



Quality Customer Service

WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE IS IMPORTANT

Outside of being the right thing to do and that people deserve to be treated with respect, there is one word;

That One Word: Competition.

Competition is a driving force in the economy.

As the internet expands, this not only increases the ability for a company to attract new customers, but also the amount of competition vying for those same customers.

In today's global market customers expect more than JUST a product. They demand attention and customer service that caters specifically to them.

Customers HAVE A CHOICE!

If their needs for service are not being met, they WILL leave and take their business to another company with a similar product.

One of the best advertisements for a company is word of mouth. It can also be the worst enemy a company has.

When someone has a bad customer experience, they share this information with others.

A company that cannot keep clients through the act of quality customer service or worse yet, loses customers due to the lack of quality customer service, is going to have difficulty staying in business.

Every customer matters. Every customer contributes to your paycheck and your job security. Every customer is a person who should be treated with the same respect and attention that you would want to be given.

WHAT THE CUSTOMER IS EXPECTING

Customers expect a lot.

- Customers expect to be treated like a person, not a number.
- Customers expect to have someone listen to what they have to say.
- Customers expect to have someone knowledgeable and competent assisting them.
- Customers expect to have someone that appreciates they have CHOSEN to give their business to that company.
- Customers want someone who is friendly and has a good attitude.
- Customers want to feel that the issue/concern/problem they have is going to be addressed and in a timely manner.
- Customers want someone to take responsibility.

Ask yourself if you don't expect the same when you are the customer.

EVERY EMPLOYEE CAN PROVIDE GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Every employee, every day they come to work has the potential to provide great customer service to every client they come in contact with. In many cases, the individual employee that a client comes in contact with, is the sole voice and impression of the company that the client will ever get. Employees are the most valuable resource a company has. They can make or break a company based on the customer service provided. It takes surprisingly little to provide a high quality of customer service.

- Attitude is everything. A single person can change the atmosphere of an entire room. How one acts affects every person they come in contact with. Have a good attitude.
- Basic common courtesy and manners are important. A simple please and thank you go a long way to making a positive impression.
- Acting and speaking in a professional manner conveys that the business the customer is giving the company is being taken seriously and instills the client with a degree of trust.
- Understand that the customer is having a challenge that may be causing them stress.
- Be knowledgeable about the products and services that are being sold or provided. This prevents misunderstandings, and helps create a feeling of confidence that clients are sure to pick up on.
- The reason the customer is there because they need or want help. They are seeking assistance from someone they perceive as having the ability or knowledge to help. Customers need assurance that they are being helped or pointed to some place that can provide them further assistance.
- Pay attention to the customer and what they are saying.

THE COMPANY HAS TO TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY

Employees are not solely responsible for ensuring the level of customer support provided meets the requirements of the clients. The company has a role to play as well.

- Employees cannot be knowledgeable and competent about the products and services if training is not provided for them.
- Effectively communicating what the policies and procedures are is important to ensure that employees know what they need to be doing and how to do it.
- Hiring employees who care about their job and inspiring them to care about the company they work for gives employees a reason to provide that high quality of customer service.
- Ask for feedback from both external as well as internal customers. Feedback from both the end customer as well as the employees will provide real insight as to how the company is doing.
- Provide feedback to employees. People need to know where they can improve and should be told when they are doing something well. This shows that they are appreciated and helps them grow.

IDEAS TO IMPROVE WHAT WE CURRENTLY HAVE

Some simple ideas this company could incorporate to help improve customer service.

- Have employees sit down and actually listen to 1 or 2 of the recordings used for their QA. There is a world of difference between seeing someone's written opinions and actually hearing what you sound like.
- Survey the employees, ask what they would like to receive training in. Where they feel they could use the most improvement. What the company needs to do.
- Provide training courses that cover third party software that we deal with on a daily basis. Most of the email clients are free to download and install. Adobe offers 30 day free full version trials of all its software including dreamweaver and flash.
- Offer a shadowing program. This encourages employees to see what the other departments do and gives them a better understanding of the organization as a whole. They may even find there is another area that might suit them better than what they are already doing.
- Cross training is very powerful. Having an extra person who can jump in and answer reseller calls or tickets, for example, would be a very a useful thing when running short handed in one department.
- Every employee has a test account. Have them call into our system and evaluate things as a customer. Ask them what they think of our customer service and what they themselves can do to improve it.
- Most employees will make the right judgment call. Empowering employees gives them a sense of pride. For example, giving employees back the ability to escalate their own tickets could make them responsible for the

content of the ticket and increase production. An employee knows what is beyond their ability to resolve and when it needs to go to someone higher.

- Management could spend a few hours on the floor doing the same job one of the lower employees would do. This will give them a first-hand account of what an average employee currently goes through on a daily basis and what types of challenges they may face.

Image Sources:

Internet Systems Consortium

<http://www.isc.org/index.pl?/ops/ds/>

NASA

<http://www.nasa.gov/>