www.impactcommunicationsinc.com Telephone: 847-438-4480 E-mail: info@impactcommunicationsinc.com

How to Understand Your Customer

By Judith Filek–President
Impact Communications, Inc.

Customers today are a lot more demanding and a lot savvier than they used to be. They know they have many choices. They are often in a hurry, confused, multi-tasking or have English as a second language.

When they get you on the phone, their expectation is that you will:

- Fix the problem quickly.
- Make the system work in their favor
- Know what the company does, its services and products.
- Know the answer to their questions and that your answers will make sense.
- Know who has authority for what decisions.
- Treat them with respect.

If you think about it, your customers are like you when you have had a service issue. If you remember this, you will be able to treat them as you would like to be treated.

Your Role

Your role is to exceed customer expectations. At a bare minimum it is to satisfy expectations. It is to make the customer feel impressed with your company. It is not to input data into a computer. It is not to get the customer off the phone. If you understand that your role is to impress, you will do whatever it takes to get your customers to continue to do business with your organization. Without this focus, it is impossible to excel. Since 1993, customer service has actually gone down in most American industries because most reps focus on the tasks related to their job and really don't understand their role.

It is expensive to get a new customer. If you do not meet your customers' expectations, they turn to your competitors. Their loss is costly. Regardless of the industry, it is six times more expensive to get a new customer than it is to keep the current customer happy. Does it make sense not to do everything you can to satisfy an upset customer?

One dissatisfied customer can do a lot of damage. An upset customer typically tells eleven other people, and those people tell five more. If you do the math, that is 67 people spreading bad news about you and your company. It is as if someone took an ad on a billboard or in a newspaper.

It is actually good news when people complain. TARP says that ninety-six percent of the people do not complain. They just go elsewhere. When people complain, it is an opportunity to fix a procedure that isn't working or to take a good look at your organization.

The bottom line is that companies with excellent customer service thrive. These companies increase sales by twelve percent yearly and market shares by six percent. Eventually, companies with poor or mediocre customer service will self-destruct. Customers have other options. They will not put up with people who do not treat them well.

What does this mean to you?

You are a key player in your company's success. You are worth millions! The better your customer service skills, the more your company prospers and the better your raises and job security.

Question: *We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. *When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our website, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.*

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