

Checklist - To Improve Customer Service

1. Be understanding: In order to really cement a new and prosperous association with a customer, you need to show that you completely understand their needs.
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3. Be on the look out for any indicators that reveal what your customers want and be sure to respond to them as soon as you can.
4. Avoid using in house talk or industry jargon – you are speaking with a person, so you need to be one yourself. Getting too technical can alienate your clients.
5. Be sure: Ask your customer, "Do you think I completely understand your needs or is there anything else I can do for you?"
6. If you need to use contractors, freelance agents or staff from a temping agency to run your business, bear in mind that your clients will view them as representative of your company. Anyone associated with your business can add to or detract from your corporate image. By using clear policies and procedures in house you will ensure that outsiders can quickly learn the ropes.
7. Recommend other businesses if you can't deliver: If what you have to offer doesn't quite fit a client's needs be confident about recommending a company that can satisfy them. This can work on a quid pro quo basis. It is always better to make sure the client gets what he or she requires, even if that means you don't make a sale. Your reputation as a caring customer oriented firm will be enhanced if you display this kind of professional generosity.
8. Keep yourself well informed about the ways the larger corporations deal with customer services. But don't be fooled into thinking that just because they are bigger than you that they are automatically getting it right. Often the larger businesses become so large that they outsource customer service work and therefore lose that important personal touch. How often have you heard consumer complaints about well known successful companies' customer services departments being shoddily handled? Make it your aim to learn from their mistakes instead of making your own.
9. Customer service is an ongoing concern which certainly doesn't cease to be simply because a deal has been closed. In most industries business owners want to generate repeat sales and long term customer loyalty. Make courtesy contact with your existing clients to establish that they are still satisfied with what you provided for them. If you promise follow up visits or product update information, make sure you live up to your promises. Listen to what your clients have to say about your products and service and make changes if and when necessary. The internet gives you the opportunity to invite customers to leave feedback about your company. This can really give you an insight into how you fare in their eyes.

10. Always express your thanks: There are two little words that are very important in business. *Thank You*. Include a message of thanks on your invoices, on your website, as well as your email. Say thank you wherever it's possible to do so. It's vital to show your customers