

Put That Smile Back on Your Customer's Face!

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Customers today are busy; some are overwhelmed by the myriad of tasks they now have to perform. By the time they call your help desk or customer care center, they are often frustrated and anything but pleasant. You can put that smile back on their face, and here is the way to do it.

- **Promise to help.** Every time you say, “I can help you,” or “Let me see if I can help,” it is music to their ears. It calms the savage beast inside of them raging to be let out. You may need to say it more than once. When you sense mounting frustration, repeat your offer to help as often as you feel it is appropriate.
- **Stay with them each step of the way.** If you need to pass the caller to another person for additional support, stay on the line with them and explain the situation to the new representative. The last thing the customer wants to do is repeat his tale of woe to multiple people.
- **Acknowledge the customer's upset.** It is not enough to simply say, “Ok.” You must say something more genuine. “I can appreciate how annoying this must be.” Yes, you are right, this should not have happened.” Your customer wants to be heard. He wants you as the representative of the company to see how inconvenienced or disappointed they are with your product or service. An acknowledgement is definitely required.
- **Sound sincere. Have an upbeat voice.** A voice with a monotone is seen in a negative manner. Your voice must have highs and lows, just as a singer's voice has a range.

- **Don't rush.** Take your time explaining how to remedy a situation. Pause at the end of each sentence or thought for a second or two. A fast talker frustrates the person trying to take notes or to envision what you are saying. It makes the caller feel you just want them to get off the line.
- **Involve the customer.** Ask the customer what he or she would like to see happen. Ask the customer if this solution would be acceptable. This makes the customer feel you value their business.
- **Offer a freebie.** Recently, I had a case of wine shipped to a friend to celebrate their landing a great new job. The case of wine was shipped to me at my business. When I called the company, they immediately took responsibility. They told me to keep the case, rather than ship it back, because of the inconvenience they caused. They would take care of shipping a new case at no additional charge immediately. Not every situation warrants something to be thrown in for free, but, on occasion, when your organization is clearly at fault, it goes a long way to keeping customers loyal.
- **Thank the customer.** Any time a customer complains it is an opportunity for your organization to correct something that isn't working. Let the customer know that your organization is constantly striving to get better and will do their best to see that this doesn't happen in the future.

Customer loyalty is difficult today. You are the face of your organization, and you play a significant role in impressing or depressing your customers. The more you can keep your customers singing your praises, the more secure and easier your job will be.

Question: *We're interested in your reaction to this article. What works in your organization to put a smile back on people's faces? Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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