



## Exceptional Customer Service is No Longer Optional

The easier it is for a customer to give you their money, the happier that customer is bound to be. And they will tell their friends!

Whether it is an improved phone system, an easy-to-access website, convenient parking, store hours that match the customers' schedules, or accepting all forms of payment, we need to simplify, simplify, simplify!

### Fix problems:

You are bound to have problems now and again. How you handle those problems can make or break your customer service plan. Have a good service recovery process and use it consistently. When there is a problem, take these simple steps to turn those unhappy customers around:

1. Apologize with empathy
2. Take ownership of the problem
3. Fix the problem ASAP
4. Get the customer's buy-in
5. Offer a small sincere token of apology
6. Follow up

### For example you might say:

"I am so sorry that we were not able to send those flowers when we promised. I know that we really created a problem for you. (Step 1) I will make sure they go out immediately. (Step 2 and 3) Will that be ok? (Step 4) And because we were at fault, I would like to offer you a 20% discount on your next purchase (Step 5)."

Then in a week or two, follow up with a phone call or note to see if the customer feels satisfied with your solution (Step 6).

### Rewrite policies and procedures:

Too many policies and procedures are there for the sake of the business instead of the customer. Take a good look at all of yours with the intent of turning them into customer-friendly policies and procedures.

For example, if your current policy states that you only accept cash or checks in payment for a product or service, consider accepting credit cards and/or PayPal to make it easier for your customer to give you their money.

Or if your current procedure has your customer filling out lengthy paperwork when they arrive for an appointment, consider letting them access the paperwork online to fill out in advance, or offer to have a member of your staff fill it out for them.

### Train, Train, Train:

All of these new customer service oriented suggestions are useless unless your employees are onboard and well trained. Once you have your new customer service business plan created, you need to train ALL your employees so that they can provide the kind of service that makes your customers *loyal* customers. Empower them to be "customer-focused." Reward them when they provide "Wow!" service.

Treat your employees with the same care and concern you want them to extend to your customers. It is a fact that if you have happy employees you will have happy customers!

And happy customers keep coming back time and time again!

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### About the Author:

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