



# Are You Guessing on Your Quality of Customer Service?

BY JOHN TSCHOHL

Providing outstanding customer service at the right price is the “Golden Rule” of most companies. It’s worth remembering that we all experience customer service every day. Customer service is a critical piece of your business, and you should fine-tune it as much as you can. Here are some well-known facts on customer service ....



# Eighty-six percent of consumers will immediately quit doing business with a company because of a bad customer experience.

**Fact:** 90 percent of companies say they deliver superior customer service and only eight percent of people think these same companies deliver superior customer service. Which goes to show, you shouldn't be *guessing* when it comes to evaluating your customer service.

*Think you don't have to worry? Guess again!*

Take your mobile phone and your service contract. If you're like me, it's hard to tell. The contract has been deliberately written to be so complex that most people don't read it. This, by the way, is why just about everyone hates mobile service providers — and why wireless carriers have some of the lowest customer service ratings of any industry.

**Fact:** The average American spends 13 hours per year and 43 days per lifetime on hold for customer service. When it comes to customer service, your customers care far more about competent and helpful service.

**Fact:** Seventy-three percent of dissatisfied customers cited incompetent, rude and "rushed" service as the #1 reason why they abandoned a brand.

**Fact:** Eighty-six percent of consumers will immediately quit doing business with a company because of a bad customer experience.

**Fact:** Bad customer service is

more than just a potential liability, it's a huge cost to your business. Consumers are *far* more likely to share bad customer experiences due to their frustration.

**Fact:** It is 6-7 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one.

**Fact:** The average business hears from only four percent of its dissatisfied customers. Very few people have time for your mistakes. Even *fewer* people are going to take the time to let you know about them, and why should they? You're the one that screwed up.

**Fact:** Your customers can do quite a few things much better than you can, and if your business isn't embracing this fact by viewing customer service as a branch of your marketing department with *tremendous* ROI, you're doing yourself, as well as your customers, a disservice.

**Fact:** Nine out of 10 U.S. consumers say they would pay more to ensure a superior customer experience. Customers expect consistent quality of customer service; with a similar, familiar look and feel whenever and however they contact your company.

American firms spend all their customer service training dollars on surveys. That's total overkill. Few spend any money training employees on customer service. Customer

service training will tip the scales toward making your business more successful for your employees and your bottom line.

## **Take Responsibility — Be... Fast and Accurate**

People want answers and to move on with their busy lives. One simple and straightforward way to solve problems faster is simply to be available at all times, 24/7 with a "live" person that answers the call within three rings. That way no one is ever having to check your hours to get in touch the next day. It's easier to resolve issues and you will stand out from the competition as a company that deals with their customers right away.

## **Be... Respectful and Friendly**

Customer service should be filled with positivity. Greet your customers, use their names, and always express appreciation for their business. Inject positivity into your day — the results will be eye-opening.

## **Be... a Listener**

Lead with your ear rather than your mouth so you can connect and problem-solve. How can you meet your customer's needs if you don't know them? To understand their needs, just listen to the

Ask your customer what they think would be a good outcome.

“voice of the customer” and take action accordingly.

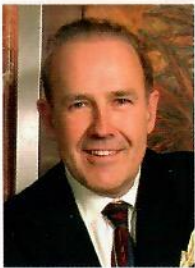
### Be... a Solution Provider

Ask your customer what they think would be a good outcome. They probably have something in mind that they feel would make sense given the circumstances. Even if that final answer is not exactly what you want, the customer may also feel that they are not getting exactly what they'd hoped.

### Be... Amazing

Bear in mind that the customer will feel incredible if they feel that you are taking extra steps to help them.

*MANA welcomes your comments on this article. Write to us at [mana@manaonline.org](mailto:mana@manaonline.org).*



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