Customer Service / Customer Experience

Customer Service – Customer service is the efforts made to fulfill the needs of a customer before service or purchase, during, and after.

Customer Service begins before and ends after - It starts with seeking out potential customers, marketing to them before they even begin considering buying the company’s service or product. After the purchase, there is follow up to survey how the experience was purchasing the service or product, feedback as to the quality of the service or product, and marketing to purchase again.

Awareness

Service Awareness – what are the needs of the customer

Organizational Awareness – what are the needs of the company

Social Awareness – how do you need to meet this customer’s needs

Read the customer – do they want help, do they want excessive help, are they just looking to get something and go, are they out for the day for a shopping experience.

Determine Customer Needs

Important to understand your customer

* Does the customer know the product and needs what models are available
* Is the customer somewhat familiar but needs guidance
* Is the customer inexperienced with the product and needs education as well as simpler language

Stating The Obvious:

* It’s not about you
* People have their own problems and if you are not in a position of authority they will take it out on you
* Don’t take it personally
* Say Please and Thank You.
* Verbalize understanding but don’t be patronizing, “I know this is frustrating, I cannot change the past, but I’m doing everything I can to help you now.”
* Patronizing statements “I’m sorry sir” “I apologize for the inconvenience sir” “I understand sir.”

How to get into the customer service mindset

* Appearance
* Attitude
* Genuine interest
* First impressions
* Responsiveness
* Commitment
* Teamwork
* Clear communication
* Actions speak louder than words
* Personal accountability

Customer service is more than selling a product or service, it is providing information, clarifying terms of purchase, providing technical assistance, following up after the purchase, addressing complaints, and much more.

Customer service is more than getting sales to produce revenue. It builds the company’s reputation. It creates a positive association with the product or service, and outstanding customer service can lead to customers telling others of their experience.

Characteristics of a competent customer service representative:

* Good product and industry knowledge
* Personable
* Adaptability
* Problem Solving

Good Customer Service

1.Listens to and responds to customer needs within guidelines.

2.Clarifies customers’ needs or expectations, when doubt exists.

3.Obtains an understanding of the specific customer’s needs and requirements.

4.Complies with agreements entered into with customers or gives early notice of any deviations.

5.Provides a timely response to customer’s complaints, feedback and comments.

6.Actively inform customers of intentions.

Customer Experience – The customer experience is the feeling the customer leaves an encounter with based on how that encounter went. Knowing what your customer demographic wants to experience can improve the methods by which your staff can provide those experiences to them.

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| --- | --- |
| Customer Service | Customer Experience |
| * Single moment of service
* Addresses customer needs
* Expressed as actions
* Achieved through the entire company and its resources
* Creates customer value
* Measured using NPS
 | * Long term feeling over multiple services
* Creates a continuity of service over multiple encounters
* Expressed as feelings
* By a single service rep or a service team
* Creates customer retention
* Measured using CSAT
 |

The company makes adjustments to market to specific demographics, and customer service representatives should do the same. If you have older patrons, you should be more formal and respectful, if your patrons are college students, you can be more relaxed and joke around.

In a social media world, a negative customer experience can lead to negative reviews. Today, people believe what is on the Internet. If there are a few 1 star reviews, it can drastically lower the overall score. Moreover, most people do not see reviews in context and only look at the overall rating. Some people will take 5 stars over 4 stars even though the difference in contributors is drastically different. A 5 star rating with 10 reviews could very well be a bunch of friends of the owner writing 5 star reviews. However, a 4 star rating with 1000 contributors is not only from real customers, but shows a consistency and predictability in the service that someone can expect from that company.

Again, it takes many positive experiences to build a positive reputation, but only one negative experience to permanently tarnish a company’s reputation.

People do buy products or services, they buy their feelings. If there is an emotional attachment to the product, then a customer will buy it.

Why do you like a certain cereal or laundry detergent? Does it remind you of home, your childhood, your mom?

Ensuring a positive experience –

* Welcome customers, say hello,
* Introduce yourself
* Ask to help, ask what they need
* Let them know you are available
* Be available, don’t disappear
* Listen, repeat to be sure you are understanding
* Make eye contact
* If there is a mistake, immediately apologize.
* Show interest, be genuine
* Be informative, describe the process so the customer knows what to expect.
* Speak with low and empathetic tone

Helpful phrases:

* I would be happy to . . .
* May I . . .
* Would you prefer if I . . .

Suggesting phrases:

* An alternative that may be preferable could be . . .
* May I offer a suggestion other customers have benefited from?
* Another possibility that can help is . . .

5 R’s to active listening

1. Receive
2. Recognize
3. Repeat
4. Remember
5. Respond

Customer Service Proficiency

Basic

* Shows positive attitudes that indicate customers are important.
* Knows what customers’ “rights” are and what expectations they are entitled to hold in terms of customer services.
* Knows what services must be provided to their customers.
* Directs customers to the appropriate persons or sources to have their problems resolved.
* Knows the profiles of customers and responds to their requests in an informed, knowledgeable and polite manner

Advanced

* Voluntarily responds to customers’ requirements promptly and effectively.
* Has a detailed knowledge of the services required by the specific customer and the service standards that are required to be met to satisfy that customer’s expectations.
* Communicates with customers to determine whether any problems exist.
* Works in partnership with customers, solves their problems and encourages their participation and acknowledges their views.
* Develops and sustains productive working relationships with internal and external customers.

Master

* Proactively engages with customers.
* Is frequently in contact with customers and knows how they evaluate the quality of services that they receive.
* Deals promptly with customer’s problems to their satisfaction.
* Identifies how services can be changed or improved that will better satisfy the customer’s expectations.
* Addresses conflicts or difficulties with customers before problems escalate.
* Goes out of their way to help customers, the public and others with their difficulties or in carrying out their daily duties.
* Follows up with customers after purchase

Never Evers

* No Touching – never any need to touch a customer.
* Never roll your eyes
* Never fold your arms
* Never perform another activity when the customer is addressing a questions or concern
* Never angle away form the customer
* Never walk away from a customer while they are speaking or while you are speaking
* Always walk with the customer, never far ahead or tell them you’ll “meet them there”.
* Don’t cut of the customer while they are speaking
* Never swear in front of or to the customer

How would you want to be treated?

For questions on how to handle customer service situations and to clarify customer service techniques, contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Office Location \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_