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## Introduction

As a business owner you probably already know how important it is to provide good customer support. By working hard at recognizing and catering to the many needs of your customers, you increase the chances of them choosing you over the competition the next time they're in the market for whatever you're selling.

There are, however, many little things to consider when drawing up a customer service strategy. In this guide we'll go over 26 of the most important rules to follow when you're trying to create the ultimate customer service experience. Hopefully by the end of it you'll have a pretty good idea about how to apply them to your own business and rise above your competition.

Let's get started, shall we?

# **26 Rules of Outstanding Customer Service**

## **Getting in touch with you**

### **1. Stay open after regular office hours**

Most people are unable to get away from work to contact you during regular office hours, so consider keeping customer service open as long as possible to minimize frustration.

### **2. Make contacting you easy and frictionless**

Making it difficult to contact you may save some money in the short term, but it will also cause much anger and frustration for your customers. When a person has had a poor experience trying to contact a company they're unlikely to give them more of their business in the future.

### **3. Don't rely too heavily on automation**

Some degree of automation can be a good thing, as it can slipstream and speed up the customer service process, but it's vital to not take it too far. It's just not possible to cover every conceivable scenario with automated routines, and many issues simply cannot be resolved with less than a real human customer service rep.

### **4. Adapt to mobile technology**

Since practically everyone owns a smartphone or tablet these days, it's important to offer customer service solutions catered to those devices. There are many possibilities, from building a specialized app, to just incorporating "click-to-call" links on the website.

### **5. Try to offer fast response times**

Speed is essential to good customer service. There is no such thing as "too fast" - if you can provide a good response to an inquiry within minutes, you're sure to leave a lasting impression on that customer, perhaps even gain their lifelong loyalty. Work on your technology and routines to become as fast as possible.

## **Interacting with customers**

### **6. Treat customers with respect**

Everyone wants to be treated with respect, and that includes your customers. Even if you don't agree with their opinion, make sure you respect it, and that they're able to recognize that you do.

### **7. Consider going multilingual**

This may not apply to companies who only deal with domestic customers, but in today's globalized world more and more business is done across borders. If a large portion of your customer base aren't native English speakers, consider hiring a dedicated customer service rep to cater to them.

### **8. Don't treat customer service as a sales channel**

When a customer comes to you with a problem, they want you to offer a solution. The last thing they want is being told they need to buy more stuff. Unless it's in a pre-sales situation, leave sales out of customer service and focus on being helpful to the customer.

### **9. Educate your customers**

Sometimes customer frustration arises from them not being able to understand the details of your business. That's why it can be a good idea to try to keep them in the loop and make sure they understand your business process fully. This is especially true if your business relies on technology, which is prone to constant change that can be difficult for customers to keep up with.

### **10. Avoid relying on scripts**

Since most customer service situations are unique, trying to force a rigid script upon them is usually not the best idea. If you need to use scripts, make sure they allow for all kinds of scenarios that can arise.

### **11. Say "yes" as often as possible**

If you get a chance to do something extra for a customer, that's not terribly inconvenient or expensive for you, take it! It's a great chance to get a loyal customer that will come back to you again and again.

## **12. Let customers know you appreciate their business**

Everyone wants to feel appreciated, and if you can instill that feeling in your customers they'll be happy to give you their business today and in the future. It's also quite simple to do - most of the time a simple thank you is plenty!

## **13. Exceed expectations**

Say a customer expects you to take back a faulty item and repair it for free. What if you did that AND delivered it back to them within 48 hours? They're sure to be impressed, and likely to tell their friends about how good your customer service is.

## **14. Know when to cut your losses**

Sometimes a situation gets toxic enough that it just cannot be resolved. In that case it's usually better to cut your losses and "fire" the customer. You need to refund their money, of course, but rather than dragging a situation like this on and on only to find out much later that it did no good.

## **15. Offer surprise gifts and bonuses**

Everyone loves surprise gifts, and they're great for making a customer like your company even more. For example, if you sell products through an online store you could include a bonus gift with every fifth purchase - that's bound to be appreciated by your customers. Just remember to not tell them about it beforehand, it should be a surprise.

## **You and your employees**

### **16. Know your business**

To be able to serve your customers well, you need to know everything about your business and the field you're in. If you're unable to answer questions they may have, they'll be less likely to trust your advice.

### **17. Reward employees who perform well**

You should try to keep track of your employee performance and reward those who do well in customer service. Just don't make the mistake of rewarding them based on number of handled issues or similar, but rather try to gauge

actual customer satisfaction (for example by sending out an e-mail survey afterwards).

### **18. Deliver on your promises**

When you say you're going to do something for a customer, you need to be 100% sure you can deliver on that promise. If not, don't make it in the first place!

### **19. Learn to apologize frequently**

When things go wrong, apologize. Even if it's not your fault. It's an easy way of communicating to the customer that you care about their business.

### **20. Own up to your mistakes**

Everyone makes mistakes. Rectifying them is important, but so is owning up to them and not trying to put the blame on anybody else. You're the business owner, so in the end you're responsible for everything that happens in your company.

### **21. Treat your customer service reps well**

If you treat your customer service reps well it is likely that they'll do the same for your customers. The opposite is true as well; treat them poorly and your customer service will likely suffer.

### **22. Take complaints and criticism to heart**

No matter how good your customer service is, sooner or later you'll get a complaint from a disgruntled customer. You must never take this personally, but look at it objectively and consider whether there is any truth to it, and if it's something you could actually improve.

### **23. Anticipate problems and establish routines to handle them**

When you've been in business for a while, you probably have a pretty good idea what the most common problems are that customers come to you with. By anticipating these problems and establishing routines to handle them, you'll be able to provide better (and faster) service.

### **24. Get involved personally**



A great way to learn exactly what the day-to-day operations in your customer service entails is by getting involved in it personally. Maybe you can take one day every month where you handle customer service personally, so you can get to know your customers better and figure out exactly how to best serve them.

## **25. Learn from customer feedback**

The best way to improve your customer service is by listening to what your customers are telling you. Not sure how they feel? Ask them! It's not a bad idea to send out a survey, straight up asking customers to voice their opinion about your company and customer service.

## **26. Never stop improving**

To ensure the longevity of your business, you must always strive to improve your customer service. It's one of the best ways to separate yourself from your competitors, and there's always something you can do better. Keep moving forward and make your company the best it can be!