



7 CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS TO BOOST PROFITS

**How to Get and Keep New Business Using
Customer Service**

TURNING CUSTOMER CARE INTO SALES

As you read every word of this report, you'll see customer service in a different light. It becomes a powerful sales tool to grow your business

Written by Mike Saccoia

“Customers may forget what you said, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel.” - Unknown

Remember the last time you phoned a business and ended up lost in their “menu maze.”

Trying options like a slot machine. Hoping you hit the jackpot and get to speak with someone.

Finally reaching a person - only to be told you need to be transferred elsewhere.

You wait for an eternity and then hear: “All of our agents are busy. Please leave a message with your name and number and someone will return your call.”

Second rate customer service can cost a business big time.

Resulting in lost revenue, angry customers and even a damaged reputation.

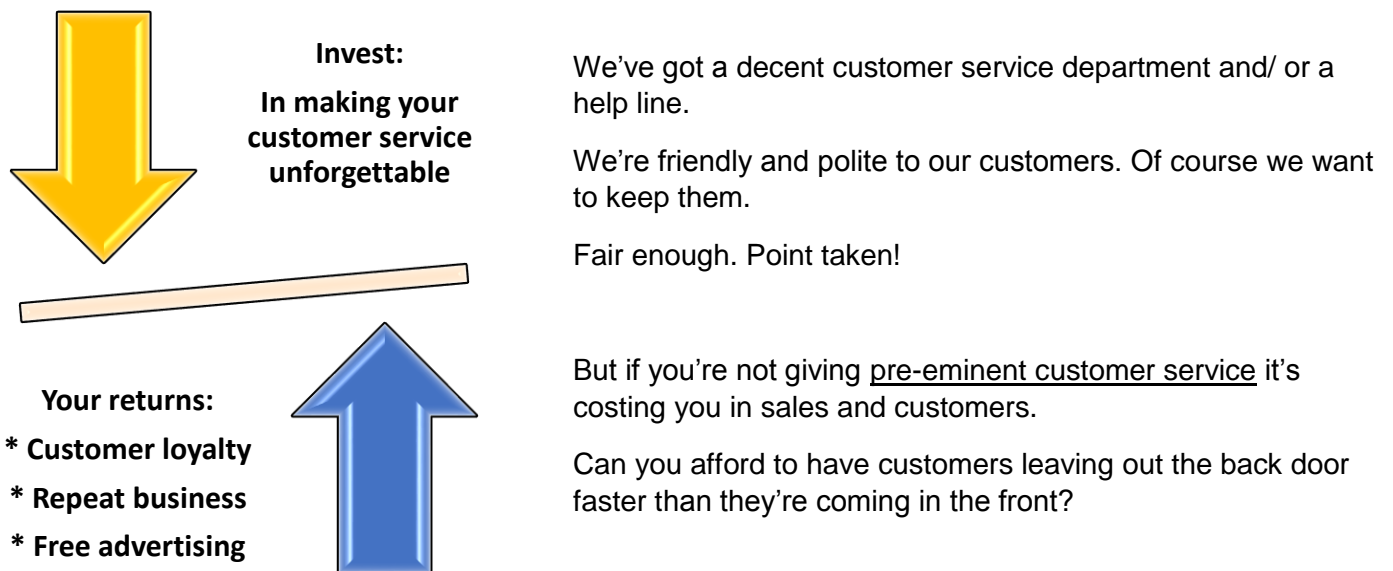
Not to mention increased costs to try and win back clientele.

Unfortunately, customer service is a buzzword thrown around rather loosely today.

It’s more of an afterthought. Let alone a strategy to grow a customer base.

Customer care is viewed as a loss leader. Because it doesn’t generate new sales.

You may be thinking. We know this stuff already. We have policies.



What I'm leading up to is this:

You can take advantage of **superior customer service** and turn it into part of your sales approach. Using it as a tool to knock the socks off your customers so they want to come back for more.

Having spent over 30 years in customer service I've seen what works.

What persuades an irate customer to give you a second chance at a sale.

Little touches that make a prospect feel special. Truly giving them the time of day.

It boils down to - **TREAT YOUR CUSTOMERS LIKE ROYALTY. And they'll be lining up for you.**

Does this mean giving away the business to make a prospect happy?

Of course not! It's impossible to please everyone all of the time.

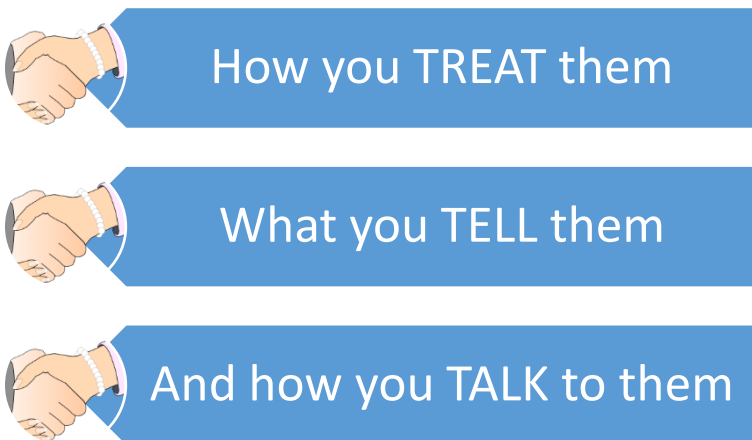
Your goal is to keep as many customers as happy as possible.

The way I look at it is the prospect comes for the need, but stays because of the experience.

After all, there are others offering the same service or product as you. Perhaps at a lower price.

Everything else being equal - treating a customer like a VIP leads to increased business.

Here's the secret sauce for treating customers like VIP's:



Read on to discover the 7 **simple steps** of this secret sauce. And create a fabulous experience for your customer. One that will have them raving, referring and buying.

1) TREAT Your Customer to a Friendly, Proactive and Consistent Experience.

Picture this:

You're at a big box store's grand opening.

Just about every 10 feet in every aisle there's a cheery associate. Ready to fawn all over you.

Fantastic service you think to yourself – almost too much!

Fast forward 6 months. The sound of crickets and echoes greet you when trying to find an associate.

It's maddening – you feel like a customer service bait and switch has been pulled on you.

Superior customer service strikes a balance between being over the top and underperforming.

Here's a great way to do that:

In the hospitality industry there's a practice called the 10 & 5 rule.

It's meant to be proactive, friendly and consistent.

If within 10 feet of a guest acknowledge them with eye contact and a smile.

Within 5 feet greet them by saying "Hello", "Hi" or "May I help you."

If the staff member is engaged with other staff it's expected they switch focus to the guest.

Not too intrusive, yet available enough to be of assistance.

Here are some points to consider:

In person:

- Remember to make eye contact and smile
- Be mindful of your work environment – if someone's wandering around like a lost sheep remember the 10 & 5 rule.
- When processing a transaction involving a debit or credit card – hand the card to the customer instead of flinging it down on the counter. It's these kind of little things that send subtle signals you're different and a cut above the rest.
- We're here to serve the customer – never make them feel like an intrusion on your work.
- Don't judge by appearance – because it will come through in your attitude and words.
- Be prepared to deal with antagonistic customers by focusing on the business solution and not the emotion. It doesn't mean you don't acknowledge the feeling. Just don't dwell on it.
- Practice active listening by nodding, having an open stance (no folded arms across the chest) and summarizing what they've said.

Online:



- Your website should load completely in under 10 seconds.
- Is your website easy to navigate?
- Is your layout uncluttered with plenty of white space?

- Can your prospects get to where they want to be in 2 clicks or less?

Finding what they want should be as easy as: “**1**” - click on the menu item listed as service. And “**2**” have a choice of options to select from.

- Are your contact, help and search options easily found across the top of your page. Not on the left. Or hidden at the bottom.
- Does your site identify and detail how your service is unique for your customers?

Such as:

“sales prospecting products for the introvert entrepreneur”;

“personal aid items to make arthritis sufferers lives easier”;

or “creative social marketing for black and white art photographers.”

These would be your Unique Selling Proposition or USP.

This is what makes you different from the competition.

- Using 2 to 4 text fonts only. Standard web fonts like Arial and Verdana are good choices.
- Make sure you have what’s called a ‘404’ page. It says there’s nothing here, move along. Customers see it they enter an old link or page on your website that’s no longer active. At the very least make sure there is a message telling the customer how to get back. To check if you have one - type in your web address followed by random characters. e.g. www.penandwhitepaper.com/adskj

Your site will be more user friendly, consistent, and stand out with these tips.

2) TREAT Returns and Disputes with Kid Gloves.

Returns and complaints are the thorns and thistles of the business world.

They're time consuming and potentially frustrating to customer and business alike.

Handling them can sting. But not if you wear kid gloves when dealing with them.

These tips will make the process smoother and less painful for both.

- **Are your return policies clearly stated in easy to understand language both online and instore?**

Avoid legalese and fine print as much as possible.

Your terms and conditions for service, purchase or financing should be easily understood by the customer and staff alike.

Clear explanations and expectations avoid stress and save time.

- **Are you as accommodating and cheerful with refunds and disputes as you are with sales?**

Avoid the 3rd degree. It's fine to ask the reason for the return. When you start to quibble and split hairs about policy, the customer's experience goes downhill. They'll think twice about giving you their business next time.

- **Don't charge for returns.**

Avoid re-stocking fees.

Yes, it's a cost. But consider the return in extra sales conversions and customer retention. If a customer feels at ease with returning they'll be apt to purchase more often.

- **Is it easy for customers to return or change their mind?**

Want a perfect example:

Take Nordstrom's - the online jewellery, shoes and clothing store for example.

Their return policy is "there is no return policy." The reason. They want to build trust with their clientele and make returns as hassle free as possible.

Returns are handled on a case by case basis.

According to the customer's situation, not the store's.

It hasn't hurt their business any.

3) TELL Your Customer What You Can Do for Them.

This one goes hand in hand with returns and disputes.

- **Do you offer a 100% unconditional money back guarantee?**

A 100% money back guarantee reduces customer hesitancy to purchase – especially online.

It's also a subtle suggestion of the superior quality and value of your product or service.

If that's too much, then consider a generous exchange policy.

Perhaps like IKEA's where you have 45 days to return the item for exchange.

Or if you're a service business a 30,60 or 90 guarantee on your work.

- **Is there support for choosing and using your product or service?**

It can be in the form of a toll-free number, FAQ section online, well-trained staff.

If you don't offer 24/7 support – do you have a specific time frame to deal with issues.

You should respond within 24 hours at most.

Even if the situation is resolved don't orphan your customer.

A follow up call is great. It promotes customer confidence - they made the right choice with your product and service. Taking this extra step of customer comfort sets you above the competition.

- **Is feedback really welcomed?**

A business should never be too busy to address valid concerns from a customer.

Customers often feel like they're not being heard.

An excellent tool for online feedback is SurveyMonkey.

A good choice because of it's low cost for a small business on a budget.

Offer your customers an incentive to take the survey.

Good choices are – discounts or draw for free service or product.

Are you beginning to see how simply taking the right care of your customer could lead to more sales?

Imagine experiencing everything above when you shopped somewhere.

You'd want to take your business there again just for the good feeling alone.

4) TELL Your Customers You Want to Keep in Touch. Use e-newsletters.

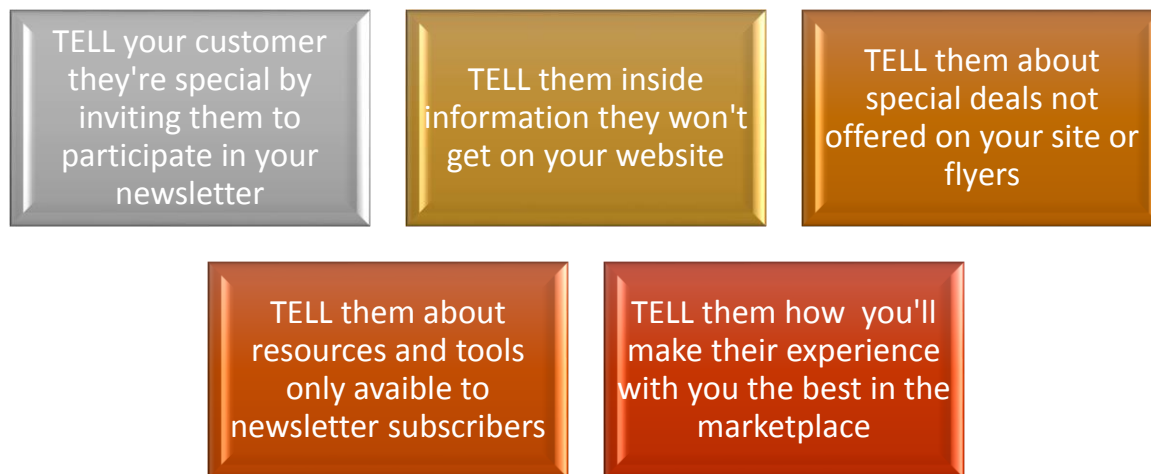
A mentor of mine revealed a timeless business insight to me years ago. He said people will forget you quicker than yesterday's news if you're not "out there." At the time his way of being out there was by distributing a company catalog.

Yes, there was the expense of discarded catalogs, but to him it was the cost of doing business. It was better to have wasted catalogs than to be forgotten by customers in a competitive market.

Today it's easier and far cheaper to be "out there" thanks to technology and the internet.

So do you have a newsletter? Why should you? You probably already have flyers, catalogs and a website. Excellent – but so does just about everyone else.

An e-newsletter can:



Your image is enhanced. You become a trusted source of information. Clients get an insider's view of your business. Almost like an intimate one-on-one. You build rapport and trust with your customer by doing this.

When you focus on them as a person and not a sales prospect you'll be repaid with repeat business. It's worth its weight in gold and makes you the go to source for information and purchases.

5) TELL Your Customers to Share.

There's nothing like word of mouth to build trust and sales.
Your selling is already done for you.
You have a sales force no money can buy – advocates and fans.

One of the fastest ways to grow your business is to keep customers coming back is by encouraging them to share positive experiences.



When you've made a sale and thanked them don't shy away from asking them to tell their friends and family about their positive experience.

Here are some ways to do that:

- Do you have a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Google Follow or other social media?
After a positive experience or compliment get them to share it out there.
- Are social media icons prominently displayed on your site?
Remember your website layout, make it very easy for them to do this.
- Ask your satisfied customers to TELL others about you. How?
Another way besides social media is by giving them referral cards with their name on it.

For example:

You give a customer 3 or 4 cards with their name on it.
They pass them on to family and friends who present the card when they come in.
The original customer gets \$25.00 off per card on their next visit.
The new customer now gets the same. It's WASH. RINSE. REPEAT. Everyone wins.

But what about the dreaded negative experiences and complaints. Believe it or not that can also turn out to be a positive. See the next tip...

6) TALK to Them Openly about Mistakes You've Made.

And what you really can do for them.

- **Go the extra mile. If you suffer a temporary loss – then so be it - think loss leader here.**

Here's a great example from a cleaning company:

Their largest office contract complained that the cleaner kept "taking shortcuts" with his cleaning. It was the third complaint about him within a month.

The cleaning company let him go.

To compensate the customer, they did a free carpet cleaning. It took two hours.

There were costs: machine rental, labor and cleaning solution.

But they needed to save the contract.

With what result?

That office now wants regular carpet cleaning. And best of all, the customer is **happy now.**

- **Tell them "I'm going to take responsibility for this."**

Instead of passing the buck.

I can't count how many times an irate customer made a 180 degree turn when I used that phrase. It does 3 things immediately.

First - it stops the situation from escalating. The client feels they have an advocate on their side.

Second - customers view this as a sign of integrity. That you care. It starts to repair a strained relationship.

Third – they have an option. There's a possibility of a favorable resolution. No one wants to feel like they've been forced into a corner.

- **Avoid an US vs. THEM climate by staying away from phrases like "it's our policy."**

In a customer's eyes that's a dead end, there's no alternative. Maybe even a deal breaker. Using "here's what we//the company can do for you..." keeps communication open. The point is to repair your relationship and have a happy repeat customer once again.

Some customers are inconsolable. It may be best for all if they take their business elsewhere.

But it's how we resolve and leave them feeling that count in the end.

No relationship is ever perfect. Just ask any husband and wife.

Never forget – a complaint is your customer giving you an opportunity to improve your business.

7) TALK to Your Customers with Empathy.

Everyone wants to be heard. Especially a dissatisfied customer.
Both your tone and manner will go a long way to a satisfactory resolution.
Here are some critical points to consider when you TALK with an upset client.

Remember the goal is to win them over and turn them into an advocate for you.

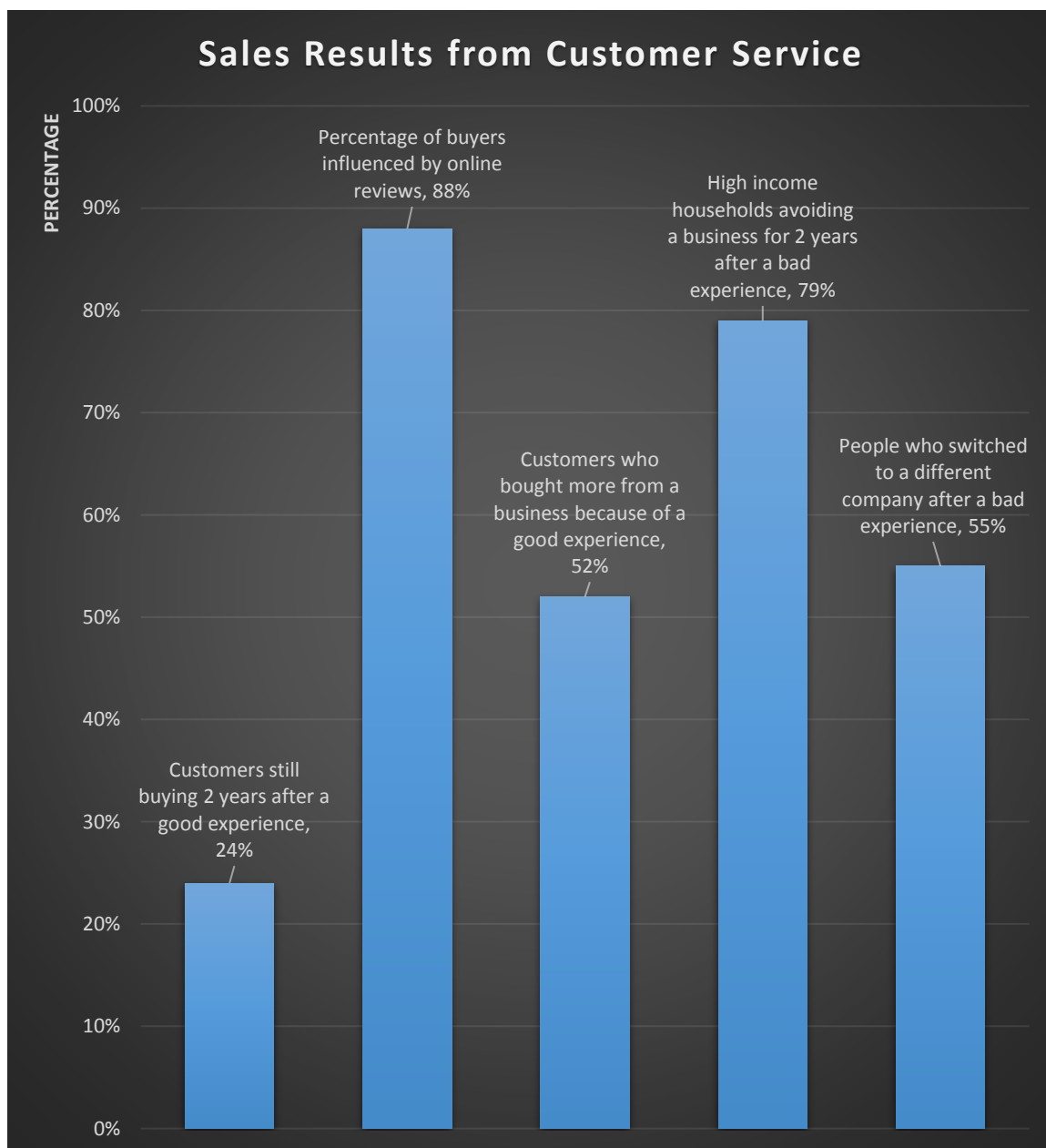
- If your business or staff made a mistake - admit it. It puts you on the high ground right away. Your customer will feel they're being heard and validated.
- Listen actively first. Let them TALK without interruption. Interjecting an "I see" or "Understandable" or some other word to cue you're actually listening.
- Be neutral. This is about a business situation or transaction. Emotion will not help or resolve the problem.
- Find a common ground. Something you both see eye to eye on.
- Focus on the business solution – "What can we do to make this right for you?"
- If the client is antagonistic or angry don't get hooked. Go to a more private area. Don't respond to angry comments. Use verbal kid gloves like "perhaps", "usually" or "possibly".
- Keep your tone friendly, calm and business like. Don't talk down to or patronize your customer.
- Know and set your limits – determine in advance how far you're willing to go to keep this customer.
- Be consistent with your customer service. Everyone should experience the same. Remember Nordstrom's example as a guide, their policy is "there is no policy."
- If you're going around in circles or the client becomes abusive, stop immediately. Sometimes just a moment or two of silence allows for cooler heads prevail. Let them know you'll step away for a couple of minutes so everyone can cool down. And that you'll be right back.
- If the customer refuses all reasonable alternatives end the interchange.

What does all this mean for your business? For the answer take a look the next page...

Growing your reputation as the friendly place to shop will attract customers and increase sales.

You can benefit from both the good and the bad (of other businesses, that is):

Check out these figures.




* Based on a survey by dimensionalresearch.com

I invite you to sign up to for the release of my upcoming report: The Secret of Using Nostalgia Marketing to Boost Profits – by registering on my website at <http://penandwhitepaper.com/signup/>


A FINAL WORD

Your goal: Transform your business into “The Cadillac” of customer care in the industry by...




TREATING your customers to a friendly, consistent experience by:

- Your greeting, policies and online experience
- Making any return or dispute process so easy for them that it encourages immediate or future sales.



TELLING your customers what you can do for them by:

- Actively listening, accepting and acting on their feedback
- Keeping in touch. Offer them an e newsletter full of true value and as a means of direct feedback and communication.



TALKING to your customers openly and with empathy

- Businesses - like people - aren't perfect. So when a mistake is made - admit it!
- Practice active listening, don't get hooked emotionally and know how far you're will to go. Your goal is always to turn an unsatisfied customer into a fan.

The tips are simple. But it takes time and work to put them in place.

You go to the gym to get in shape and to lose weight.

But you don't expect to see drastic results only after 2 or 3 trips.

Slow and steady wins the race. Superior customer service is the same.

Results come from investing time, dedication and attention to your customers.

Is it worth it? Definitely – in repeat business, sales and an unbeatable reputation.

How may I be of further service to you? Reach me at <http://penandwhitepaper.com/contact/> to let me know.

©2016 Mike Saccoia & penandwhitepaper.com