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October 2013 Client Newsletter

Dear Judi,

Did you know it takes 12 positive customer experiences to make up for one **unresolved** negative experience? That is why BusinessNH magazine asked me to write the article below about key customer service essentials and turn-offs.

Judi

Secrets of a Secret Shopper

Editor's Note: We asked Judi Hess, who has owned a mystery shopping firm, Customer Perspectives in Hooksett, for the past 30 years, to share her insights into what closes a deal with shoppers and what sends them running for the door.)

During a recent shopping trip, I felt as if I'd suddenly begun speaking Swahili and hadn't noticed. Here's what I ordered: "I would like a small, nonfat latte with no sugar, please." Here's what I got: A medium-sized, fully fatted latte, with sugar.

Now, at the risk of sounding age-ist, I feel I must point out that the clerk was at most 20 years old. Perhaps her brain had been too hard-wired to the constant buzz of a cell phone or video games to truly pay attention to a person standing in front of her. But was that the real problem? What I really think was going on is that the clerk was overworked and rushed.

That's a big problem because an interaction like that could cost a business a customer. Whether we are talking about a small boutique or the large box store, that initial employee interaction can determine whether the customer spends time browsing and buying, or turns around and leaves. In today's world, where there is always another store around the corner or another vendor down the street or online, there are few second chances.

Did you know that 96 percent of customers who have had a negative experience don't complain, while 91 percent of them actually just leave and never return? Beyond philosophy.com, a customer experience consulting firm, reports it takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience. And someone who had a bad experience with your business is four times more likely to leave if it is related to customer service, as compared to product price or product quality.

We all want to engage our customers so they keep coming back and hopefully talk about what a great shopping experience they had at "I Love to Shop Here" store. So how do we do that?

Customer Service Essentials

1. Offer the Basics: Always be friendly, polite and enthusiastic. Customers should be greeted warmly and treated with courtesy and respect. Smile, make eye contact, and look and sound enthusiastic. When asked where a specific item is located, don't just vaguely point to some distant location or name an aisle. Actually accompany that customer to the product.

2. Personalize the Experience: Develop a genuine relationship with the customer by talking about what they seem interested in. Build rapport rather than offering a canned presentation. For example, compliment something they are wearing, ask how their day has been and/or inquire why or for whom they are seeking a particular product or service.

3. Know Your Products and Services Inside Out: Sales clerks should know enough to answer basic questions about how products work, and all additional features and benefits customers may ask about. For example, emphasize how a particular product or service will make the customer's life better, fuller, and/or nicer. And don't forget to cross-sell similar or supplementary products.

4. Uncover the Need: Ask relevant questions to find out not only what customers feel they need, but also what they may want. This is actually doing the customer a favor by attempting to fulfill his or her desires.

5. Follow Up: Try to get customers' phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses, and then contact them at appropriate intervals. For example, if a particular customer is buying jewelry as a gift, follow up the next week to see how much the gift was appreciated. This goes beyond customer expectations and makes you, and your store, really stand out. In other words, "out-amazon" amazon.com.

Customer Turn-Offs

1. Rudeness: This is guaranteed to cost you not only the customer you were rude to, but also the friends, family and colleagues they share their experience with, both in person and online. Never argue with, act abruptly or get annoyed with a customer. The customer is always right.

2. Indifference: There is nothing worse to a busy shopper than not being able to find a sales associate or, even worse, watching several of them clustered together in personal conversation when assistance is needed. Approach customers and ask them what they need.

3. Not Listening: A friend of mine recently asked a shoe salesclerk for a size 8 of a particular style. The salesclerk came back with a size 7 in a completely different style than the one held in her hand. Not listening to a customer's needs and wants is a major turnoff.

4. Not Focusing: Have you ever been in the situation where an employee is working with you and another customer or employee interrupts, totally distracting your interaction? This sends a message to the customer that they are not valued and breaks the rapport the employee has been building with them. Help one customer at a time, and if need be, find another colleague for the other person.

5. Hard Selling: If your store does not carry what the customer needs and/or wants, don't try to sell something just for the sake of making the sale. If you direct the customer to a competitor who you think can help, the customer will thank you for your honesty and remember the interaction when shopping in the future.

BusinessNH October, 2013

Regardless what industry you are in, there always seems to be a need to have great customer service skills. Customer Service skills span various roles and positions across an organization including sales, recruiting, customer service and even executive.

How many of these do you excel in?

1. Be a great listener
2. Great communication skills
3. Be calm and have patience
4. Keep your promises
5. Be honest

For complete article, [click here](#)

By ECHOGRAVITY, September 19, 2013

4 Customer Service Mistakes That Will Kill Your Business

Never underestimate the importance of customer service. But just in case you are tempted, drive to your nearest Borders bookstore - or what remains of it - for a reminder.

Borders, once the nation's second-largest bookstore chain, began liquidating last month after filing for bankruptcy protection in February.

And while Wall Street may find plenty of reasons for the company's failure, the one that resonates with the consumer advocate is this; It stopped listening to its customers. While people migrated from deadwood media to the Internet, Borders doubled down its bet that customers would buy CDs and DVDs in its stores.

You know what I bought the last time I visited a Borders? A really good cup of coffee.

Turning a deaf ear to your customers' wishes can kill your business. You don't need an MBA to know that. Just go to your nearest mall, past the shuttered Borders store, and I'm willing to bet you'll find another retail store that for one reason or another, didn't meet the needs of its customers and paid the ultimate price.

For complete article, [click here](#)

By Christopher Elliott

Because we value our customers' perspective, we will be soon sending you a brief survey. Thanks in advance for taking the time to help us better serve you.

Upcoming Events:

American Marketing Association - Advanced School of Marketing Research on Nov 4-8 in Atlanta. For more information, [click here](#)

Foresight and Trends Conference - Nov 13-15 in Los Angeles. For more information, [click here](#)

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