



## July 2013 Client Newsletter

Dear Judi,

If your Sales / Marketing department promotes your organization as providers of better customer service, it needs to provide that level of service! Branding as good service providers will backfire if the service isn't in place first.

Judi

### Just Spent thousands On New Marketing? Better Make Sure Customer Service Measures Up

All the innovations of new decor in your store and flashy new advertising that brings customers in your door can be wrecked in the blink of an eye if the customer's experience falters. This [small business marketing expert](#) reports on her recent experience inside a fast-food chain that had done wonders and spent much recently to remake its image. Their efforts are what got her in the door. Yet, she left with a bad taste in her mouth.

Employees at the service counter were apathetic with their customer, while also talking amongst themselves about non-work related matters. They were borderline rude, she reports, and suddenly she was in a bad mood.

Running the business and managing the marketing go hand-in-hand, like a relay race, this expert suggests. Screw up the marketing and you might be fine, but screw up the operations and your business won't rise above it. Good customer service can build your brand, as satisfied customers tell others about their experiences.

Customer Perspectives can help your business build a program that evaluates the customer service experiences at your place of business and make sure they're in alignment with your operational goals and marketing efforts.

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### Do You Know These 8 Rules For Good Customer Service?

You might have the best sales team in the country, but if you don't have the customer service chops to back up your sales, you may not [see repeat customers](#). The hallmarks of good customer service include the following 8 things. Master these and you'll go a long way toward nurturing relationships with your customers so they will remain loyal.

1) **Answer your phone.** As much as possible, make sure a live human answers your business phone.

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- 2) **Don't make promises unless you will keep them.** Deliveries must be when you say they are going to be. Reliability is key to keeping customers.
- 3) **Listen to your customers.** Let your customers talk before you start offering suggestions.
- 4) **Deal with complaints.** Making the complaining customer happy is going to go a lot further than ignoring a complaint.
- 5) **Be helpful** - even if there's no immediate profit in it. Solve a customer's problem even if it doesn't involve him or her buying something from you.
- 6) **Train your staff** (if you have any) to be always helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable. Train them to excel in customer service and do this regularly.
- 7) **Take the extra step.** Literally walk the customer to the area of the store they are seeking. Don't point or say, "Aisle 3".
- 8) **Throw in something extra.** Give the customer something unexpected, maybe even just a smile. It really can be the little things that matter.

One way to determine if your company is providing top notch customer service is by hiring the services of a mystery shopping firm such as Customer Perspective. The kind of reporting a mystery shopper can provide back to company management is invaluable in determining, from the customer's point of view, whether your training efforts have worked and whether your employees are following through.

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## Customer Service Lesson? Offer Services That Actually \*6

If your company is going to offer a service, make sure it works. That's the lesson I learned recently when dealing with my local phone company, which is also my Internet Service Provider. When a bill was due on July 5, the day after a holiday, I discovered that the online bill-paying system offered by the company actually didn't work. It's not that it didn't work that day or that I was just unable to figure out how to make it work. It didn't work and the company admitted it didn't work. Discovering this just as the bill was due raised my irritation level to **Yellow**.

A call to the customer service line led to a recorded message informing me that the office was closed for the holiday weekend, leaving me with no way to pay the bill on time in order to avoid finance charges. Irritation level now? **Orange**.

Next, a trip to the company's Facebook Page where I left a comment about my displeasure with the online bill paying system. A few minutes later, a company representative responded on Facebook and asked me to contact them directly by email and she would "have someone reach out to you." [To their credit, the company was at least monitoring its social media for customer comments.]

I emailed with an explanation of the problem and received a quick response (from the same person) telling me I could pay the bill via phone. For an extra fee. Irritation level now? **Red**.

The representative noted that "We are aware that our online bill pay feature is not as useful as it should be."

Ahem.

It's almost hard to keep track of the various customer service blunders inherent in this one experience with the company. If I had any choice in providers in this area (I don't), this company would be history.

A customer service evaluation program such as that provided by Customer Perspectives could help this company figure out if the problem here was with its initial training programs for employees, its processes for handling complaints, its online properties or all three.

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## Upcoming Events:

**The Marketing Insight Forum** - October 3<sup>rd</sup> in New York. For more information, for more information, [click here](#)

**Corporate Researchers Conference** - October 16-18 in Dallas. For more information, [click here](#)

**The Market Research Event** - October 21-23 in Nashville. For more information, [click here](#)

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