

SMALL BUSINESS MATTERS



Customer Service: A Little Help Goes A Long Way!

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Whether you are a business owner, manager, customer service rep, or a retail clerk, everyday you probably go full steam ahead with the days duties and responsibilities of your position. At least in most instances, that is how it works or should work.

However, step back from your job at whatever business or organization you work for or own. Now think about when you are a customer or client at another business. Can you think about both the worst service and the best service you have ever received and how you were treated in both instances? If so, take note and ensure that you and your business strives to meet the best service experience you have had and not the worst.

Easy, right? Wrong. Many businesses fail and only some succeed. You may think of businesses that may have some helpful staff and other staff you want to avoid or at least you think to yourself “it wouldn’t hurt if they smiled once”.

To ensure you have a culture of excellent customer service, you don’t approach it as something you do, but rather how you build your whole business around the customer. After all, without your customers where does that leave your business or your job.

So it goes without saying that the most crucial aspect of your operation can easily get overlooked either sometimes, often, or every time a customer interacts with your business. Strive for seldom!

If you think you are doing fine then great. But if you want to do a health check in this department, review the following checklist.

- √ Customers always receive a friendly greeting in person or on the telephone.
- √ Customers are offered assistance especially if there is staff available to assist.
- √ Staff are always genuine and courteous, more importantly, customers receive undivided attention.
- √ Both staff and management are knowledgeable about the products and/or services.
- √ Always keep your promises and make it up to the customer if you do not.
- √ Help a customer even if there is no likely purchase today as he or she may come back another day.
- √ When customers ask for assistance they are lead to the product they are looking for (no pointing).
- √ Customer requests for something different, you try your best to accommodate or assist.
- √ You ask your customers how you are doing such as a “how can we serve you better” card.
- √ There is an established process to handle complaints respectfully and tactfully.
- √ Your business is clean and tidy, organized, and designed around the customer.

If you are doing most of the above, great. You are building customer loyalty.

If not, and you’re an employee, why not put into practice this approach to your job. It will give you greater job satisfaction as the more helpful and pleasant you are with customers, the more you will receive the same. At the end of a long day, you will have more positive energy.

If your are a manager or owner, write a customer service policy and communicate it to your staff, whether it is a staff of one or one hundred. Does it have to be elaborate? No. If you can give employees the instruction to lock up all doors at the end of the day, you can easily ask them to make it a practice of extending friendly greetings to customers. Take a team approach to customer service and ensure staff knows the its importance. Then post a sign for customers with your name and your customer service commitment and ask customers to contact you if they are any problems unresolved.

Why is excellent customer service important? It can lead to greater customer satisfaction, of course, and that may lead to greater employee morale, higher sales, and ultimately a better bottom-line. *So, a little help goes a long way!*

For more information on business financing and other services of CBDC South Coast call 1-800-303-2232 or 538-3846.