

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Poor customer service can happen at every size and type of business, which means every business can benefit from understanding what constitutes “good” customer service and how not to lose sales because of a bad experience a customer may have had.

Today’s customers are well informed and discriminating. They are more likely to listen to their friends and family regarding your product or service than any advertisement or press release you might send out. At the same time, customer service seems to be conspicuously absent from many of our own customer experiences. Therefore, making sure every customer your business attracts has a good experience can give you a competitive advantage. Here are some key tips

Be customer-focused. Discover what your customers need and want and then provide it. Without the customer, your company cannot exist. Your customers should be welcomed, listened to and respected. You may want to seek their input and change the way you do business after seeing what they have to say.

Give more than expected. You should strive to give more than a customer might expect. Don’t over-promise what you can do or provide, but go beyond the basics. Perhaps your product arrives faster than expected, or comes with something extra thrown in. Depending upon your type of business, you might be able to provide information and support to some customers, even if it might not result in a sale. You might consider rewarding repeat customers in some way.

Treat employees well. Poor customer service is often the result of insufficient training of employees. Every employee in your company should be trained about its products and services. Such training might include phone call handling, what to do about complaints and conflicts, and monitoring of delivery systems. Employees in direct contact with customers need to be able to answer most every question and solve most problems that might arise, or at least know to whom to go to solve the problem.