

# 5 STEPS FOR GETTING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS

How can you get great customer service? How can you get an employee to go above and beyond to help you? How can you get an employee to work on your behalf because they like you?

Employees can work miracles for customers who appreciate them, and who are friendly and respectful. Be one of those customers!

If you want to get great customer service, I recommend that you take the following steps that will work whether you're talking face to face, on the phone or by email.

## 1. BE FRIENDLY

**Introduce yourself.** Use your first name, rather than "Mr. Smith" or "Ms. Johnson," because it will set the tone for everything that follows. When you're informal, you establish a relationship that puts you and the employee on an equal footing, which makes conversation easier. Ask the employee for his/her name and use it in your conversation. Also, thank the employee in advance for helping.

## 2. DESCRIBE WHAT YOU NEED – ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE EMPLOYEE IS THE EXPERT IN MEETING THAT NEED

Whether you're looking for help with products and processes for refinishing a kitchen, looking for a dress to wear to a wedding, or needing a new fishing rod, **give the employee as much information as you can** so that he/she can steer you in the right direction. Let the employee know you trust their advice to ensure that what you purchase will be the best product at the best price.

## 3. BE POLITE

**We all like to be treated like we matter.** When you use words like "please," "thank you," and "I appreciate your help," you form a connection with the employee. You let them know you value them and respect what they do. When you make the employee feel like a king or queen, they'll treat you like royalty.

## 4. BE HUMBLE

**Don't be arrogant or demanding.** Employees deal with dozens of customers daily, many of whom treat them like serfs. You want to be the exception who stands out by treating them like a god or goddess of knowledge. Your goal is to befriend the employee and have them provide you with service that goes above and beyond.

## 5. MAKE EMPLOYEES FEEL LIKE THEY ARE YOUR PARTNERS

**When you form a connection with the employee and show your vulnerability, they become your champions.** That's exactly what Beth did when dealing with an airline. She had two \$100 vouchers but couldn't locate them before she booked a trip for herself and her daughter. She found the vouchers a week after returning from the trip, but they had expired. She sent an email to the airline, beginning with: "I realize this problem is mine, not yours." She explained her situation, and within a few days the airline sent her two new \$100 vouchers. Why? Because Beth behaved decently, and the airline's employee could empathize.

Your goal is to get great customer service. Recognize that you play a critical role in achieving that goal. Leave your ego at home, befriend the employees, ask for help, and be appreciative. You'll be surprised by the results.

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

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*John Tschohl is the founder and president of Service Quality Institute, the global leader in customer service with operations in more than 40 countries. John is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service. He has developed 17 customer service training programs, including Handling Irate Customers, 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.*

