

July 2009: Getting Customers to come back to you

We all think we give good customer service, yet only 5% of businesses have a written procedure on customer service. Too many employers think their staff knows "customer service". You have to be trained on what your business stands for and what level of service you will consistently provide.

A \$2.00 shop can't be expected to provide the same level of service as an upmarket fashion store; it would be economical disaster as the cost to provide a high level of service would be more than the sales. Likewise a 5 star restaurant may have the best food, but many patrons will go elsewhere as the level of service from one waiter to another varies too much.

Each business must have written procedures on the level of service the customer is willing to pay for and the business must consistently provide this level.

The level of service you provide must be financially viable for the business. If you are not charging a premium for high level of service, it could be costing you money.

- Only 15% of people buy on price and price alone. You can look at any industry and the discount cheap suppliers have a maximum of 15% market share. Kia and Hyundai and other low cost car manufacturers have 15% market share. Why? Because people buy for other reasons and want to be treated as special.
- If you cut back on your customers expectations, you'll be punished.
- When you allow bean counters and data analysts to make marketing decisions, you'll be punished.
- To be specific, if you offer something free, and some insecure member of the management team says it's OK to remove the "r" from "free," think again.
- Forget the terms "customer retention marketing" and "customer relationship marketing." That's the gibberish spouted by number-crunching business school grads and MBAs. If you're in marketing, your business is to create customer relationship magic.
- Don't waste the clients' time on a 50 question post sale survey, where each answer is either, poor, average, good or very good. Most people are too polite to say what they really think.
- It is far better to ask "would you buy from us again and would you refer us?" If the customer says yes, you have done an average job, if they say no; then ask more questions.
- Customer service is all about expectations, the more you know about their expectations the better service you can provide.
- When a customer is made to feel extra special by people who run a business, it's a pleasure to spend money with them again and again.
- Every squinty-eyed bean counter, accountant and CFO who believes it's smart to save money by cutting back on services and cheapening product should be required to go back to school and re-learn economics 101. That is, supply and demand, there are far more people willing to pay for good service than just a cheap product.



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Testimonials

"Rewarding for me and reinforced what I've been doing over the last 8 months" - J. Triffet

"It was great meeting you during the university and especially enjoyed your passion for doing what's right. (and I picked up some things along the way... My bonus and incentive system will never be the same.)"

- Ivanka Menken, Executive Director, The Art of Service Pty Ltd

"Very thought provoking" - Tim Wilson, FMG Consulting