

Leaving customers delighted with your service

BUSINESS
FEATURE



How to distinguish your company with a customer focused culture

Let's start with a couple of quotes that speak to the heart of what true customer service is:

Good manners have much to do with emotions. To make them ring true, one must feel them, not merely exhibit them.

Amy Vanderbilt

You can only become truly accomplished at something you love. Don't make money your goal. Instead pursue the things you love doing and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off of you.

Maya Angelou

Your team must have the right mindset and a genuine desire to deliver excellent customer service. There are disciplines most people acknowledge as true, but very few actually follow through on them and create a company that consistently provides remarkable customer service. In coaching small businesses for over ten years, these are the disciplines I believe are essential to have in place:

1 Culture, values and why you exist, must be genuine

Culture is possibly the most critical component of your business. Start with core values that are non-negotiable to you. Qualities like urgency, honesty, frugality, creativity etc. These values should guide your team even when you are not around. They must be real, explained and upheld. Your cause speaks to why you're in business, for example, my company cause is: 'To help SME Business Owners and their teams create quality lifestyles through business success'. Your culture is the outcome of the way your team operates as a result of your values and cause.

Discipline #1: List the values that are non-negotiable. Get clear on your Cause and why you're in business. Finally, communicate and constantly remind your team why these are important and then live them on a daily basis.

2 Find, keep and grow the right team

Hiring the wrong people will cost you more in the long run. Skill is important, attitude is a non-negotiable. What kind of attitude? One that fits perfectly with your company culture, cause and values. When hiring, hold out for the right people to stand a chance of success and growth.

Discipline #2: Ensure your recruitment process allows you to find the right team members. Then provide support, guidance and leadership to allow them to grow within your company.

3 Focus on the mission not the commission

If your focus is purely on money, success may come, but the stability of it will be questionable. To quote Benjamin Franklin: "He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money. Like Amy Vanderbilt says in her quote, your customer service will be more exhibited than felt and your customers will pick up on that.

Discipline #3: Do the right things because it's the right thing to do. That sentiment is often overlooked and underestimated. Do not compromise your company culture, cause and values, they are the things that will deliver you profit.

4 How and what you are delivering

Build a great business model that genuinely helps people through fantastic products and services and do that in a way that leaves people feeling it was a pleasurable experience worth talking about.

Discipline #4: Educate your team on exactly what is expected of them to create an exceptional experience for your customers. Show them how to deliver your product and service and how to achieve the outcome the client is looking for. People very quickly forget wonderful customer service if the actual delivery is poor. We're emotional creatures after all!

5 Find, keep and grow the right Customers

"The customer is always right" is wrong. Some customers won't fit your values and culture and they are free to go elsewhere. This requires judgement, but when you're clear on what you stand for, you'll know who your ideal customers are. Don't pander to a customer just because they have money in their pocket, remember, money is the bi-product.

Discipline #5: Look after the right customers exceedingly well. With the wrong customers, be OK with acknowledging you're not a match (in a way you and your team feel most comfortable).

One final quote for you, actually more of an insight, by Karl Popper, called the paradox of tolerance: "A tolerant society will be destroyed by its tolerance to intolerance". Do not tolerate intolerance in your company when it comes to your culture, cause and values. Find team members who embrace those same values and accept nothing less and you'll be well on your way to creating remarkable customer service and plenty of profit as a bi-product.

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