

Employee PRIDE in Satisfying a Customer

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Customer service is something that we hear more and more about. We hear so much about customer service that for many it has become a meaningless, abstract term of one aspect of an employee's role in the workplace. Many companies speak to it and there are, in fact, awards given out to honor those corporations with the highest ratings in customer satisfaction. It has reached a point, where, in fact, the term is even somewhat over used. But, what does a customer really want? How can the individual employee of a company satisfy more customers, more often? And, what is customer satisfaction?

Simply, **customer satisfaction is meeting or exceeding the expectations of the customer.**

Yes there are procedures in corporations about how to respond to customers; how to answer the phone; how to be polite.....but so much about customer satisfaction is about the employee's **attitude.**

From early childhood conditioning, the majority of our direction is negative.

Don't bite off more than you can chew

Don't write on the.....

Don't speak unless you're ...

The American psychologist, William James said:

"The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their minds."

Over time and with training, **a person's attitude develops and can change from a negative to a positive.**

For the most part, dealing with people (customers) comes down to the individual employee's attitude. **If an employee's attitude is positive, upbeat, and happy, it will have a positive affect on the attitude of customers.** If the employee is negative, the employee will have a negative affect on others. People prefer a smile to a frown and a compliment to a complaint. In customer service, the ability to control one's attitude is

critical to the success of a company. Every employee has to be aware of their feelings and actively seek ways to focus those feelings in the proper direction.

The **employee of a company must develop positive attitudes to replace negative ones.**

But, generally speaking, how should that happen? There are concepts for turning negative experiences into positive ones when dealing with a customer. For example:

- Respond positively in the face of setbacks.
- Realize that although one cannot control others' behavior, an individual's own positive attitude can have a powerful influence.
- Initiate and maintain control over one's reactions to outside forces
- Develop the self-confidence, skills, and knowledge
- Excel in communications with others to try to understand their feelings and their needs.

With these concepts in mind, however, what specifically can one do to improve the manner in which they deal with a customer.

One method is smiling. Make it a goal to make someone smile each day. Another is listening to motivational tapes or reading motivational material. One can learn to control attitude and behavior. It takes practice to express oneself in a positive manner. Just as someone can affect attitude, one can use this and other techniques to influence their own attitude and the attitude toward people around them.

Remember the old trick of counting to ten to calm down? A derivation of that process, affirmations, can provide you with another excellent technique. Instead of counting down numbers, repeat positive statement which affirm the feelings, qualities or attitudes that you want to develop and project. Specifically, **an affirmation is a positive statement** which describes the person one wants to become. Affirmations should have the following qualities:

- They should be positive
- They should be statements in the first person and in the present tense
- They should be in the realm of your capacity to believe (realistically, high)
- They should be directly related to your goals

The use of affirmations will reinforce self-confidence and help ensure the development of positive attitudes.

Repeat positive statements, such as:

- "I feel good."
- "I am an excellent communicator"
- "I am in control"

- “I am happy”
- “I enrich the lives of the people around me ... including my customers.”

Develop personal affirmations. Repeat them several times daily. If this exercise can become a habit, a person will be pleased and surprised at the results.

What is important for every individual is that they are personally in charge. They make choices and they pursue the directions that they believe are right for them. **Dealing with customer service is about dealing with people.** In essence, one is developing new habits. This is not an easy process. It takes the formation of new habits which is a time driven process, but one that can prove quite productive.

The lack of customer service is the failure to meet a customer’s expectations. It is the difference between how a customer expects to be treated and how he or she perceives they are being treated.

Each and every person is a customer and if they are being neglected, ignored or overlooked, they become disenchanted, frustrated or even indignant. Yet the reality may be far from these perceptions. A clerk may be spending a great deal of time trying to find something the customer is looking for, or determining an answer to a question. However, if the customer hasn’t seen anyone for hours or hasn’t heard from anyone for days, the perception is that they are being neglected or ignored. The perception is reality, and the result is dissatisfaction.

Effective customer service which results in satisfied customers is both the delivery of good service and the perception of satisfaction, respect and service.

Excelling in customer service is much more than the way people are treated at work. It involves a personal understanding of **why people behave the way they do**, and what role they can play in influencing others’ behavior for more positive results.

In many ways, **customer service is a state of mind, a way of thinking and acting that influences customers positively.** It stimulates them to want to continue to do business with one’s company.

Part of quality customer service is knowledge. Knowledge about the company:

- What is the business?
- What are customers seeking?
- Why do they do business with the company?
- How can one ensure that they will be doing business with the company tomorrow?

In addition, an employee should be well-versed in:

1. Product knowledge
2. General knowledge (current events)
3. Industry knowledge
4. Competition
5. Self Knowledge
6. Skills Knowledge

Customer service is a major factor in influencing where people do business. It has a direct effect on the company's bottom line. Think about it. **People tend to come back to places where they've received respect and good service**; and word-of-mouth advertising can play a significant part in boosting sales.

On the other hand, a negative event tends to wipe out all the good ones. It's human nature to avoid people and places that caused us to have a bad experience. It has been said that people **don't forget good service** and they **don't forgive bad service**.

Remember, **customer service means satisfying customers**.

As one often does, put yourself in a customer's shoes. When a customer sees an item that they want, their first reaction or desire, is an emotion. Logic is the secondary reaction. After it is decided that one wants the product, one usually justifies reasons the sale is needed. Sales, in fact, are eighty percent emotion and twenty percent logic.

The same principle holds true for any problem that is encountered with a customer. When a customer is dissatisfied with a purchase, making a return or filing a complaint, the real problem is often buried deep beneath negative emotions. Emotions lead the conversation. One usually has to sort them out and acknowledge them before one can get to the real problem and a logical solution.

As a customer service person, a major part of the job is dealing with the problems of the customer. That may be difficult at times when one has problems of their own. However, **the job is to satisfy the customer**. The employees' concern is not the customers' problems. An employee should keep their personal problems at home. That is often difficult to do, especially if it is a serious or an on-going problem. Nevertheless, it must be done. **If one's mind is not on work, customers can easily notice**.

People have the power to do much more than just handle negative attitudes. They can generate positive attitudes.

An employee needs to control and feel comfortable with the idea that they can actively control, rather than passively accept, the attitudes that create such a force in their lives. This is not an easy process. One truly needs to **practice positive thinking every day**, until it becomes a habit. Successful people know how to influence others because they have mastered the ability to influence themselves to become what they are capable of

becoming. They look at life as more than a spectator. They believe that circumstances do not control their destiny; rather it is how they choose to interpret and react to each circumstance that determines the outcome.

It is not what happens to an individual in life...its how one reacts to what happens that is essential to success. While one doesn't have control over external forces, they do have the power to control the responses to those forces.

The title of this article incorporates the word pride. Satisfying the customer is very much about **PRIDE**.

Think about **PRIDE** as an acronym:

P practice responding positively in the face of setbacks.

R ealize that although one cannot control others' behavior, a persons' own positive attitude can have a powerful influence on them

I nitiate and maintain control over reactions to outside forces

D evelop the self-confidence, skills and knowledge needed

E xcel in communications with others; trying to need their feelings and needs

As one continues to develop their human relations skills, those personal relationships with others, and the everyday dealings with co-workers and customers, will improve.

With a positive attitude, one can meet and exceed a customer's expectation and produce the highest level of customer satisfaction with pride.