

Title:

Making Great First and Last Impressions Over the Telephone

Word Count:

590

Summary:

Here are 5 ways to make the most of the first few seconds of your call and 3 ways to make the most of the last few seconds.

Keywords:

Telephone Techniques, Customer Service

Article Body:

1. Greet the customer enthusiastically. Put a smile on your face and energy in your voice. Intentionally sound fun, interesting, friendly, and conversational. When you do these simple things, you will find that you are quickly establishing rapport with callers and that customers enjoy speaking with you.

2. Listen without interrupting. It can be tempting to interrupt a rambler or storyteller, but try not to do so within the first few seconds. Listen patiently and let the customer tell you what is on her mind. Of course, you can't let a long-winded caller get out of hand.

3. Respond with appropriate emotions. Be natural with your customers. When they are happy and the situation calls for more energy, express this energy. If the situation calls for empathy, don't sit there like a stone, express empathy. When I was in car rental and a customer would complain about a breakdown in one of our rental cars, I'd quickly make an expression of empathy like: "I realize how frustrating this whole thing must be for you."

4. Make the customer feel smart/good. Yesterday I conducted a mystery shopper call for a client and one of the customer service representatives did an outstanding job of making the caller feel good. The "mystery shopper" was told to ask several redundant and "dumb" questions and she did that very well. At one point the customer service representative said, "You obviously care about your health or you wouldn't have called today." That went over very well---instead of making the caller feel like an idiot, she made her feel like a star!

5. Never come across annoyed, "interrupted", or irritated. Your job is

to help and serve. And in your job you are going to hear a lot of the same thing over and over. Some customers will annoy you and some of the comments you hear will be just outrageous. But don't let it show. Give every caller your best and sound patient, interested, friendly and helpful every time.

Master these five points at the beginning of the call and your impression will be friendly, helpful, and memorable. Read on to discover ways to end the call on positive note.

**Make the most of the last few seconds of the call-- **

** 1. Ask if there is anything else you can do.** Don't rush to end the call. Make sure you've answered all of the customer's questions by simply asking, "Is there anything else I can do for you today?"

** 2. Express sincere appreciation for the call. **One of my clients does a phenomenal job of this. Anytime and every time a customer calls Accuvue Vision, they will get a warm and sincere thank you for the call. Every representative will make the caller feel great about calling with sincere phrases like: "I'm really glad you called us today." "Your feedback is definitely appreciated and I'm so glad you chose to share it with us today." "Thanks so much for taking time out of your day to call and tell us this."

Always end the call on a positive, upbeat note.

** 3. Let your caller hang up first. **It's simply polite to let your caller hang up first. In most cases, callers will hang up with 2-4 seconds of the last spoken word.

Never forget that your callers remember the first and the last thing in a series of events disproportionate to anything else. Make the most of these critical touch points by adopting these steps.