

Creating great customer service to elevate business

Good customer service forms the basis of a successful business to consumer organisation, for though the customer is not always right, he or she has the power to make or break a company's reputation.



It has become increasingly important for businesses to focus 70% of their efforts on building great service and 30% boasting about it.

“The responsibility of customer service does not necessarily fall under management, yet managers do play a role in ensuring good customer service is rolled out correctly,” says Neville De Lucia, new business development director at Dale Carnegie Gauteng. “Dealing with consumers on a daily basis is the norm in B2C organisations and all employees dealing with customers should be accurately trained in order to reduce complaints and keep customers happy.”

Top tips for employees

- Enhance relationships - Customer service is purely relational, so it is important to build and strengthen your relationships with your customers. Be friendly to consumers at all costs, do not criticise or condemn them, but always be open and honest. Do not just act interested, but be interested in their needs. After all, they have come to you to fulfil a need or want and it is your job to do that and to make them feel special at the same time.
- Complaint resolution process - Complaints are something that are unavoidable, but when managed correctly the blow of the complaint can be resolved easily. All employees should be aware of the process of how to handle a complaint in the correct way. When customers complain, always listen to their side before reacting and show empathy towards their concern. Always address the issue at hand and try your best to solve it. Ask questions to ensure you fully understand what they would like you to do to solve the issue. Always follow through, if the complaint cannot be resolved straight away and make sure that the necessary steps are put in place to resolve it and follow up with the customer on the phone once it has been resolved. Try not to take complaints personally.

- Dealing with irate customers - The aim is to solve the issue and not add fuel to the fire, so remain calm and polite when a customer is irate. Try to see the customer's point of view first and listen attentively. Most irate customers just want to vent and want someone to listen and understand. Always show a willingness to resolve the problem and find points of agreement with their concern.
- Gaining referrals - Referrals are a big part of new business, which is something most businesses do not realise. Good customer service and referrals are very much linked and overflow from the one to the other. Never underestimate the power of a satisfied customer's goodwill or influence, because people who have had a good experience are more likely to refer you to others. Also do not be afraid to ask for a referral from customers if need be.

"In today's world, customer service needs to adjust to the new forms of communication by embracing technology that enables the customer to interact with your business on various platforms, irrespective of this, it is vital to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction and outstanding services to build loyalty," concludes De Lucia.

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