



# ***FRONTLINE***

## **Customer Service Program**



*COMMITMENT TO  
PROVIDING QUALITY  
CUSTOMER SERVICE IN  
RICHMOND/WAYNE COUNTY.*

# CUSTOMER SERVICE

## UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

**CUSTOMER SERVICE IS AWARENESS OF NEEDS, PROBLEMS AND EXPECTATIONS.**

Do you provide good customer service? The answer to that question really isn't for you to decide. Your customers make the ultimate determination of whether or not your organization actually has outstanding customer service. So, when trying to do a "customer service checkup", you have to pay attention to what customers experience when doing business with your company.

### **Customer Needs and Expectations**

Do customers view your organization as one that is easy to deal with? If so, that means that your team is practicing customer-focused behavior. However, if customers find it difficult to deal with your company, it's another matter entirely. To be viewed as a company that is easy to work with, it's important to consider what customers need and expect from their product and service provider and to act decisively to meet or exceed their expectations.

### **Knowledgeable Service Providers**

Customers expect to interact with company representatives who know what they are doing. Employees need to be properly trained and need to know how to get information they might need to respond to customer inquiries.

### **Options and Alternatives**

Customers need to know what their options are, and they need to feel like you have their best interest in mind. Don't tell customers things like, "The only thing you can do is...". Instead, say, "The best option in your situation is...".

This phrasing is much more positive, even though the meaning is the same. Adopting this type of language helps you meet the customer need for options and alternatives.

### **Enthusiastic Service**

People want to do business with companies whose employees act like they actually enjoy their jobs. Don't go overboard with enthusiasm, because doing so can result in coming across as insincere. However, make sure you know how to greet customers positively, conveying a sense that you really want to help the customer rather than that the customer is intruding upon you. Simply replacing a phrase like, "What do you want?" with "How can I help?" can go a long way toward sending the right message to customers.



# CUSTOMER SERVICE

## THE 3 WORST WORDS IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

**WHATEVER YOUR  
BUSINESS IS, TALK TO  
YOUR CUSTOMERS AND  
PROVIDE THEM WITH  
WHAT THEY WANT.  
IT MAKES SENSE.**

**By changing a few words, you can turn a bad customer experience into a great one.**

It's happened to most, if not all, of us at one time or another. You walk into a store, politely ask for help, and you're told, "You'll have to wait." It's not the waiting part that bothers us most of the time - it's the phrase "**you'll have to.**" As a customer on the receiving end of this statement, it sounds a little harsh or abrasive, doesn't it?

Most of us probably don't say "you'll have to" out of rudeness. We say it because we are trying to protect ourselves, or set expectations with a customer. But when you examine the meaning of this statement literally, you can see where it breeds a lot of customer resentment right off the bat. It tells another person what to do, it implies that you have the power in this transaction, not them, and it doesn't give the customer options.

The irony is that, by changing just a few words, you can turn a curt brush-off into a great customer experience. For instance:

**Before:** "You'll have to fill out this form."

**After:** "I'd like to get a little information from you so we can help you better."

**Before:** "You'll have to wait for a technician."

**After:** "I'll have someone here to help you in just a few minutes."

**Before:** "You'll have to wait in line."

**After:** "We should be able to get to you soon - it shouldn't be more than a short wait."

A fantastic example of an alternative comes from Rich Gallagher, a communications skills expert and author of several customer service books including

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# TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE

## TOP 12 TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES

**PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH A COMPUTER. THEY WANT TO SPEAK WITH A REAL, LIVE, RESPONSIVE, RESPONSIBLE PERSON WHO WILL LISTEN AND HELP THEM GET SATISFACTION.**

Hundreds of millions of telephone calls are made each and every day around the world, and many of those calls are made by customers. It is clear that the way these telephone calls are handled can make a huge difference to a company's relationship with its customers.

Using the telephone competently and courteously is essential to customer and client satisfaction. Poor telephone etiquette can have a disastrous effect on your telephone customer

service - and bottom line.

Here are 12 rules to remember that will help you provide excellent telephone customer service:

**1. Preparation.** Have a fair idea of what you are going to say in advance of your telephone call. Have a mental script you can fall back on if the conversation wonders.

**2. Introduction.** When we meet people face to face, we often introduce ourselves with a handshake. On the phone we must do this

verbally by greeting the customer with genuine warmth.

**3. Build rapport.** Most callers want to speak with a human being, not a machine. Be yourself and keep it friendly.

**4. Speak clearly.** Making yourself understood is a key principle of effective telephone customer service.

**5. Tone of voice.** A friendly but authoritative manner works well. Develop your

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## THE 3 WORST WORDS IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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*Great Customer Service Connections and What to Say to a Porcupine —*

*I tried to go to a sold-out Philadelphia Phillies baseball game last year while passing through town on business. Instead of saying the obvious, "We're*

*sold out, you'll have to come back another time," the clerk said, "We'd love to have you see the game. Even though we are sold out, feel free to check at each of our gates to see if there are any extra tickets. Good luck!"*

*As it turned out, there were no extra tickets at any of the gates and I eventually left*

*empty-handed. But every person I had dealt with at the ballpark was so polite, upbeat and helpful that it was still a great customer experience. I later discovered that the ballpark attendants are specifically trained on what to say to fans in such situations, and it works!"*

Remember to look critically at times where you are tempted to say "you'll have to" to customers, and start rehearsing new responses that speak to your customers interests. The difference will be amazing.

# TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE

## TOP 12 TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES

**BUSINESS IS ABOUT  
TECHNOLOGY, YES.  
BUT IT'S ALSO  
ABOUT OPERATIONS  
AND CUSTOMER  
RELATIONSHIPS.**

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own phone personality and vary your vocal pitch to avoid sending the caller to sleep.

**6. Keep it positive.** Make a list of words that sound upbeat and use them. Avoid using negative words and phrases on the telephone, such as, "that's not possible", "forget it", "why didn't you", "I don't know", "never heard of it", and "it's against company policy." Keep bureaucratic phrases and jargon out of customer service conversations.

**7. Listen.** In some ways, listening to your customer is more important than speaking. Find out exactly what your customer wants before attending to their needs.

**8. Putting callers on-hold.** If you have to leave the customer at any time, make sure you explain why and for how long. Offering to call the customer back demonstrates courtesy and a willingness to help.



**9. Transferring calls.** One thing that kills a customer relationship is being passed around from pillar to post, or, worse still, getting lost inside a virtual switchboard. Ensure you know how your telephone customer service

system works and always get the caller's details before you transfer them, so you can call them back if need be.

**10. Use voicemail effectively.** Properly compose your voicemail before delivering it. Rehearse announcements before recording them on your phone.

**11. Dealing with difficult calls.** Try to think about why the caller is acting the way they are and do not take what people say to you as a personal insult. Don't lose your temper and keep your attention on the facts. Try to get your customer's agreement as a way forward to resolving the call.

**12. Closing the call.** Make sure you give assurance that any promises you have made will be fulfilled. Thank the caller and let them know their business is appreciated.

By following these telephone customer service rules, not only will you communicate effectively to your customers - you will positively impact your company's bottom line.

## SECRET SHOPPING

*Provided by Wayne County Tourism*

**Send us your personalized customer service performance evaluation form to have your business "shopped" with a phone call or visit to your facility.**

**Results are provided free of charge.**

**For more information on the Frontline and Secret Shopper programs, contact the Tourism Sales Dept. directly at (765) 935-2882.**

# CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

## BUSINESS TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE TIPS

**THE WAY YOU  
PRESENT YOURSELF ON  
THE PHONE CAN LEAVE  
LASTING IMPRESSIONS  
OF YOU AND YOUR  
COMPANY.**

Many things have changed over the years, especially in the evolving world of business. One thing has not changed though, and that is the need for proper telephone etiquette in the workplace. Along with company downsizings and layoffs has come a necessity for companies to merge jobs together in order to eliminate human resources and save money. While that may be necessary, it is not necessary that the common element of etiquette, especially telephone etiquette, be left to suffer.

The following are some proper telephone etiquette tips that everyone in your workplace should practice everyday.

### ***Incoming Calls***

- All incoming calls should be answered in a timely manner.
- Business telephones should always be answered with a phrase such as, "Good morn-

ing, ABC Company, this is Carol, how may I help you?" This lets the caller know that they have reached the right business and to whom they are speaking.

- Speak clearly when you answer a business telephone. Do not slur or mumble your words. Speak with confidence so the person on the other end has the feeling that you know what you are doing.
- Never be rude to a caller, no matter how nasty they are. Always remember to handle yourself in a professional, business-like manner.

### ***Outgoing Calls***

- Same as above. Speak clearly without



mumbling, and speak with confidence.

- Same as above. Never be rude. Always demonstrate professionalism when calling someone on behalf of your company.
- Give your name and your company's name to whomever answers the telephone. Do not make them guess who it is or have to pry it out of you.
- When leaving a voicemail message, always state your name, company, phone number and reason for calling. Be brief and do not use up an unreasonable amount of time.