KEEPING CUSTOMERS HAPPY

How to Provide Exceptional Client Service

By Joann M. Slavin
Statistics

- 80 percent of companies say they deliver superior customer service.
- 8 percent of people think that these companies deliver superior customer service.

Uh-oh!
Clients chose to pay for services for two reasons:

1. The product is valuable for their business.
2. It is seamless... They don’t have to think about it.
Your competitive advantage: customer service as an offense
Recommendations and Customer Loyalty

Studies have shown that it costs six to seven times more to acquire a new customer than keep an old one, outpacing your competition depends upon having a loyal following of happy customers.

Want to learn how to increase loyalty with your new and existing customers? (this is the secret part!)
Here’s the secret to increasing loyalty!

Customers are not loyal to a company...they are loyal to beliefs.....to what the business stands for.

Connecting with your clients on a personal level is critical for growing a business and engagement.

They want to see that you share their beliefs and these beliefs are incorporated into how you can conduct business.
Tips for taking care of your clients

- Build a relationship: respect
- Respond to emails and phone calls
- Set yourself apart
- Follow up
- Make their lives easier
- Give value added service
- Always listen
Tips for taking care of your clients

- Build trust
- Follow through on your word: keep promises
- Recognize responsibility
- Be on time with your data
- Be grateful
- Be an expert in your field
- Take care of the clients that you have...don’t overlook them
- Word of mouth marketing is powerful and a solid strategy for creating business growth
Reciprocity

By going out of your way for a customer, it creates a desire to return the favor. Loyalty is very valuable in business.
The Best Service

“The best customer service is if the customer doesn’t need to call you, doesn’t need to talk to you. It just works.” - Jeff Bezos
“If you make the customer a promise... make sure you deliver it.”
- Merv Griffin
“So I think instead of focusing on the competition, focus on the customer”  - Scott Cook

=Happy CLIENTS
Teddy and Bear
my puppies
Is great customer service worth the effort? (this is a no brainer)

Let's discuss the risks vs. benefits of providing bad service as compared to great service.
Why clients leave?

The number one reason that clients leave a company is poor customer service. What factors lead a client to say they had bad service?

- Incompetency
- Non-responsive
- Rude
- Issues not resolved in a timely manner
- Feel let down
“In an era when companies see online support as a way to shield themselves from costly interactions with their customers, it’s time to consider an entirely different approach: building human centric customer service through great people and clever technology. So, get to know your customers. Humanize them. Humanize yourself. It’s worth it.”  

-Kristin Smaby

“Being Human is Good Business”
The Cost of Bad Service

- “News of bad customer service reaches more than twice as many ears as praise for a good service experience” - White House Office of Consumer Affairs

- Customers are willing to walk away if they do not get the level of service that they expect.

- The worst part is that you may not know the impact of your poor service until it is too late.
Drink the Kool-Aid

Everyone in the company needs to be empowered to make the decisions to meet the customers needs
“People will work hard when they are given the freedom to do the job the way they think it should be done, when they can treat customers the way they like to be treated. When you start taking away their incentive and start giving them rules, boom, you’ve killed their creativity.”

-Jim Nordstrom, founder of Nordstrom department store
“There are many who subscribe to the convention that service is a business cost, but our data demonstrates that superior service is an investment that can help to drive business growth. Investing in quality talent, and ensuring they have the skills, training and tools that enable them to empathize and actively listen to customers are central to providing consistently excellent service experiences.”

- Jim Bush, Executive Vice President at American Express
Service Skills Your Employees Need

1. **Patience**: we are in a technical field and not all of our clients are technical

2. **Attentiveness**: really listen and more importantly hear what is being said

3. **Clear Communication**: leave no room for doubt
   
   *e.g. TCL list (means different things to different people)*
4. Competence

5. Time management skills: deal with decision makers when you need to... no more groundhog day

6. Intuition: look and listen for real meaning

7. A calming presence: keep your cool
Service Skills Your Employees Need

8. Ability to handle surprises
9. Tenacity
10. Willingness to learn
11. Closing ability
Answer the phone!
“If you make the engineers answer e-mails and phone calls from the customers, the second or third time they get the same question they’ll actually stop what they’re doing and fix the code. Then we don’t have those questions anymore.” - Paul English, Kayak.com

Are clients asking the same questions and having the same issues over and over again? Guess what? It’s you and not them. Fix the issue.
Forgiveness

- Despite our best efforts mistakes are bound to happen... It is how we deal with them that matters.

- Your reputation won’t be altered unless it becomes the norm.
Customers are more likely to provide feedback if they know that you are listening. Customer feedback can save you time if you spend time working on something that you think that they want but they don’t really need.
Feedback

- Do you think few complaints = great service?
- The average business hears from 4 percent of its dissatisfied customers
Managing Feedback

- For every customer who complains, the other 26 that have the same issue are silent.
- Take the comments to heart and really hear them.
- Project Managers need to learn to hear and to work to fix the issue not just correct the one time occurrence.
Managing feedback

- Email feedback
- Observation
- Survey feedback
“When customers share their story, they’re not just sharing pain points. They’re actually teaching you how to make your product, service and business better. Your customer service organization should be designed to effectively communicate those issues”.
- Kristin Smaby, “Being Human is Good Business”
Customers will teach you everything that you ever wanted to know about building a better business......if you let them.

Taking the information to heart and learning from it and changing is up to you.

When the student is ready
the teacher appears

- Buddhist Proverb
Have a deep understanding of your customers ... and their needs and expectations

When we understand what the customer needs (hint: we can find this out by talking to them and asking them), we can spend time working on giving them what they want.
Get out of the client’s Way!

Providing content based forms of client support on your website or in email blasts that will help your clients can allow them to get the information that they need at their own pace.

Sometimes clients want to be in control of the information when they want it, not when you are available to give it (self-serve).
When food goes bad
when client feedback goes wrong

Customers don't *always* know what they want in a product, and many features that get requested are often spur of the moment requests, not true improvements that will solve major pain-points for a majority of your users.

- Help Scout
Why Steve Jobs never listened to his customers

“It’s really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don’t know what they want until they see it.” - Steve Jobs
Do clients really know what they want?

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.” - Henry Ford
Management as Support Staff

Management needs to support client services by giving them the opportunity to be successful by:

- Providing quality data
- On time
- Giving them the tools and resources needed
- Mentoring and training
- Being accessible for guidance and direction
- Being available for escalation if needed
In Conclusion

Exceptional customer service results in greater customer retention, which in turn results in higher profitability.

Customer loyalty is a major contributor to sustainable profit growth.
QUESTIONS?

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