

# **How customer service can help you grow your business**

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Good customer service and strong customer relationships start at the top; you must set high standards and epitomize those standards yourself. Smile and project a positive mental attitude. Always be friendly and courteous, both over the phone and in person. Show sincere interest in your customers and be a good listener.

Never argue with complaining customers. Express concern when they had a negative experience. Express understanding; apologize and refund their money or replace the product; or otherwise take immediate steps to resolve the complaint. Demand these same behaviors from your employees within their range of responsibilities and authority. Develop a reward program to recognize employees that excel in outstanding customer service.

In cafeterias, employees should be fully knowledgeable of the menu items and able to answer most all customer questions concerning the menu. They should always be prepared to make recommendations and reinforce customer's choice. Food presentation/appearance is as important, if not more important, than the actual taste of the food. Employees should always recommend desserts by graphically describing them, in vivid, mouth-watering drama. The employee assisting should always thank the customer for their business and so should the cashier. To facilitate your building an opt-in email customer list, the cashier should ask for customer's name, month and day of their birthday (not year), and email address by giving them a benefit, e.g. we

occasionally send out special discount offers that will save you money.

As much as you can, maintain the general appearance/cleanliness of your facility and equipment, including bathrooms. Your personal appearance should be neat and clean and so should your employees. Who wants to be served by someone who looks dirty or sloppy?

If you can provide a pleasant sound of music, do it. Keep the smells pleasant. Lighting should be adequate. Floor coverings and Wall coverings should be clean and attractive if possible. The interior layout and traffic flow should make it easy for customers to enter and exit your facility. Signage, inside and out, should be clear and helpful.

1. Seek customer feedback to maintain high quality standards in your customer service, product offerings, and facilities. Hand out customer surveys with an incentive for them to be completed and returned. Include an invitation to complete an online survey form in an email message to your customer email list. Request a “secret shopper” to visit your facility posing as a regular customer with the objective of giving you candid feedback on the several key points that impact customer perceptions and service.