

The following is an excerpt from:
Win the Customer: 70 Simple Rules for Sensational Service

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Published by AMACOM Books

www.amacombooks.org

Division of American Management Association

1601 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

CREATE YOUR DOS AND DON'TS OF SERVICE

▶ One important fact to consider (before reading any further about exceptional customer service) is that customer support and care for customer relationships has typically been done very poorly in recent years. This is evident by the number of negative reputations and viral stories of terrible customer service and customer experiences gone wrong. Bad reputations for service have only promoted additional mistrust among customers; it seems like few customers truly trust the organizations that serve them. Most customer relationships today are left to deteriorate after the initial customer sale. Even with examples of a few major brands breaking the mold, considerable time and effort are needed to put this big bad customer support picture right again overall.

To make sure you're on the right track, you need to establish your own set of rules for how to deliver high-quality customer service. There are dos and don'ts in how to behave with customers, and it's essential that you communicate those clearly and effectively to everyone who can affect the ultimate service result.

Here are a few dos and don'ts to get you started in developing your own list based on the specific needs of your organization and the wants of your customers.

DO ENCOURAGE INITIATIVE

Initiative often leads to memorable experiences. Employees who are encouraged to think on their own will often come up with innovative ideas and unique approaches to resolve everyday customer problems. Each customer problem should be seen as an opportunity for self-

motivated employees to deliver outstanding customer service. Freedom to act innovatively in service interactions will foster teamwork and develop a fun and positive environment for service teams.

DO THINK POSITIVE

Optimistic and positive thinking (particularly when interacting with customers today) is the key to a great customer satisfaction experience, and it also boosts confidence and raises employee morale. Being real and keeping things in perspective also play an important role, along with the positivism and optimism.

You are unique. Developing your own style means your behaviors and actions reflect your personality and your individuality. When you are true to yourself, your positive attitude will shine through to customers. Interacting with the customers in a personal, purposeful, and helpful manner is a highly effective way to develop meaningful customer relationships and memorable service experiences.

DO ENCOURAGE CLOSE ENGAGEMENT

In a customer support scenario, the customer needs to be told all the things that can be done, what will be done, and when it will be done. Real service is about solving problems and offering solutions, giving the customer relief from any further burdening effects of the problem in a warm, engaging, and polite way.

Customers today desperately need a friendly human being who is real and able to engage with them instinctively. They crave emotional connection. The company relies on its employees to deliver an exceptionally memorable and positive experience. It is those pleasant experiences that actually encourage everlasting customer loyalty. Great, reliable service breeds a good reputation, which is also flattered by the free, positive promotion via independent reviews, reports, or verbal recommendation.

DON'T MAKE IT PERSONAL

Employees should not bring their own personal problems into the workplace. They should be determined, focused, and effective at dealing with any customer problems when they arise and not let outside problems cloud their judgment, throw them off track, or cause them to send mixed messages. Employees should not get frustrated with a customer's demands no matter how unreasonable they may seem to be. They should keep the discussion going in a friendly, fact-finding manner, listening closely to what the customer is really saying. And they should definitely not lose patience if they find themselves explaining something to a customer over and over. The reason something has to be explained again may very well be that the employee did not explain it effectively the first time. All of us as individuals learn things in different ways.

DON'T PROJECT A COLD ATTITUDE

Employees should not spoil an opportunity to develop relationships with the customers by acting or talking like obedient corporate robots. Stiff, unemotional, by-the-books discourse will never create the warm give-and-take atmosphere needed to deal with a customer's problems. Personality, conversation, and talking about the issue at hand (as a central theme of focus) are all important in establishing relationships. Building a two-way rapport with customers is not going to happen effectively without projecting personality, especially if the conversation lacks stimulation and is not focused on anything of mutual interest or relevant.

You must have certain rules and regulations to help the smooth running of any business or institution. However, simply preaching corporate policy doesn't always lead to solutions for customers. The potential for effective customer relationship building can't happen if the opportunity is constantly squandered by cold, unfriendly corporate policies. If there were one place where solutions are most critical to continued success, it would be in customer service interactions. Serving customers and meeting their needs are key to continued business success.