

When it comes to customer service, it's the little things that make a difference.

by Sandy Geroux

Is your customer service up to snuff? Do customers rave about you, or do you leave them scratching their heads and wondering where you are and how they can reach you to answer their questions?

Here are a few tips to provide your customers with the kind of outstanding service that keeps them loyal to you and has them raving about you to their friends.

1. **Pay attention to the little things that could mean a lot to customers.** For example:
 - a. When you call customers, do you hang up when *you're* done talking, or do you wait for them to hang up first to be sure *they're* done talking? While this may seem like a very small thing, I've had conversations with salespeople who have simply hung up when they're done, and I've had one more thing to add - but they were gone. If it was important, I had to call them back; if it wasn't, I simply let it go. If a customer is done talking anyway, they'll never think about this point. However, if they're not, having you hang up before they're done could make them feel as though you are anxious to get off the phone and get on to the next call - making them feel like just another number, instead of being made to feel very special.
 - b. When a customer tells you they won't be around at a certain time, or asks you to please call them on a certain day, do you remember this tidbit of information? Maybe they've told you they have a big exam coming up, or just got a new puppy, or their car broke down. If you have (or plan to have) more than one contact with a customer, make note of this information somewhere to remind yourself of the little things they've said to you. Referring back to what may have been a casual comment on their part makes a BIG impact when you actually remember that they said it - and then ask them about it during a later conversation!
2. **Make it easy for customers to do business with you** by putting all your contracts, forms, instructions and other pertinent information on your website, where customers can easily access necessary information at their convenience.
 - a. You could also make reports available to help customers solve a problem, address an issue, or provide information they can give to *their* clients. You can make these reports downloadable so it's convenient for customers, and free for you!
3. **Never make them wonder what's going on with their business transaction.** Many salespeople begin the relationship with tremendous follow-up designed to gain the customer's business, but forget that the same level of care is necessary throughout their entire business relationship, even after the sale is done. Too often, the longer the relationship goes on, the fewer follow-up phone contacts are initiated by the salesperson - unless there's a problem.

However, if you haven't kept in contact with customers through the good times, they will probably be more demanding and less understanding of ANY foul-ups that occur. In addition, without a strong relationship, the customer is likely to do one or more of the following:

Workplace: Where employees have to go because they make a paycheck
WOWplace: Where people love to go because they make a difference

3760 Manteo Circle Orlando, FL 32837 P (407) 856.1188 E sandy@thewowplace.com W TheWowPlace.com



- Blame you for a problem, even if it wasn't your fault
- Be less tolerant of delays on your part in returning their phone calls
- Be less willing to compromise in an effort to gain a win-win resolution
- Seek another provider to replace you in the future

Creating a strong bond with customers through the good times helps minimize or eliminate negative consequences when things go wrong. Frequent follow-up calls, even if nothing is wrong, such as "Just checking in to say hi" calls, or value-packed e-mails, are very effective in letting customers know you haven't forgotten them. In addition, quick reaction and response when customers have questions or problems, as well as their successful resolution, are important.

4. **Provide them with an exceptional experience.** What do you do that's different from everyone else? Do you give them special treatment or a special "gift"? The gift doesn't have to be expensive. A gift from the heart never fails to make someone feel special. Is there something in which they're particularly interested? Can you give them something pertaining to a special interest or hobby? Some people have made terrific homemade treats, such as cookies, cakes or pies and given them as gifts (not expensive, but definitely from the heart). Perhaps you can create a photo album (paper or electronic) or PowerPoint presentation that documents and creates a memento of their experience with you. If you have a digital camera, you can create something special for your customers with no expense other than a little time and effort.

Even if you don't give gifts, can you offer an exceptional way of doing things? For example:

- A saleswoman gives bags of popcorn and soft drinks to executives as they watch a video during her sales presentation. A REALTOR hires a limousine to pick customers up and drive them to and from closings. What can you do to create a WOW experience for your past, current and potential customers?
- Can you send a hand-written card for special occasions, or just to thank them for speaking with you about your services? No one sends hand-written notes and cards any more - be different: take the time to occasionally write and send one. One of my bosses hand-wrote 2,000 cards every year at holiday time – one to every employee in the company!

Paying attention to a whole lot of little things adds up to a big difference between you and your competitors. Customers may not notice exactly what's different, but the higher level of courtesy, lower frustration level, and extra care and compassion you show to them in everything you do have a positive impact on their experience - and relationship - with you. Doing this on a regular basis will ensure that when they talk about working with you, it's in glowing terms!

With over 27 years of speaking and training experience, national speaker and author Sandy Geroux delivers motivational and educational programs to help "Turn Your Workplace Into a WOWplace™", helping organizations create WOW experiences for customers and employees alike by fostering a culture of trust, compassion and commitment to values, service and respect.

<http://www.thewowplace.com> or contact sandy@thewowplace.com or call 407-856-1188.

