



Improve your service to older customers

From rephrasing to using a larger type size, there are many ways to meet seniors' needs.

With an aging U.S. population, seniors are likely to make up an increasing percentage of any business's customer base. In fact, recent data suggests that the older generation is increasing at a rate nearly three times faster than all others in the U.S. So what can you do to improve your service to older customers?

The current issue of *Customer Communicator* offers a number of tips including being respectful, being patient and listening courteously, avoiding technical jargon, and being sensitive to potential communication barriers.

In addition, keep the following advice in mind:

- **Seniors may be reluctant to give personal information over the phone.** If that's so, find out your customer's preferred method of sharing information, and offer to work through that medium.
- When giving customers instructions on how to do something (fill out a form, navigate the website, use a product, etc.), **offer to walk them through the steps.**
- If you notice that a customer is having difficulty hearing you, try to eliminate background noise, from office machines or nearby conversations. Then **speak clearly, using a moderate pitch and pace.** If the customer has difficulty making out print information, offer to send the information in a larger size.
- **Rephrase your comments if a customer doesn't understand them.** Don't simply repeat more slowly or loudly what you have already said.
- **Avoid ageism.** According to the National Institute on Aging, ageism is stereotyping and discriminating against older people (senior citizens are non-productive, dependent on others, slow to accept change, etc.). Remember that older people have experience and knowledge and are often active participants in business and their communities.

