

Superb Customer Service

From Brian Tracy's Million Dollar Habits

There are four habits that you need to develop to achieve a reputation for superb customer service. *The habit of service orientation toward your customers* is the key to repeat sales, lower marketing and sales costs, and higher profitability. There are four levels of customer service that determine your ranking in your industry.

The first level of service is for you to develop *the habit of consistently meeting the expectations of your customers*. To achieve this, it is absolutely essential that you find out what customers expect of you. And whatever it is, it is vital to your survival and success that you meet those expectations every single time.

A primary source of anger, frustration and negative emotions, both personally and commercially, is "*frustrated expectations*." This is when we expect something to happen and it does not happen the way that we wanted it to. Whenever you experience negative emotions of any kind, it can almost always be traced to having been frustrated or disappointed in a particular expectation. This is doubly true with regard to customers, and their dealings with different companies.

The most successful and profitable companies are those that made a habit of clearly identifying what customers expect, and then organizing the entire business to be sure that those expectations are delivered upon 100% of the time.

Do More Than Is Expected

However, meeting customer expectations is just enough to keep you in business. It is not enough for you to grow and succeed in a competitive marketplace. To do that, you must develop *the habit of exceeding customer expectations*. You must do more than customers expect. You must do things that are outside of the range of expectations. It is these extra things that you do that cause customers to be happy in dealing with you, and cause them to want to buy from you again

What are the little things that you can do better, faster, cheaper and easier that will make your customers happy that they dealt with you.

Could you offer something extra to your customers that they did not expect? Could you do something extra for your customers that they had not thought of? How can you exceed your customer's expectations, every day?

As it happens, as soon as a company finds a way to exceed customer expectations, and it becomes known in the marketplace, your competitors will copy you and duplicate your efforts in an attempt to stay even with you, if not get ahead.

Therefore, every time a way of exceeding customer expectations becomes common knowledge in the workplace, it becomes a *normal* expectation of customers. From then on, customers expect to get what was at one time something extra in the normal course of doing business with you.

Delight Your Customers

The third level of customer satisfaction is when you develop *the habit of delighting your customers*. You delight your customers when you do something that is so unusual that it makes your customers especially happy. It can be something as little as a follow-up call from a senior executive to a new customer. It can be a call thanking them for the business and asking them for any ideas on how you might improve your services to them in the future. It can be something larger, like a gift of flowers or fruit to a customer who just placed a large order. It can be a *thank you* card signed by several people in the company. It can be a personal visit by a key executive to a new customer. In every case, these little gestures, which are not particularly expensive, leave a wonderful impression in the customer's mind and dramatically increase the probability that he or she will buy from you again.

Amaze Your Customers

The highest level of customer service is when you develop *the habit of amazing your customers*. This is when you do something for them that is so extraordinary that they want to run around and tell everybody they know. Develop the habit of continually thinking of things you could do that would amaze your customers. This could change the whole nature of your business.

Some years ago, in the midst of the Federal Express advertising campaign, "*When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight,*" there was a major blizzard in Colorado that closed down the mountain passes between Denver and the ski resorts to the west. Without reference to his superiors, a Federal Express deliveryman, who was blocked from fulfilling the promise of Federal Express, chartered a helicopter to fly over the mountains and deliver Federal Express packages to his key customers.

To get maximum benefit, he telephoned ahead to find out where he could land a helicopter to deliver the packages. The story was picked up by the newspapers and eventually broadcast worldwide. It cost Federal Express several thousand dollars for the helicopter, but it earned them millions of dollars in good publicity by their effort to amaze their customers with service beyond anything they could ever expect.

Love Your Customers

Perhaps the most important habit that you can develop for business success is to think in terms of "loving your customers." Stand back and look at your customers, your products, your services, your marketing and sales efforts and your business activities. If you genuinely loved your customers, the way you love the most important people in your life, what would you do differently from the way that you deal with them today? What changes would you make in your product or service

quality standards? What changes would you make in your customer service policies? If you genuinely loved your customers, and wanted to please and satisfy them more and better than anyone else, what would be the first thing you could do to demonstrate this?

Nothing happens until a sale takes place. Your ability to put yourself in the shoes of your customers, to treat each customer the way that you would like to be treated if the situation was reversed, is the most important habit that you can develop for business and financial success. By developing the habit of thinking in terms of marketing, sales and customer service all the time, you will become better and better in every area. You will achieve all your business, personal and financial goals and lead the field in your business. You will earn the esteem, loyalty and respect of everyone inside and outside of your business, and become one of the most successful businesspeople of your generation.