

Title:

The Golden Rules Of Customer Service

Word Count:

939

Summary:

Everything I know about customer service I learned from working at McDonalds as a teenager. Hard to believe, but true! In this day of highly competitive cyber business, the companies that will succeed will be those that offer superior customer service. The value of a lifetime customer is immeasurable. So once you get a customer, how do you keep him? The answer is killer customer service! Here are some of the secrets that have made McDonalds the success it is today!

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Keywords:

Article Body:

Everything I know about customer service I learned from working at McDonalds as a teenager. Hard to believe, but true! In this day of highly competitive cyber business, the companies that will succeed will be those that offer superior customer service. The value of a lifetime customer is immeasurable. So once you get a customer, how do you keep him? The answer is killer customer service! Here are some of the secrets that have made McDonalds the success it is today!

Service with a Smile

"Hi, Welcome to McDonalds! May I take your order?" Got a new prospect? Welcome him to your business. Introduce yourself and tell about your services in e-mail. Let your customers get to know you. People are more likely to do business with someone they trust. You can't overstate the importance of building strong customer relationships.

Smile when you are talking on the phone. Customers will hear the difference in your voice. Be careful when you send e-mail. It's easy to be misunderstood. E-mail lacks the visual and audio cues of face-to-face communication. You must make an extra effort to ensure that your "tone" is cheerful and friendly.

Also with an e-mail, people expect a quick reply. A fast, friendly response will

let your customers know that you are working hard to keep them happy!

*Suggestive Sell *

"Would you like an apple pie with that today?" When a customer buys a service do you have something complementary that would add value? Business folks, who are pressed for time, will value the convenience of one-stop-shopping. Look at your line of products and think to yourself, What can I do to make this more useful to my customers?

Is there a helpful article I can send them?

Is there a service that would complement my business's other services?"

Have the Menu in Plain Sight!

"What all comes in the #3 value meal?" People like to know what to expect when they order from you. They want to know up front what things cost, how soon to expect it, etc. If a customer doesn't see this information on your website, he just might leave. You know how nerve-racking it is buying a car when you don't know what you are going to pay or if you are getting a good deal!

Knowledge of what to expect takes the fear out of buying.

The Customer is Always Right

"I'm sorry your order was wrong, how can I make it better?" Nothing is worse than a "screw up" in an order. The best way to turn a negative into a positive is to go out of your way to make it right and make that customer feel satisfied with the results. After you make it right, apologize for the screw-up sincerely, and offer an incentive for him to try you again--for example, a discount on future service.

Everyone knows one complaint will scream louder than 30 complements. Make sure to answer ALL complaints. Don't give anyone a reason to leave and say that his or her needs were not met.

You can learn a LOT from your customers. Make sure to LISTEN. Other customers may be experiencing the same problem. Learn from your mistakes.

List your phone number on your web site. An angry customer wants to know that his complaint is being heard NOW! Sending an e-mail response from the customer service department within 24 hours might not cut it!

Q.S.C.

Quality, Service, and Cleanliness Quality--Is there any way you could improve your service? Do you set a level of excellence for your products and services that you meet or beat? Service--Do you make your customers feel like they are number one in your book? Do you listen to customer needs and fill them? Cleanliness--Does the atmosphere of your virtual business make customers happy and want to come back? Is your website visitor-friendly? Is your website easy to navigate? Does it load quickly?

***Brand Awareness/Corporate Identity ***

Is your URL as memorable as those famous golden arches? Many visitors find your site not by clicking, but by remembering your URL. Is your URL on business cards and stationery? Is it listed in your yellow pages ad? Keep your URL short and simple: long URLs with hyphens, punctuation, or ones that are hard to spell won't give customers a fighting chance. Include your company's URL and other contact information in your email signature. Does your secretary know your URL? The answer may surprise you!

***What is your USP ***

(Unique Selling Point)? "We've got the best fries in town!" Tell customers right on your home page why they should do business with you and not the guy down the cyberstreet. Tell your visitors in one short sentence who you are, what you do, and why you are better. Will you save them money? Can they rely on your experience? Try to list these in terms of benefit to them, and NOT features of your product.

***Customer Appreciation ***

"Thank you and come again!" Thank your customers for doing business with you. Send them an e-mail as a follow up to see if your product or service was what they expected. Would they recommend you to a friend? How about a hand-written note or card to tell someone that you value his or her business. There is a lot to be said for good old-fashioned customer service. Treat your customers like gold and they'll be customers for life. The most powerful tool in your marketing arsenal is a customer referral. Give your customers a reason to brag about you and you'll have a lot of customers knocking at your door!