

# Get an edge with customer service training



John Tschohl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

As a business owner, you can sell the same items or services at the same — or lower — prices as your competitors. What can you offer that will give you a competitive in that situation?

The answer is this: Exceptional customer service. Not only will doing so increase your customer base and revenues, but it will also save you money by reducing employee turnover. Given today's economic climate, it is critical that you do whatever you can to increase your odds of being — and remaining — successful.

Unfortunately, few companies are willing to invest the time and money necessary to provide customer service training for their employees. Most owners and executives think it is unnecessary, that employees simply know how to provide good service to their customers. The truth is that they don't.

Just as athletes know they must constantly train in the fundamentals of their sports to be winners; employees must be trained constantly in the fundamentals of customer service. Schools and colleges don't offer customer service courses, so

where are your employees going to get the training, they need? You must provide it.

*Customer service training is not an expense; it is a high-yield investment.*

Ninety-nine percent of your company's contact with customers comes through your frontline employees. The sad fact is that those employees are the least paid, least trained, least valued, and least appreciated people you employ. They deserve better. When not trained in how to provide exceptional customer service, many employees become frustrated, burn out and leave.

Customer service training is not an expense; it is a high-yield investment.

It is a profit-producing strategy. If you want to instill a service culture in your company, you must make a commitment to do so — one that starts at the top and travels through management to your frontline employees.

The return on investment when you train your employees is great. You will realize increased sales, improved employee morale and productivity, fewer customer complaints, a drop in employee turnover, and an increase in customer loyalty.

You might be thinking that your employees already provide great service to your customers, but you might be turning a blind eye to what is really going on in your organization. For example, when customers ask your employees where they can find a certain product, do those employees simply point or do they walk customers to the product? Do your employees call customers by name? Do they thank them for their business? Are they proactive in asking customers if they can be of help? Do they smile? Do they make eye contact with customers?

Those are just a few of the elements

of exceptional customer service—and they must be taught. You can't, however, train employees once a year and expect them to perform to the highest standards. If you want to drive a customer service culture in your organization, you should train employees every four months with something new and fresh. That training should focus on quality, accuracy, dependability, speed, human relationships, and attitudes.

When you give your employees the tools and skills, they need to take care of your customers, they — and your customers — will stay with you.

For more detailed information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute, you can visit him online at [www.customer-service.com](http://www.customer-service.com).

**About the Author:** John Tschohl is the founder and president of the Service Quality Institute—the global leader in customer service—with operations in more than 40 countries. He is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service and has developed 17 customer service training programs that are used by companies throughout the world. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at [www.customer-service.com](http://www.customer-service.com). He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

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