

# Customer Service Week

5 - 9 October 2015



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**The first week of October is almost upon us and that means one thing... it's Customer Service Week**

A golden opportunity to boost morale and motivate your teams, celebrating Customer Service Week opens up a lot of opportunities for quality interactions with the workforce including:

- Offering praise
- Implementing training
- Hearing thoughts and concerns in meetings or one to one sessions
- Reminding customers of your commitment to service

With at least 5 days to dedicate to raising awareness of the importance of customer service, your managers and team leaders can highlight ways to go the extra mile in delivery, thank customers for their loyalty and recover a relationship from a service failure.

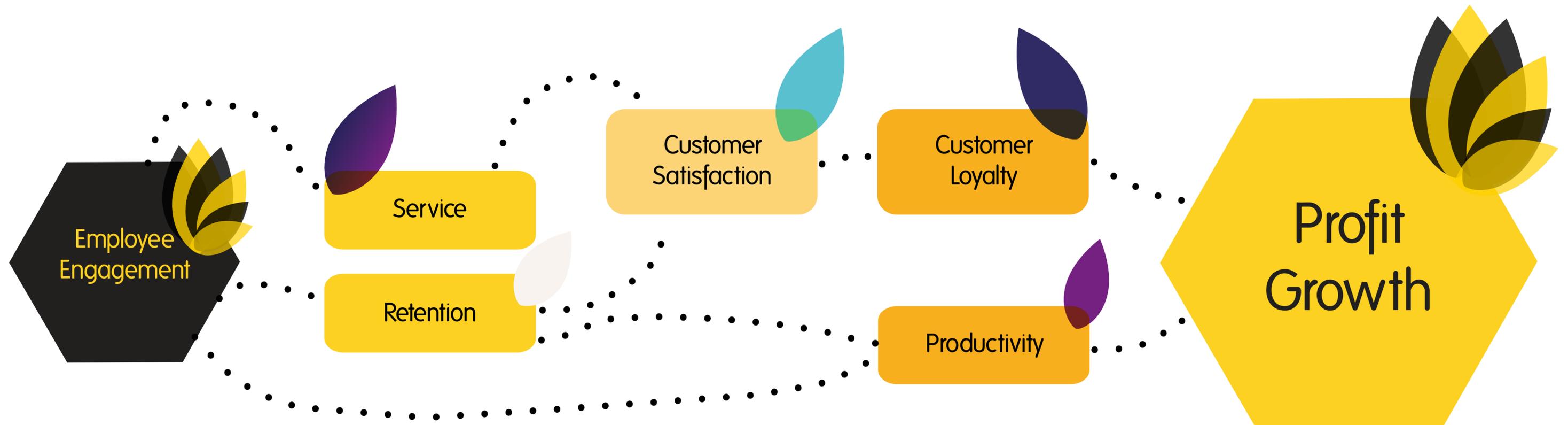
Use our 2015 Customer Service handbook as a starting point, and supplement excellent basics with a stand-out solution from STY. We'll help you provide great customer service, and reward the people who deliver it.

# Providing Great Customer Service

**Providing top notch customer service impacts your organisation in every way.**

Mapped here in the service profit chain, great service leads to better customer satisfaction overall, and improved customer loyalty long term. Fully satisfied customers spend around 2.6 times more than somewhat satisfied ones; great customer service is an enabler for profit and growth over time.

Customer service is influenced hugely by employees, who are more productive and have a notably positive effect on customer service and overall performance when they're fully engaged by their employer – so even your employee engagement efforts will help in the quest to deliver excellent service.

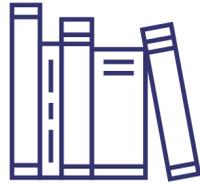


# Must Have Customer Service Skills

We're celebrating Customer Service Week, and what better way than to honour the must-have customer service skills?

Some people think that almost anyone can provide great customer service, but that's not always the case. It takes a special combination of acquired knowledge, taught skills and even some natural-born talent for your staff to provide a fantastic level of care and fully deliver your brand personality.

So, what skills are you looking for?



## 1.) Product Knowledge

Without a knowledge of your product range, your customer service reps aren't much use to your customers, who usually seek support when they're confused. At the very least, they should know where to top up their knowledge, which brings us to the next point...



## 2.) Caring

This doesn't mean asking about Uncle John's scraped knee, but it does mean caring about relaying the correct information, making customers happy and closing a sale. Your reps have to care – if they don't care, they don't want to help.



## 3.) Attentiveness

How infuriating is it when the person on the other end of the phone just isn't listening? Listening helps your staff understand the problem faster, solve it better, and get it right first time. Bonus points for staff who listen between the lines, and figure out what it is the customer is really looking for when they aren't quite sure themselves.



## 4.) Persuasive

The benefits are twofold: make sales to people who have arrived to make an enquiry, and extract information from customers who need help. Really persuasive staff will sell additional products to the people who arrived with a problem.



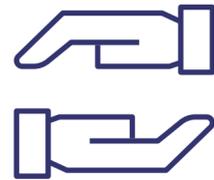
## 5.) Patience

Perhaps a dash of patience and a sprinkling of self-control – both go a long way in customer service and help your reps maintain a cool facade in difficult situations, even when a complaint gets heated. Which brings us to...



## 6.) No problem approach

A can-do attitude is a must have in customer service and can transform a long-winded phone call peppered with complaints into a top quality transaction highlighted by extra information and a pleasant conversation. This approach avoids stress for staff, and can have a calming effect even on the most irate of customers – approach with caution though, as no-one wants to speak with someone who's so chilled out they appear not to care.



## 7.) Compassionate

Much of the time, customer service is about providing a compassionate ear to problems, concerns and confusion, and offering genuine sympathy will improve understanding on both sides of the conversation. Compassion is also often the key to opening up the issue and realising why your customer is upset in the first place – it's rarely what it first seems to be.



## 8.) Relatable

As people, we all want to feel like individuals, and squashing employees' personalities won't make them better at their jobs. Embrace the human in your humans; they'll seem so much more relatable when they are being themselves...



## 9.) Acting

...But, not too much. Sometimes, great customer service calls for a little acting skill, a wide smile and a cheery disposition that isn't quite natural. Some customers will just never be happy, and your staff need to know how to maintain their cheerful temperament, even when it's tough.



## 10.) Adopt Your Tone

Finally, your customer service staff need to be able to master the art of adopting your brand's tone of voice because they are, after all, delivering your message. The staff who can adopt your brand's personality will produce the best customer outcomes, we guarantee it! Start them off right with your brand guideline or service handbook, empower them to make good decisions, and recognise them for a job well done.

# Retaining Loyalty

**Great customer service leads to customer loyalty, and acknowledging that loyalty is a major part of retaining it. We recommend two ways of acknowledging your customers' loyalty: with a verbal gesture, and a tangible one.**

Implement top notch customer service practices to give customers a positive experience that goes above and beyond every time they get in touch, and use a rewards program to reach out between transactions. Try loyalty points, Acts of Random Kindness or issue gifts on special occasions - birthdays, weddings, anniversaries - to form an emotional connection.

# Are You Thanking Your Customers? You Should Be!

Great customer service makes a customer feel valued and appreciated - that's what keeps them coming back. You can't reach excellence if the basics aren't in place, and a grateful gesture doesn't have to be grand - there are dozens of ways to say thank you!

Here are our top five.



## 1.) Use Their Name

You're not thanking them directly, but using someone's name shows that you are listening, concentrating and appreciate their custom. Addressing by name implies a level of respect and gratitude, and who doesn't love that?



## 2.) Interact Online

Reply to your customers – even the negative ones! We truly believe that companies can thank their customers simply by hearing them on Twitter and Facebook. Much of the time, social interaction is positive, so use its free and instant nature to interact with audiences around the world.



## 3.) Give them great deals

We see loads of companies giving the best deals to new customers. Don't forget about the ones that were there first! Give them a few special deals now and then to show your appreciation, and we think they'll stick around.



## 4.) Give Points

Every business needs loyal customers, and you can reward that loyalty with points. Use a Trade Club program to prompt new business, and most importantly, thank your existing customers for their return custom; give them points, which they can redeem for gifts.



## 5.) Reward their loyalty

Customer Retention Services use a range of gifts to thank your customer for their loyalty. Most companies have a budget for correcting mistakes or collecting survey results, but don't forget about saying thanks! A birthday bouquet or Christmas cookies now and then can be the difference between a loyal patron and a competitor's newest recruit.

# Customer Retention, ARK and the Frugal Wow

**Taking the customer experience above and beyond what they expect – we think that’s an impressive way to provide stand-out customer service and show a customer just how important they, as an individual, really are to you.**

Have you heard of the Frugal Wow? It’s a concept created by Bain fellow Fred Reichheld, who described a Frugal Wow as a gesture that doesn’t cost much, but brings a smile to your customer’s face.

In essence, the Frugal Wow is a way to ‘wow’ a customer in a manner that takes the experience above and beyond their expectation, ultimately building on good will and creating positive word of mouth and reviews. Although it costs very little, a Frugal Wow has a lasting impact on the customer, adding a little personality and flair to their relationship with your brand.

We often talk about the basics: great product, strong customer service team, competitive price – all the things you’d expect a modern company to have achieved as a minimum. Once the basics are in place, Frugal Wows have a power that sets your brand apart from others who only offer – well, the basics.

The ARK, or the Act of Random Kindness, is a more refined Frugal Wow. With an ARK scheme in place, staff are empowered to celebrate the connections they’ve made with their customers, embrace your company’s personality and project it out to customers – in the form of a personal gift and message - with the aim of building a strong relationship and cementing loyalty.

As customers, we all love personalised service. People love to be listened to and above all, to be treated like an individual. The ARK embraces individuality and inspires the workforce to engage more efficiently. Staff on the front line, so to speak, are already keen to engage with customers so they can solve their problems but with an ARK program in place, they’re also keen to form a relationship by asking questions, sharing interests and listening for an opportunity to celebrate a life event or reference a joke with the perfect ARK. Studies show that giving makes people feel good, so it’s not just your customer who enjoys the ARK program, it’s the staff who get to choose and send the gift.

As made clear by its name, the Act of Random Kindness is unexpected, and is designed to surprise and delight customers with reference to their lifestyle, their interests, or the moment they’re in right now. Consider a bottle of champagne for

the newly engaged couple opening a joint bank account, a personalised keyring for the lady buying a car, or a guide to Australia for the adventurer buying travel insurance, and you’re on the right lines.

It’s the element of surprise that contributes towards the huge social feedback received by ARKs, and it’s not uncommon to see several posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by people delighted with their gifts. Some are shared with friends, some directly with the brand, but often images and messages are shared with both publicly, spreading positive, genuine reviews far across the web in a way that traditional marketing can’t dream of.

The beauty of an ARK is that each one is likely to be different. As with people, each ARK is individual, having been chosen specifically for the customer who receives it with the purpose of making them feel special, showing them that your company listens, and saying thanks for being a loyal customer. It’s this message of thanks that’s so instrumental in boosting customer retention and loyalty – a personal acknowledgement that you appreciate their custom, and want them to keep coming back.

# What About When Things Go Wrong?

It's a sad fact of life that sometimes, we suffer customer service failures. But the way you deal with those failures can mean the difference between a briefly disappointed customer who has their faith restored, and a really disappointed customer you'll never see again.

A Customer Service Recovery program is there just in case. Offer a sincere gesture of apology when things go wrong, and turn a complaint into a compliment by proving your organisation doesn't settle for providing second best service.

How does it work? Empower staff to send an apologetic gesture when they receive complaints, discover a problem or are aware that things haven't gone to plan. For companies using this program, it's not unusual to experience the Customer Service Recovery Paradox – an unhappy customer ends up more satisfied as a result of the service failure than they would have been without.

# Customer Service Recovery

1

Sorry... let me fix it for you

!#?\*!£?!#

You'll have to come back later when the manager is back from lunch



Research shows that what makes or breaks an organisation's reputation is ultimately its ability to handle complaints...

4

Keep customers happy and they'll be your biggest advocates...



Thanks so much for my journal. I wondered if you could upgrade my package?

You're very welcome Jane. Let me get some packages created for you...

5

A totally satisfied customer contributes 2.6 times more revenue than a somewhat satisfied customer



A dissatisfied customer tells between 9 and 15 people about their experience

7

91% of customers who leave will never tell you why



Take each complaint as feedback, and send a small gesture as a token of apology or thanks.

8



Before you send cash compensation, remember that customers adore personalisation... and they remember a company that remembers their name

2

9

...if that customer leaves, it actually costs 6-7 times more to reach a new one...



3

Quality Service Focus Assist

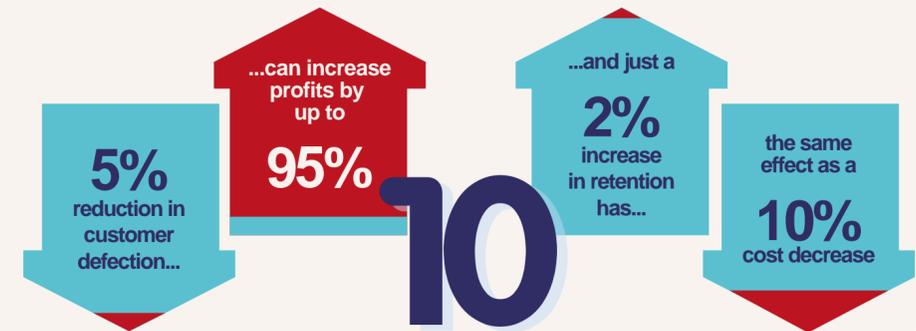
They care more about service quality than about speed – concentrate on emotional needs for service impact



Targets Targets Targets

6

...of purchases are based on customer feeling



10

# Celebrating Great Customer Service

It's National Customer Service Week – a time for celebrating not just great delivery, but the people who make it happen.

How often do you thank your workforce for representing your brand personality so accurately? Recognise their hard work with a reward gift and engage their dedication for the future, which secures an emotional connection and means improved customer service, performance and profit.

Employees who are effectively engaged aren't just happy in their jobs, they go above and beyond the call of duty. They care more, are more productive, and even stay with the company longer. They have bought into company values, assumed them, and are motivated to make a level of effort that people only give when they really want to: Discretionary Effort.

Those engaged staff aren't just benefitting internal activities, either. 72% of engaged employees believe they positively affect customer service, and this is a key point in the Engagement Profit Chain. Engaged employees care about the service they provide, make it their business to provide helpful information, and create meaningful experiences for the customer.

To start engaging with employees using a Rewards program, contact the experts at STY today and set up a program that benefits the workforce year-round, or in a one off Rewards drive to celebrate Customer Service Week.

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