



Loving Your Customers ***6 Tips to Keep Them Coming Back***

The age of great service isn't dead, but it is very sick. You would think in an economy that eats big and small companies on an almost daily basis that don't make the cut, people would be more prone to render excellent customer services. You would think that the heavy competition of today's market place would drive companies to spend more on customer service training than on advertising - knowing that "word of mouth" advertising is the best you can get without spending much money. But the statistics still show that service is down and complaints are up.

What's the problem? Workers that don't believe or have a commitment to who they work for or do or sell. Executives that take accounts for granted. I like what Jeffrey Gitomer, Sales Trainer says, "Customer satisfaction is worthless, customer loyalty is priceless." How do you get the kind of loyalty that keeps them coming back to you and only you? Learn to love your customers!

1. Remember your mission. You are here to make life better for others. If you love your customers you will want to make their lives better. If you believe in what you do or sell, this will come naturally to you. my friend, Charles Marcus tells the story of the bell man in Toronto that went out of his way to make the Marcus' family stay at his hotel the most memorable experience of their lives. When asked why he went so far out of his way to serve the man said, "I feel like my name is on the sign of this great establishment along side the official name. I love this place and I love being associated with it. If you don't believe in what you do; don't believe it will make the lives of your customers better; or don't like your customers, this is your first hint that you are in the wrong place and definitely shouldn't be in customer service. More on your attitude later...

2. Continually build relationships. How can you make lives better when you don't know how your people live? Customer service, lie sales is all about developing relationships. I shop at certain places where prices are higher, but i get great service and know they will back the product. I deal with people who have gone out of their way to make me feel important. Don't believe me? Ask my

insurance salesman, Doug, my investment analyst Lynn or my dentist, Dr. Nick. All of these people receive the newsletter and i know on a first-name basis because they have taken the time to develop a relationship before (and after!) rendering a service. The closer you get to your customers, the easier it will be for you to S.E.E. (S-ignificant E-motional E-xperience) their needs. Look for these significant emotional experiences and find ways to meet the needs they produce.

3. Watch for signs of trouble. Into every life, rain falls. Be a good weather watcher for your company or service. Become a barometer. Learn how to react to high and low pressure in the lives of your consumers. Look for service opportunities. Where are need not being met by anyone else? Is your competition failing to meet all of their customers' needs? Significant signs of trouble are:

- Anger
- Frustration
- Questions
- Discontent
- Inadequate resources

4. Meet felt needs. When you look for areas of hurt it becomes easy to meet needs. Most customer service representatives try to meet service needs first. They see their role as Super Heros rushing in to save the world. If you see your job as an *Investigator*, first, then you will find out where the hurt lies and be better able to solve problems. Most people will not tell you everything in the initial moment of the conversation, so it is essential that you ask good seeking questions to find what needs are to be met. Look for feelings (listed in Step 3), then consider yourself as your customer's servant and meet their needs. Remember this phrase:

*To solve others' problems, use your head.
To meet others' needs, use your heart.*

Everyone likes to be heard and to be treated special. I can remember the name of every customer service representative that met my needs and tried to serve me. Your customers can too!

5. Always speak positive service. Learn how to say what you CAN do rather than what you CAN'T or DON'T or WON'T do. Don't let the rules dictate your service to your most loyal customers. I have had many instances where the rules said "no," but the Customer Service Representative said "Yes." Whenever you put rules before people you generally accumulate more rules and less people. When you put people first, you tend to accumulate more people and less restricting rules. Airlines and cell phone companies are learning this the hard way. If they haven't learned it they won't be around much longer. If your travel or call you know what I mean. Example Rules vs. People. "I am here to help." "I understand

your need for..." What you say can give help or discouragement.

6. Never give up. Customer Service is an attitude - not a department. It should be an infectious attitude that permeates your entire organization. Have you ever been to someone's home after they had just had a fight? How could you tell? The atmosphere was dark, their attitudes were cold and you felt out of place and/or unwanted. That is the way your customers feel when you don't carry a positive customer service attitude with you and your staff at all times. Everyone should be willing to help and follow through on every opportunity to give the best service of all. Never give up on your customers and never give upon training and maintaining the best service your organization can. The word of mouth from satisfied customers will do more than any advertising campaign you can buy. If you continually do the right thing, it will bring benefits.

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