

# ARE YOU JUST GUESSTIMATING YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE QUALITY?

Outstanding customer service is the Golden Rule that most companies profess to follow. And when it comes to turning nice-sounding policies into great customer relationships, it's worth thinking about the customer service we experience every day.

Customer service is critical to your business. It's why you should keep fine-tuning it daily.

Let's look at some well-documented facts about customer service:

- **Fact:** 90% of companies claim they deliver superior customer service, yet just 8% of their customers think these companies are actually doing so. The lesson – never guesstimate your customer service.

A good (bad!) example is your mobile service provider's contract, which is deliberately made so complex that most people don't read it, much less understand it. It's just one more reason why nearly everyone hates mobile service providers, and why overall wireless carrier service ratings are among the lowest of any industry.

- **Fact:** The average American spends 13 hours per year and 43 days of their lives on hold for customer service. Which tells us a lot about how much most companies actually care about their customers.
- **Fact:** 73% of dissatisfied former customers cite incompetent, rude and "rushed" service as the number-one reason they've abandoned a brand.
- **Fact:** 86% of consumers will immediately quit doing business with a company because of a bad customer experience.
- **Fact:** Bad customer service is a great deal more than a potential liability risk. It's a huge cost to your business. Consumers are far more likely to share bad customer experiences.
- **Fact:** It's 6-7 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one.
- **Fact:** The average business hears from just 4% of its dissatisfied customers. Very few people have time to deal with your mistakes. Even fewer people will take time to tell you about them. Why should they? You're the one who screwed up. *Mmm-bye-bye.*
- **Fact:** Your customers can do quite a few things a lot better than you can. And if your business isn't embracing this fact, and viewing customer service as a branch of your marketing department with tremendous potential ROI, you're not only not serving your customers as well as you could, you're doing yourself a disservice in the bargain.
- **Fact:** 9 out of 10 U.S. consumers say they would pay more to ensure superior customer experience. Now, pay attention – *that's 90% of your potential customers who would PAY MORE for great service.*

Customers expect high-quality customer service with a consistent look and feel whenever they contact your company.

American firms spend all of their customer service training dollars on surveys, and that's ridiculous overkill. Few spend any dollars actually training their employees on customer service excellence. The point is, customer service training can tip the balance toward making your business more successful, your employees happier, and your bottom line brighter.

**Be fast and accurate** – People want answers fast so they can move on with their busy lives. A simple, straightforward way to starting solving your customers' problems faster is to be available 24/7 with a live person who answers calls within three rings. That way, no one will ever have to check your hours or wait to get in touch the next day. In the long run it'll be easier to resolve issues, and you'll stand out from the competition as a company that addresses its customers' needs immediately.

**Be respectful and friendly** – Customer service should be conducted in an atmosphere of total positivity. Greet your customers, use their names, and always express appreciation for their business. Inject positivity into your day, and the results will be eye-opening.

**Be a listener** – Lead with your ear rather than your mouth. It will help you connect with your customers and solve their problems. How can you meet your customers' needs if you don't know what they are because you aren't really listening?

**Be a solution provider** – Ask your customers what they think would be a good outcome. They've probably got something in mind that they feel would make the most sense in the circumstances. Even if the answer isn't what you hoped it would be, it might give you an opportunity to avoid leaving the customer with the impression that you aren't genuinely interested in offering them the right solution.

**Be amazing** – Finally, just remember that customers always feel incredible when they feel you're truly willing to take whatever steps will be required to help them.

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