

## Customer Service

What customers really want in customer service can be divided into two areas.

**Firstly** – they want the core service of your business to meet their needs. They expect your product or service to work.

If you say that you're a plumber, then the customer expects you to fix their leaking pipe. If you say you're an accountant, then they expect you to resolve their tax details.

They also expect your product or service to represent value for money.

If I buy an expensive pair of winter boots I expect them to keep out the cold and wet and also look good. Naturally if I was to buy a cheaper pair I wouldn't expect them to last as long.

Customers expect your after-sales service to be efficient. If my new winter boots start to leak when I wear them for the first time, then I expect the shop to replace them immediately.

However, none of this will make customers loyal or cause them to tell others how good you are. They take this core service as a given. You wouldn't see me running around telling people that my new winter boots didn't leak.

**What  
customers  
really want**

This is the **Second** and most important point -

What customers **really - really - really** want and what will make them loyal to your business and say wonderful things about you to other people are:

**Warm and friendly responses** – When customers make contact with you face to face or over the telephone, they want a warm response. It can still be businesslike but you and your people need to look and sound - friendly and likeable.

**(This may all sound like common sense to you but think about these factors the next time you're a customer and ask yourself if they are happening to you. Then ask yourself if your customers or clients are experiencing this from you and your people)**

**They want to feel important** – They know that you have lots of other customers and clients but they just love it when you make them feel special.

**They want to be listened to** – Customers often get the impression that the person dealing with them is not really listening. You must keep working on your listening skills. Keep good eye contact with people and concentrate on what they're saying. Keep an open mind and resist the temptation to jump in with an answer.

It's also important to show that you're listening. Open body language and head nods when face to face – lots of Uh – Hu's when over the phone.

**Someone to know their name** – A person's name is one of the sweetest sounds they'll ever hear. If you use a customer's name when you talk to them, it indicates that you recognise them as an individual. Don't use it too often as it can become irritating, but definitely at the start and the end of a conversation.

**Flexibility** – Customers hate to hear the word "No" or "it can't be done." It's not always possible to say "Yes" to a customer or do exactly what they want; however, it is important to be as flexible as you can.

Tell customers what you can do not what you can't.

**Recovery** – When things go wrong, customers want you to solve their problems quickly. They don't want to hear excuses or who's to blame or why it happened, they just want it fixed fast.

Customers will often judge the quality of your service by the way you recover. They will even forgive your mistakes if you recover well.

Say, for example, you served a meal that wasn't cooked properly or wasn't hot enough. You would need to apologise, assure the customer it will be fixed and then do it quickly. Then tell the customer that they won't be charged for the main course or give them some wine or a free desert. Then, when that customer talks about your restaurant, they'll tell people – *"There was a small problem initially but when I pointed it out, they really moved themselves and they couldn't have been more apologetic."*

Don't be afraid when something does go wrong; it's often a great opportunity to show customers just how great your service really is.

Overall, customers just want to feel good. They want to feel better after they've dealt with you or anyone in your business, than they did before. If you can create that feeling, then you're well on the way to - **getting customers to come to you.**