



September 2008

Coach For Consistent Service

Customers and customer service. Without customers, we have no business. Yet, why do countless businesses ignore the importance of customers and coaching their staff to handle the customer as the most important part of their business?

In a culture of fast food restaurants, drive through banking, and ready-to-go meals at the supermarket, people have come to expect quick, efficient service without a second thought. It is only when we encounter a rude employee, a poor quality product, or a long delay without explanation that we evaluate the quality of service we are receiving. And in seconds, we make up our minds whether or not to come back - ever.

Incidences such as these happen everywhere:

- The uncaring person who shrugs when we point out a dirty or damaged product.
- A rude or indifferent response to a question or request for help.
- A contractor who promises quality products and materials who shows up late or leaves before the job is done.

They are the reason customers leave and never come back without complaining. They simply stop being your customer and start being the competitors' customer.

Customers look at more than price or generic services. They are strongly influenced by the perception of quality and service that you provide. That is why customer satisfaction is the strategic tool for any company's success today.

Competition for customers is fierce and quality driven. From banks to college campuses, the

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customer has become king. Some companies have adopted mission statements, policies, and procedures to handle the customer with sincerity and integrity.

No matter the size of your company, department, or team, you may want to have a written policy to ensure customer satisfaction. If so, think about these key points.

Determine customer needs. Ask your customers either formally with a customer survey or informally at the time of a transaction to give you insights to product use or future services needed. It will also give you information on what annoys or delights your customer. Now you have a starting point and can set goals to gauge customer satisfaction.

Measure customer satisfaction. Without satisfied customers, there is no company. Consider establishing a customer service policy. It will determine direction and help create strategies while setting specific goals with time-determined objectives. Remember to set goals that are easily remembered, easily understood and achievable.

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IMPACT By Coaching



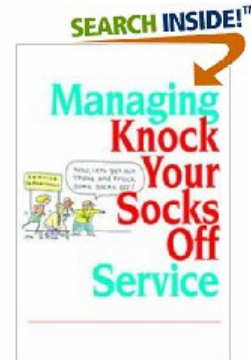
Solving problems immediately. When customers communicate problems, team members should have the ability to respond and take action to correct the problems. Customers feel heard and situations can be addressed to prevent reoccurrence. Consider establishing a **Customer Service Panel** to review any reports of customer dissatisfaction so that it can be measured against policies and procedures in place and changes can be determined if necessary

The manager's role. All eyes are watching and all ears are listening for anyone on the management team who does not adopt and model customer service standards. Managers must “think customer” to help people understand customers’ requirements and their accountability and responsibility to meet those requirements. More importantly **they are the coach:** motivating and rewarding team members for successfully implementing and meeting customer satisfaction.

Everyone is responsible. No matter what title or position a person may hold, everyone is responsible for customer satisfaction. Managers who support people in skills training prevent problems with customers. They support their internal customers and build motivation, commitment and self-esteem. In turn, **customer satisfaction mirrors employee satisfaction.**

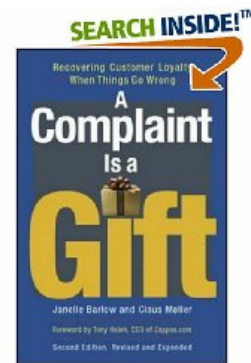
Coach and support. Meet with team members to brainstorm for ideas on determining customer requirements and exceeding expectations. Coach and support people to meet established customer service standards and **encourage everyone to become a customer champion!**

Suggested Reading:



MANAGING KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF SERVICE (KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF SERIES) (PAPERBACK)

by [Chip R. Bell](#) (Author), [Ron Zemke](#) (Author)



A COMPLAINT IS A GIFT: RECOVERING CUSTOMER LOYALTY WHEN THINGS GO WRONG (PAPERBACK)

by [Janelle Barlow](#) (Author), [Claus Moller](#)