



NYT Soft Skills Training

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The basic goal of keeping customers satisfied has always been at the heart of customer service. In years past, it meant doling out smiles and fielding the occasional phone call from an upset customer. In the modern world, there's a whole lot more to it than that.

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The Internet has given consumers a powerful voice, and they're not afraid to use it. In the past, if a customer had a problem with a product or a company, there wasn't much they could do about it. Now, a person can let the entire world know about a poor experience.

H.E.A.R.D

Disney handles over 135 million customers in their parks each year, they don't take customer service lightly. So, the technique Disney has developed to train customer service representatives in how to handle angry customers is called HEARD.

Hear: Listen to the customers entire story. Read messages carefully.

Emphasize: Use phrases that convey that you understand how the customer feels. Acknowledge what the customer says.

Apologize: And do so effusively! Understand customers' concerns.

Resolve: Fix the issue, and if you don't know how to, ask the customer "how can I set this right?" Make sure customers are satisfied.

Diagnose: Get to the bottom of the issue so you can make sure it won't happen again. Probe for information.

The concierge experience



The Concierge approach

If you attended a party where the host snarled at you, reluctantly offered you a drink, looked past you to greet someone deemed more important and basically couldn't wait until you left -- chances are you would leave, slamming the door behind you.

We should start to refer and treat our customers as guests, and since it becomes more difficult to do through chat we need to put some extra effort to accomplish it. Customers don't want to feel like they're a pain to you, we need to make them feel welcomed.

Anticipating needs



A great waiter knows when to refill your glass or bring the check, just as a great company anticipates what their guests need -- often before they know it themselves

Anticipating needs



To be able to anticipate your customer's needs, you will have to pay close attention to their needs, if a customer is not tech savvy and you are troubleshooting with him, by sending him the steps on what he needs to do before he asks is a good way of anticipating customer needs.

Give respect and VIP treatment



It costs nothing to be courteous, but you can pay dearly if you aren't.

If we fail to make our customers feel respected and that we care about them, we may even make them decide to cancel, that's how important this is.




Show immediate action

And solutions! Not blame.



Sometimes things get messed up, but apologies, which matter, mean nothing if they aren't followed by action. Well done is better than well said.



Maintaining a positive attitude

Attitude is everything, and a positive attitude goes a long way in providing excellent customer service. Since your customer interactions are not face-to-face, your attitude should be reflected in your messages.

It's easy to misinterpret the tone of written communication, and email or live chat can come across as cold. The brain uses multiple signals to interpret someone else's emotional tone, including body language and facial expression, many of which are absent online.

Problem-solve

Over 80% of customers have churned because they experienced bad customer service.

Don't be afraid to wow your customers as you seek to problem-solve for them. You could just fix the issue and be on your way, but by creatively meeting their needs in ways that go above and beyond, you'll create customers that are committed to you and your product.

Respond quickly

66% of people believe that valuing their time is the most important thing in any online customer experience. Keep an eye on each conversation to make sure you don't forget to reply to make sure you are working on customer's requests. Speed should be of the essence – especially for smaller issues that don't take much time to solve.

That being said – great customer service beats speed every time.

Respond quickly



Customers understand that more complex queries take time to resolve. There's a difference between the time it takes you to respond and the speed at which you resolve their problems. Make sure to let your customers know if you need more time to work on the issue, don't let them hanging with no idea of the status of their request.

Personalize Service



40% of customers say they want better human service. That means they want to feel like more than just a ticket number. They get angry when they're not being treated like an individual person, receiving boilerplate responses, or being batted like a tennis ball to different people.

Customers want to interact with a person – not a company.

Personalize Service



Customers should be able to tell they are talking with someone else.

You have the freedom to have your own style within the quality and procedure guidelines we provide.

A photograph of a modern building with a curved, metallic facade. The building's surface is composed of many small, rectangular panels that create a grid-like pattern. A large, curved glass window is visible in the upper left portion of the image. The overall color palette is light blue and white, with a bright, overcast sky in the background.


**What makes a
conciierge different?**



Willingness & Commitment

Is the capacity to be one of the greatest in one's field, while remaining humble. With humility, comes a passion for continuous learning and a deep-seated desire to be helpful.

We need to adopt an unrelenting dedication to find a way to make it happen, no matter what "it" is.



Readiness to take action

To borrow the Nike tagline, great concierges “just do it.” A story that illustrates all three of these qualities was printed in a small brochure that the Four Seasons hotels created to help their guests understand the role of concierges and take advantage of their services: A guest told a concierge, “Your cheeseburgers are really great here. I want you to send one to my brother who lives in Bahrain. And oh yes, I want it to arrive hot.” The concierge’s response: “Would that be cheddar or blue, sir?”




Readiness to take action



TAKE ACTION

Try to find a way to satisfy your customer's requests, even if it is something we don't have available, finding a way to meet their needs shows that you are ready to take action and resolve.



Make it personal



For the excellent concierges, it's always personal—meaning they bring all aspects of themselves into their work.

Making it personal (while not taking anything too personally) is a powerful tool. However, there are times when we need call upon others for help or offer help to others, which leads us to the last quality.

Tips!

#1 Practice Empathy, Patience, and Consistency

Some of your customers will be full of questions, some just chatty, and others plain mad. You must be prepared to empathize customers and handle all of them and provide the same level of service every time.

#2 Understand that Good Customer Service is a Continuous Learning Process

Every customer is unique and every support situation is different. In order to handle surprises, sense a customer's mood, address new challenges accordingly, you have to be willing to keep learning.

Tips!

#3 Ask Customers if They Understand.

Make sure your customers know exactly what you mean. You don't want your customers to think they're getting 25% off when they're actually getting 25% more product. Ask customers if they understand what you're saying. Use positive language, stay cheerful no matter what, and never end a conversation without confirming the customer understands and is satisfied.

#4 Show Your Customers Your Work Ethic

Customers appreciate a rep who doesn't pass the buck and sticks with them until their problem is solved. However, you can't spend too much time handling one customer while others are waiting.



Tips!

#5 Don't Be Afraid to Say "I Don't Know"

Your customers rely on you to know your product inside out. It's your job to stay informed enough to respond to questions or at least know where to turn if the questions become too technical for you to answer. If you don't know the answer it is okay to say to your customers "I don't know", as long as you follow it up with "but I'll find out".

Customers will appreciate your honesty and your efforts to find the right answer.

Tips!



#6 You Have to Have Thick Skin

You know the old saying “the customer’s always right”. There’s truth to that. The best customer service reps have the ability to swallow their pride and accept blame or negative feedback...or handle unreasonable customers in an empathic way. No matter what, your customer’s happiness is your primary goal. If a customer is completely unreasonable, just be human and level with them. Let them know you’re doing your best.

Tips!

#7 Pay Attention to Your Customer's Experience

A negative customer experience at any point in the customer lifecycle can destroy your relationship. Pay critical attention to key touchpoints: customer trial periods, customer sign-ups, customer on-boarding etc. Make sure you have a full view of your customer experience.

#8 Show Your Customers You're Human

Do your best to identify common ground and shared interests with the customers you help. By humanizing your relationship you'll make resolving conflict easier, your customers will like you more.

Tips!

#9 Practice Active Listening

When you use active listening, your customers feel heard. Make sure your customers know you understand them by clarifying and rephrasing what they say. The key is to empathize with them and reflect their feelings by saying things like, “I’m sorry, I can see why that is upsetting” or “That is a problem and I understand what you’re saying”.

#10 Admit Your Mistakes

If you mess up, admit it, even if you discover your mistakes before your customers do. Admitting you messed up builds trust and restores your customer’s confidence in your service. It also allows you to control the situation, re-focus the customer’s attention, and fix the problem.

Tips!

#11 Rollout the White Glove Treatment

Make sure you're meeting your customers' needs. Make each of your customers feel like they have a friend in the business.

#12 Practice Clear Communication

How you communicate with your customers couldn't be more important. Styling affects communication. Tone affects communication. Watch out for passive-aggressive language ("Actually..."). This will turn off your customers. Also avoid confusing your customers with slang, colloquialisms, or technical jargon.

Tips!

#13 Don't Be Stiff

When you speak or write to customers be personable, casual, and most importantly be friendly. Don't treat customers like a number by using an overly formal tone.

#14 Use the CARP Method

It's important for customer service teams to stay consistent in the tone they use and the processes they practice. A great way to do both is to use the CARP method:

- Control the situation.
- Acknowledge the dilemma.
- Refocus the conversation.
- Problem-solve so the customer leaves happy.

Tips!

#15 Solve your customers' problems the first time they call in.

There's nothing your customers will appreciate more than getting their issues addressed the first time around.

#16 Always Close Conversations Correctly

Every conversation you close with a customer should end with you saying "Is there anything else I can do for you today? I'm happy to help!" and your customer saying "Yes, I'm all set!" loud and clear. Correctly closing a conversation shows the customer three vital things:

- You care about getting things right.
- You're willing to keep going until you get things right.
- The customer is the one who decides what "right" is.

Complimentary words

Complimentary words are those that we use in a conversation to make the person we are talking to feel good about themselves.

These words can be particularly powerful in customer service and sales when looking to positively influence the emotions of a customer

WAY
TO
GO!


GOOD
JOB

WELL
DONE

YOU'RE
THE MAN

THUMBS
UP

YOU
ROCK



“Thanks for being so honest with me about how this is impacting you”

After an angry customer has vented at you, it can be difficult to know what to say next. The wrong thing can set the customer off again and damage their impression of you.

A compliment can work well in these situations, if used carefully. Thanking them for their honesty can help to show the customer that you are on their side, before you move forward with answering their query.

Other examples

“I can see that you’ve been a loyal customer, that’s great!”

“It’s nice to speak to a customer who’s so proactive”

“I think that was a very wise decision to make”

“It’s good that you’ve shared that with me”

50 Complimentary Words

... For Customer Service

Words to Compliment a Customer's Personality...

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Considerate | 10. Humble | 18. Proactive |
| 2. Co-operative | 11. Insightful | 19. Responsible |
| 3. Determined | 12. Intelligent | 20. Sincere |
| 4. Enthusiastic | 13. Loyal | 21. Thorough |
| 5. Friendly | 14. Observant | 22. Thoughtful |
| 6. Funny | 15. Organized | 23. Understanding |
| 7. Generous | 16. Patient | 24. Welcome |
| 8. Helpful | 17. Positive | 25. Wise |
| 9. Honest | | |

Words to Compliment a Customer's Possession...

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 26. Amazing | 35. Good Choice | 43. Outstanding |
| 27. Awesome | 36. Gorgeous | 44. Superb |
| 28. Brilliant | 37. Great | 45. Smashing |
| 29. Delightful | 38. Interesting | 46. Splendid |
| 30. Excellent | 39. Impressive | 47. Stunning |
| 31. Fabulous | 40. Lovely | 48. Terrific |
| 32. Fantastic | 41. Marvellous | 49. Tremendous |
| 33. Fine | 42. Nice | 50. Wonderful |
| 34. First-Class | | |



How best to use complimentary words?


While we have given lots of examples of complimentary words and compliments, the key is to deliver them in the right way. They need to come across as authentic.

A compliment cannot feel like just another box-ticking exercise, which are what soft skills are often reduced down to as part of a contact center quality program.


The compliment needs to land in the right way so it feels natural. This doesn't happen when you are trying too hard to compliment someone.



How to be more personable with clients



76% of customers say they view customer service at the true test of how much a company values them. Learning to properly engage with customers on a personal level is one of the ways to enhance the experience they have, and it's also a way to enhance business and take it to the next level.





How to be more personable with clients

1. Treat Your Customers Like a Person and Not a Number

According to Entrepreneur.com, "Customers should never feel like a number in a long list. Instead, they should feel as if they're involved in a one-on-one conversation."

2. Be Friendly

Being friendly is part of what makes a customer feel good. If a customer feels good, they are most likely to use your service again.

How to be more personable with clients



3. Make your customers feel like a top priority.

Even if you're in a situation where you may be overwhelmed and spread thin, it is still important to make it appear as if the customer is your main priority.

4. Go the extra mile for your customer

Can you remember a time that a business went above and beyond to ensure that you were a satisfied customer? How did that make you feel?

How to be more personable with clients



5. Be honest with your customers at all times.

Ideally, any business wants to deliver what they've promised without any complications or obstacles. Unfortunately, that cannot always be the case. However, keeping the lines of communication open and always being honest is key to providing an exemplary customer experience.



Conclusion

Conclusion

The United States is definitely a consumer culture, which means there are countless businesses selling vast amounts of products and services to a large population of people.

With this much competition in the marketplace, having fantastic products and services is simply not enough to earn loyalty and repeat business. What companies must do is set themselves apart from their competitors, and one effective way to do this is through providing great customer service.

Conclusion

Customer service may be defined as the ability of an organization or company to tend to their customers' needs and wants, and to meet – and even exceed – their customers' expectations. Great customer service is like a recipe with the most important ingredient being a meaningful relationship between businesses and clients.

Remember:

As previously stated, human behavior is primarily emotional, and because of this, it is the most important concept to understand in relation to customer service. Accordingly, it cannot be overemphasized that the human component of service is essential to addressing the customer's needs and meeting (or exceeding) their expectations. It does not matter how perfect the product or service is – if the human connection does not exist between the client and the staff, loyalty will suffer

Remember:

There are six universal emotions – anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. All these emotions are responsible for determining daily decisions, so they are important when providing customer service with a memorable moment. If the emotions of happiness and surprise are brought to the surface, customers will have a positive experience and advertise the company by word of mouth. Of course, such experience will make them come back and do repeat business. Both happiness and surprise establish an emotional connection that drives loyalty, so it is important to elicit them by providing quality customer service.