

BizTips from SCORE - Improving Your Customer Service Performance

This week I walked into a local supermarket and coming toward me was an employee wearing a monogrammed shirt and name tag. I smiled as I passed but received no recognition, acknowledgement, or greeting. This set the tone for the entire engagement and it wasn't good. My guess is that the employee wasn't coached that great customer service begins and ends with them at the front door. . Your team can offer "gold medal" customer service by:

Being genuinely interested in other people. One of the axioms we borrow from principles of networking is to be interested in other people so the focus moves away from you to them.

Authenticity is critical for customers to take you seriously. Being customer focused is one thing, but to show real interest in them creates an environment of sincerity that makes the experience more than transactional.

Offering a smile. When you smile you are showing you are genuine, open, and welcoming. It is the most important nonverbal communication you can display since it is a door opener to start a conversation and possibly a relationship.

Using their name. "Hi, my name is Joan, and yours is?" This takes the engagement to the next level. Customers like to hear their name being used in the buying experience.

Being a good listener. 70 percent of communication is listening, not talking. If you are a good listener you will actually hear and therefore potentially understand what your customer wants, needs, or desires.

Remembering the Thank You. These are the two most important words in customer service. Showing appreciation goes miles in making the customer feel special. Even if they are a long time customer, thanking them for doing business with you reinforces their importance to you

Making customer service a "team" event. Everyone in your employ is a customer service representative. Every interaction with a customer leaves an impression that creates the "loyalty index" in the mind of a buyer.

At the end of the day, customers have many options, but they buy from those that satisfy them. Make improving your customer service performance a key performance indicator for 2024.

Contributed by Marc L. Goldberg, Certified Mentor. Sourced: How to Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie – 16 Tips for Outstanding Customer Service, Gregory Ciotti, Zombie Loyalists, Peter Shankman. For Free and Confidential mentoring to up your customer service game contact SCORE Cape Cod and the Islands. www.score.org/capecod, capecodscore@scorevolunteer.org, 508/775-4884.