

# TO CREATE PASSIONATE CUSTOMERS, REMEMBER AND USE THEIR NAMES!

Very few companies remember their customers' names and use them – much less remembering the faces of their most frequent customers, let alone the customers they see only occasionally.

Yet there's nothing more precious to a customer than knowing you remembered their name. It's so simple and so valuable, it's one of the highest expressions of a customer-service company culture. Most companies and employees simply don't care – because they don't realize how great an impact it makes.

This simple behavior is a stealth weapon for creating passionate, loyal customers (and stealing customers from your competitors). And it costs nothing but the effort to train your staff.

I can think of only three companies that are outstanding at using my name: Delta Airlines, Amazon, and Apple. These three exceptional companies can serve as role models for us all. Why not join their ranks and share their successes?

Every organization that wants to be a service leader should devise a strategy to help their employees adopt this simple behavior.

The more valuable the customer, the more important it is. Most companies have technology that records customers' names. How hard can it be for an employee to say, "Mr. Charles, good afternoon, thanks for calling – how can I help?"

There are three easily surmountable obstacles that keep most employees from using customers' names: indifference, fear, and lack of training.

1. Indifference: Employees often think of their work as "just a job" or a daily grind to "get through." They clearly haven't invested themselves in the company's success. Perhaps they haven't realized how profoundly their actions can affect the big picture.

2. Fear: There's often a fear of interacting with customers, or of not pronouncing their name correctly.

The solution? Ask the customers to remind you how to pronounce their name. Customers will appreciate your effort to learn and remember their names.

3. Lack of training: It isn't easy for a company to differentiate itself on price, product, and quality. But when you provide superior customer service, you set yourself apart from the competition and increase your customer loyalty. And it all begins with remembering names.

While most of us probably don't have exceptional memories, we do have the tools to make our customers feel recognized and welcome. When they hand you a credit card, membership card, or reservation

form, a simple glance at their name will suffice, and it's folly to ignore that information!

## 11 SIMPLE STEPS FOR RECALLING NAMES

1. Pay attention to what your customers are saying.
2. Avoid distractions – be focused on the customer.
3. Learn the customer's name as soon as possible.
4. Use customers' names early and often.
5. Engage all of your senses, especially your eyes and ears.
6. Connect information. Link new info to the information you already have.
7. Write things down.
8. Go over the encounter in your mind and try to remember every detail.
9. Rehearse. Refer to your notes and review what you've learned.
10. Use affirmations – tell yourself that you have a great memory.
11. Stay motivated, stay positive.

Most people can remember a face, but attaching a name takes a different set of skills.

- The first time you hear a name, repeat it back to the person in conversation as soon as you can.
- Add the name to the beginning or end of a greeting: "Tasha, how nice to meet you," or "It was a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Gainer."
- Associate the name with something the customer tells you about him- or herself.
- To repeat – write it down! Include the name, a phonetic spelling, any personal details, and the subject of your encounter.

When you greet your customers by name you're telling them they're important to you and your organization, and when customers feel important they're more likely to return. Treat every customer like royalty. Remember their face and name, and you'll create loyal, passionate customers.

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