

Customers for Life

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- Product innovations can be copied overnight
- cutting-edge technology is available off-the-shelf

Look for the ‘want to’ types: do they truly want to be in our business and, even more important, do they truly want to take care of our customers?

10 Commandments of Customer Service

1. Ask customers what they want and give it to them again and again.
 2. Systems – not smiles. Saying please & thank-you doesn’t insure you’ll do the job right. Only systems guarantee that.
 3. Underpromise, overdeliver. Customers expect you to keep your word. Exceed it. Shut up.
 4. When the customer asks, the answer is always yes.
 5. If a complaint is made to you, handle it.
 6. No complaints? Something’s wrong. Encourage customers to tell you what you’re doing wrong.
 7. Measure everything.
 8. Pay people like partners.
 9. Show people respect. Be polite. It works.
 10. Learn how the best do it & model their systems. Then improve them.
- If you’re good to your customers, they’ll come back because they like you.
 - If they like you, they’ll spend more money.
 - If they spend more money, you want to treat them better.
 - If you treat them better, they’ll keep coming back.
 - Visit with your customers and find out what they want.

Service Checklist

- Don’t guess about what customers want. They’re happy to tell you.
- Make it easy for them to tell you. Create a short questionnaire, no more than 5 questions, preferably 3. Focus on the most important parts of doing business with you from the customer viewpoint.
- Don’t pester the customer to fill out the survey.
- The moment the customer says, “Can you ...” you should be prepared to answer yes, even if you can’t immediately figure out how to do what she wants.
- Stretch. Help your customer find or get what they want, even if you don’t do it.
- Don’t charge for the extra service if you can help it.
- There’s no “after hours.” Provide good service around the clock.
- Don’t worry about people taking advantage of you. Very few will.
- Build in a cushion. Always estimate high – 10% more than you think the job will cost. That way, your final bill can be lower than your estimate.
- Throw in some extras if you can.
- What can go wrong? Ask that question in designing your systems. Examine every step you take in delivering your product or service. See where there are possibilities for error or variation. Figure out ways to eliminate them.
- What can be automated? Do it wherever possible.
- Look to manufacturers as models. Manufacturers, not service companies, have the best systems.
- Keep a record of errors and track them, so you can set up your system to eliminate them.
- Talk about mistakes. Log every single job that is brought back. Fix it. Find out how the problem slipped through in the first place.
- Hold daily quality meetings. Talk about problems.
- Look for patterns so you can spot trends & problem areas.

- Anyone who deals with a customer must have the authority to resolve problems.
- Nothing is more important than the customer.
- Do it right the first time.
- Keep adding new ideas & improving old ones, because if somebody offers your customers more, they will leave.
- Set high standards for yourself & exceed them.
- Being first isn’t good enough. If you stop once you have a new idea, it’ll get ripped off & you’ll be left in the dust.
- Continually improve your ideas.
- Periodically review every part of your operation.
- Spy on your competition & model what you like.

Checklist for trying a new idea:

1. What’s the benefit to the customer?
2. Will the customer easily understand the benefit?
3. What impact will this idea, program, or system have on our reps?
4. How will it affect our existing systems?
5. Is anybody else doing it successfully? What can we learn from their experience?
6. What could go wrong?
7. Will it give us an advantage over our competitors?
8. How much will it cost?
9. Will it make money?
10. When should we evaluate it?

Sell the product you like the best.
Keep the service promise.

When something goes wrong:

- Apologize. Sincerely regret making the mistake. No pre-printed form. Make it sincere. Let the customer know you mean it.
- Fix the problem.

Make it easy for customers to complain.