The Customer Communicator Web Extra

Writing Skills

Try these customer-friendly writing techniques

Whether you are writing a formal business letter or sending an email, your language and tone should be carefully considered.

You can make your letters and emails more friendly and service-oriented by using the following tips:

■ **Develop a polite opening.** If you are dealing with a complaint, apologize for any inconvenience to the customer up front. For instance, "Dear Ms. Jones, I'm sorry you were disappointed with the Easy-Dry hair dryer you recently purchased from our company." The next line should thank the customer for taking the time and effort to write. For example, "Thank you for bringing this problem to our attention."

■ **Choose words and phrases that are positive.** Just as you would on the phone, be aware of your word choice and make sure that nothing negative creeps into your writing. To do this, focus on what you can do for the customer rather than on what you can't do. For example, if a customer wants to replace an out-of-stock product, you would say: "We would be happy to offer you our newer, deluxe model hair dryer to replace the defective one, at no extra charge."

■ **Offer specific, concise details of the resolution.** "We are shipping the hair dryer today by ABC Express Delivery. You should receive it no later than Tuesday morning."

■ **Close by thanking the customer for his or her business.** "Thank you for choosing XYZ company. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to serving you again."

■ **Leave the contact channel open.** "Please don't hesitate to contact me personally if you don't receive your hair dryer by 1 p.m." And be sure to include your name, phone number, and email address.

■ **Proofread, proofread, proofread.** Don't rely solely on "spell-check." These tools will not find mistakes that are also words (like "mice" for "nice"), number problems, or missing words (like "that product is in stock" when you meant "that product is not in stock"). You still have to proofread.

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Tools, tips and tactics for the frontline customer service professional

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