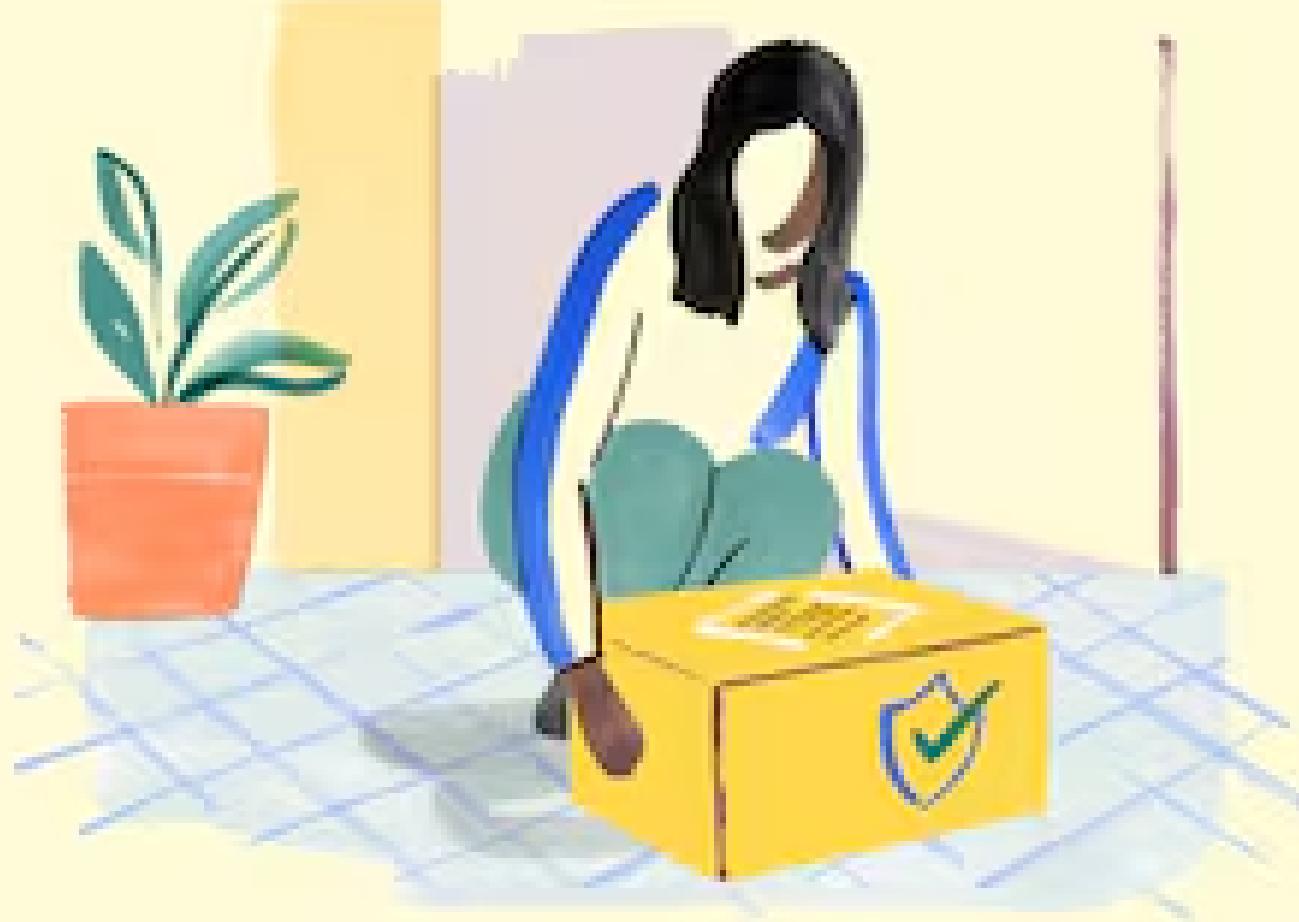
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