

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Simple Ways to Deliver Rock-Solid Customer Service

by Carol Hartman, M.B.A

The other day when reviewing a stack of recently-published business training publications, I revisited several time-tested principles for providing good customer service. I thought it would be a great idea to share a few of them with you. Here's what some of the business world's leading service-excellence "gurus" are saying about how to provide good customer service in the new millennium.

1. Listen to customers who bother to complain. (Unhappy customers usually just fade away with no explanation.) Learn from what they tell you. Make appropriate changes.
2. Continuously study and improve how your company provides service. Take personal responsibility for asking customers for feedback. Don't be so quick to delegate this to someone else in your organization.
3. Look at your business through the eyes of your customers. Look at everything from your parking lot, to your telephone system, to the layout of your facility. Would you be excited and satisfied to be doing business with your company?
4. Empower your employees to perform exceptional service. Authorize them to make decisions based on their own good judgment on behalf of your company.
5. Teach your employees to serve their internal customers with the same courtesy and respect that they use when dealing with your external customers. A strong spirit of cooperation will pay off handsomely.
6. When a customer is unhappy, let them tell their story. Let them know you hear them. Don't be afraid to acknowledge that you understand how difficult the problem has been for them. This empathetic approach usually opens the door for problem solving.

Do these sound familiar? There's really nothing new. The moral of the story is this: Regardless of whether we call the people we serve "customers" or "clients" or "patients," the process of customer service excellence is the same. It's about treating the people who keep our businesses alive in a quality way.

These same training publications also said that it is still a natural tendency for satisfied customers to tell others where they received good service. So you see, no matter how fast things are evolving in this new century, there are a few things - according to the experts - that simply haven't changed at all.



© 2005 Carol Hartman/Balanced Act
www.balancedact.com 252-449-5255

All rights reserved. Permission to duplicate in its entirety is granted as long as the author name, byline, and copyright information are included.