

WOW Communication is Clear, Consistent... and There!

by Sandy Geroux

Customer service is all about doing things for the customer, at their convenience. Here are 5 tips to help you think about how clear, consistent and valuable communication can help you put customers and their needs first:

1. **Focus on helping them; don't point fingers (at them or your co-workers).** Always keep your communication with customers positive and forward-focused. Don't be so concerned with placing blame that you can't (or just don't) focus on proactive solutions to their problems. If there's a problem, find out what's wrong, figure out what you can do, and do it... or tell them you'll need some time to investigate what can be done and promise to call them back.
2. **Specify a certain date and time** when you tell a customer you'll call them back. Many of us leave this information "open-ended", in an effort to make it more convenient for ourselves, or to prevent "boxing ourselves in" to a certain time. But it's more important to alleviate the customer's discomfort at not knowing when (or if) they'll ever get their answer.
3. **Keep your promise.** When you specify a date and time... meet it or beat it. This follows the "under-promise and over-deliver" principle. If you're going to go through the trouble of differentiating yourself from everyone else by specifying a date and time, do not break that promise!
4. **Call, no matter what.** Even if you don't have an answer for them by that date and time, call them anyway! Your customer can't read your mind, so they don't know you're still working on the problem. In fact, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, they'll think you're "just like everyone else"... and have forgotten about them. Call them to follow up and set up a new time to call - or at least a new plan for going forward.
5. **Be sure backup plans are in place to communicate with your customers** in the event of an extended (more than a day or two) absence on your part. Don't risk losing any leads or being able to serve customers quickly by being unavailable and not making someone else available to help them while you're out.

For example, I once had a problem with my health insurance. My agent had lost my file, couldn't answer my question, and left me hanging for weeks without a response. I subsequently met the owner of another agency who promised to have someone call me so I could switch to their agency. Almost two weeks went by with no call. Three weeks later, I received a call from an agent at his company, who explained that "she'd been out sick the previous week." By then, I thought she'd either forgotten about me or didn't have time for me and I had found another agency.

In our fast-paced world of business, who can afford to lose business because we catch a cold? Or our child is sick? Or we just want to take a vacation? Let's face it... no one can be "on call" 24/7... nor can we plan to never be sick or on vacation again in our lives.



Therefore, we must challenge ourselves by asking this question: “What is my backup plan in case I am out for more than a day or two? How do I ensure that not only do I not have to be available every minute, but that I am able to capitalize on leads and serve my customers - at least during business hours - no matter what happens?”

Customers deserve communication from us... they deserve to know what’s going on with their issue, they deserve to have us keep our promises, and they deserve to be served at their convenience... not ours. Clear, consistent, and caring communication is the absolute least we can do for them... and the one thing that makes the most impact in creating a WOW for them.

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.

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

