

Face – To – Face Customer Service

1. Be Welcoming

- a. A strong, warm and sincere greeting!
- b. This is considered one of the most basic customer service tips yet it's a rarity these days.
- c. What is more common is either no acknowledgement or a rehearsed, insincere greeting. "Have a nice day"!
- d. Every customer who walks through the door should feel important and welcome in your business.
- e. A poor greeting is like a poor handshake – the customer goes away feeling unfulfilled.

2. Be Organised

- a. There is nothing worse for a customer going into a business where the staff can't seem to find anything.
- b. The simplest request is thwarted because you or the staff can't find a pen or some other object that is essential for making a business work. Tie a pen to the counter!
- c. Being organised is impressive and gives the customer confidence in your business.
- d. Being organised results in raising the overall level of customer satisfaction.

3. Be prepared to make a Recommendation

- a. A common trait is the lack of ability, the confidence or having the empowerment to make a recommendation.
- b. Making a recommendation is not a hard sell! It's what the customer wants. They like to know what you would recommend.
- c. A customer can walk out with a pile of brochures and a head full of information but you have no sale! You should tell a customer what they should buy and you are not being a high-pressure salesperson. Explain about some products then make a recommendation such as:-
 - i. "This is the equipment I use", the Customer asks why and you can say "Because it's the best" or
 - ii. "I recommend the fish today", the Customer asks why and you can say "Its fresh in today, it's the Chefs favourite or "I sampled todays specials and it was the nicest".
- d. How many times have you been into a bookshop not really knowing what you feel like reading? You ask the sales assistant to recommend something and they

mumble a few words about it being up to you. How do you feel? In a good bookshop, the staff will gladly make recommendations.

4. Talk to the Customer, not Through the Customer

- a. It's difficult not to be repetitive when dealing with customers all day long, especially when they tend to ask the same questions every time. Don't recite the same lines over and over with no recognition of the customer as an individual. How do you feel when this happens to you?
- b. Don't answer enquiries like a robot with no acknowledgement and often simply pointing. That's like saying "You're not important"
- c. When dealing with customers, stop for a second; make clear eye contact to acknowledge the person, then answer questions clearly and concisely and specifically what they have asked for. Don't treat them like a number – treat them like the person they are
- d. Don't complain about customers being demanding and rude and wanting everything done immediately. They are only giving back what they received.
- e. Smile – make eye contact – gain rapport – friendly encounter. The customer leaves feeling good and the person serving also feels good and ready to start the next encounter on a bright and positive note
- f. Business Owners and Managers must set the example
- g. Try to keep some innovation in the workplace that will keep you and your staff talking to the Customers.
- h. When it is busy it is even more important to take a few seconds to be friendly. People can deal with waiting if they are served by a friendly, interested person.
- i. If you are going to ask a question, make sure that you acknowledge their answer.

5. Do something unexpected

- a. Exceeding your customers' expectations is often really quite easy.

"I visited a bottle shop recently to buy some wine and beer for a networking event. There was a new brand of beer on the market that I had seen advertised that looked good and it was being sold at a good introductory price, but I thought that I would play it safe and buy the usual product. The salesman started up a conversation and I told him my concerns. He immediately offered me one of the new beers to try, which I did. I ended up buying a carton." (Unknown to me they may have done a deal with supplier and they can claim the free beer as a promotional expense)

"This bottle shop is out of my way, it's not necessarily the cheapest and it's a pain to park, but I always go back because of the service I get."

"If the salesman isn't too busy, he even carries or trolleys my purchases out to the car." "In my eyes this is very good service and I feel special as a customer and he treats all of his customers the same" (It also frees up a parking spot more quickly)

"This is a very successful bottle shop that thrives with no advertising."

- b. Good customer service is all about the details and doing the small, unexpected things. Look for ways to do the little, unexpected things to make your business stand out from the crowd and word will spread.

What is your Unexpected offer? Your WOW factor
e.g Kiah Wilderness Tours offer a hot towel for customers.
I will....

6. Set the Stage

- a. Making your business user friendly helps set the stage to offer good service

“When I had my 24hr Truckstop we had a number of things in place for the truckies which set up our customer service delivery. These made the Customer “feel at home” and some of these were expected but others were innovative”

1. *We never charged a Truckie for tea or coffee for the 8 years I had the business, whether they were buying fuel or not*
2. *We had a Truckies lounge not open to the public, with tables and chairs, a kitchen with microwave, and a couch for those who felt off colour, showers for men and women (no cost), and in those days, a Gold Phone for truckies to make their business calls (no mobiles – I guess today I would have Wi-Fi)*
3. *At the side of the building we installed a laundry tub with hot and cold water, soap and paper towel. After the Truckies finished fueling, and checking over their truck they were able to wash their arms up to their elbows, which they really appreciated (and the Cheques were clean when they paid for their purchases)*
4. *Many Truckies travel with working and companion dogs and so there was always a bowl of water for them and of course we sold dog food. We even got to know the dogs’ names and what they liked to eat.*

b. Checklist to help you set Your Stage

- I. Are you easy to find? Address, Contact details
- II. Are you easy to access? Inviting (Clean welcome mat) suitable parking?
- III. Is your atmosphere suitable? Well lit, loud music, smell?
- IV. Are you easy to negotiate? Clear Signage, Queues, and obstructions.
- V. Is your Staff well trained? Customer Service, Selling Skills and are they experienced in their jobs to give customers a good experience?
- VI. Do you make it easy for customers to pay?
- VII. Is everything stocked up, clean and in place?

c) Staff Attributes Checklist

- I. Is the staff pleasant and sincere?
- II. Do they pay attention to the little things?
- III. Do they go above and beyond the call of duty?
- IV. Do they thank the Customer for their business and invite them back?
- V. Do customers leave the business wanting to recommend it to their friends?

7. Remember to say “Thank You”

- a. **Right!** – Stop for a second, look the customer in the eye and sincerely say “Goodbye. Hope to see you again soon and thank you for your business” The customer feels valued and important.
- b. **Wrong!** - When the person behind the counter doesn’t even say ‘thank you’ or just mumbles something without looking at the customer and continues with what they were doing before being interrupted! The customer feels “Dismissed” and “Rejected” and will not come back and will tell other about their poor treatment!
- c. Poor service encourages more poor service!

CUSTOMER SERVICE CREED

- I. WE KNOW AND CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS EXPECT FROM US
- II. WE KNOW WHAT OUR COMPETITORS ARE OFFERING
- III. WE MEET AND, WHERE EVER POSSIBLE, EXCEED OUR CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS
- IV. WE THINK LIKE A CUSTOMER
- V. WE MAKE CUSTOMER SERVICE A PRIORITY
- VI. OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS ARE REVIEWED REGULARLY
- VII. WE “COMMUNICATE” WITH OUR CUSTOMERS
- VIII. WE FOCUS ON DETAIL AND THE LITTLE THINGS SO OUR BUSINESS STANDS OUT
- IX. WE DELIVER WHAT WE PROMISE
- X. WE TREAT OUR CUSTOMERS WITH *RESPECT*