

# MAKING THE MOST OF A CUSTOMER SERVICE GESTURE

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# CUSTOMER SERVICE GESTURES: AN INTRODUCTION

## Who doesn't love great customer service?

Making a purchase, a service call or even a complaint feels better when we're greeted with a smile, treated like an individual and most importantly, listened to. Even if you've reached the peak of great customer service, you can supplement it with a customer service gesture.

Service gestures take many forms, but the underlying motives are all the same: to reach customers on an emotional level. Creating a memorable, human spark between brand and customer at pivotal moments is the most effective way to build and maintain great relationships – and great relationships mean a better bottom line thanks to loyalty, advocacy and repeat custom.

Research has shown that more than half of customers would pay extra to guarantee a better service, and actively want brands to meet their emotional needs – specifically they want to feel valued, love personalisation and care more about quality and attitude of service than about speed.

A customer service gesture – of any kind – is an efficient, high quality route to showing customers a touch of brand character and humility in a world where personal service is in decline, and can communicate a variety of messages.

**41%** of customers are loyal to a brand because they experience good employee attitude – Deloitte

**55%** would pay extra to guarantee better service – Defaqto

**2.6** times more revenue is contributed by 'totally satisfied' customers than by 'somewhat satisfied' customers – InfoQuest

# DID YOU KNOW?

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"Customers care more about service quality and attitude than about the speed of the service. They want companies to meet their emotional needs."  
-Gallup Research

Key opportunities are identified by a range of studies to show that small gestures can transform the most common customer service moments for the better.

**22%**

is the low percentage of loyalty program members who feel 'very satisfied' with the level of personalisation they experience with a program  
- 2016 Bond Brand Loyalty Report

**73%**

is the high percentage of members who are more likely to recommend brands if they have a good loyalty program  
- 2016 Bond Brand Loyalty Report

# MAKING THE MOST OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY GESTURES

Loyalty programs come in all shapes and sizes, rewarding customers for their loyalty, purchases and longevity. Sending reward gifts makes the most of a poignant moment by turning into something memorable. Here's how to inject some personality into your loyalty program.

## Takeaways:

- Address every customer by their name
- Reference a particular customer moment
- Reward loyalty over time
- Send an Act of Random Kindness and use personal details to inspire gift choice

## Address the Customer by Name

There's no excuse for an impersonal reward gift. Whether you're issuing points by email or text, sending a physical gift or voucher, addressing your customer by name is the best way to get their attention and show them you thought of them personally. Research shows that for customers, a company remembering their name makes them more likely to remember the brand (PMC) – and with the right CRM system behind your reward program, it's achievable for companies of any size.

## Reference a Customer Moment

Especially when rewarding customers for a purchase, it's easy to reference a particular moment, and this can take a variety of forms. If you're saying thanks for buying, add some details about the purchase – what a great choice Sarah made on her new power washer; you hope John and Lisa enjoy decorating their new house; if Tom ever needs advice on downloading software to his new laptop, he should give you a call. A reference like this is powerful from the named member of staff who helped the individual in question, and is a motivation to put customer loyalty programs in the hands of the managers and staff on the front line of your business.

## Use an Act of Random Kindness

Not all customer loyalty rewards are prescribed. Consider Acts of Random Kindness, or ARKs, which call on customer service reps to put their knowledge of the customer to great use. An ARK doesn't necessarily reference a purchase, but does a great job of acknowledging customer individuality by inviting staff to suggest a gift – any gift – for their customer. It might be to celebrate a birthday, send condolences, mark an anniversary, revisit a shared joke or story and the best ones reference family, pets, hobbies, interests or anything that's important to the customer. The aim of an ARK is to surprise, delight and create an emotional spark; a thank you the recipient remembers into the future.



# ACTS OF RANDOM KINDNESS IN ACTION

Acts of Random Kindness give companies the unique ability to take a moment of high emotional involvement, and compound it into a lasting memory for a customer. ARKs are gifts requested especially for individual customers, focusing on their lifestyle and interests to show them your company really listens.

Many customers are overwhelmed by the reality that a large company has made the effort to add the human touch – taking to social media to express their gratitude. In a world where companies increasingly pay for advertising and influence on social media, ARKs offer the opportunity for positive word of mouth that spreads organically, and the kind of advocacy that can't be bought.

 **Sarah-Jane**  
@sarah\_jane73

#ReARKtion @virginmedia thank you for this lovely surprise this morning, very unexpected made me smile thanx Martyn.



10:03 a.m. - 24 Jul 2015

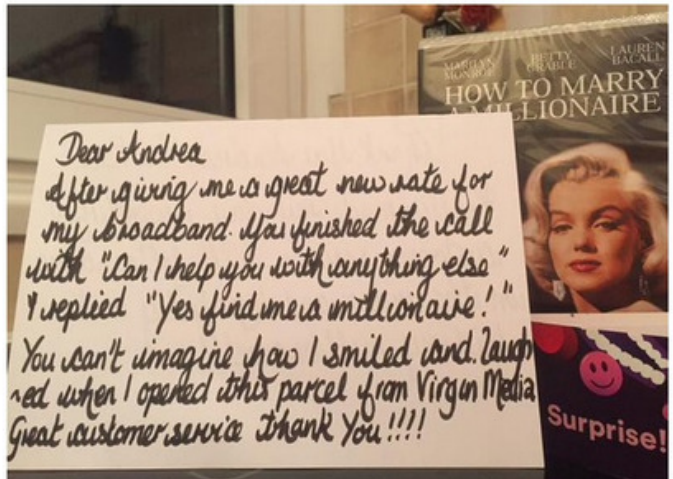


Reply to @sarah\_jane73 @virginmedia

 **Virgin Media** @virginmedia · Jul 24  
@sarah\_jane73 Lovely! :) We're here if you need anything! : AJ

 **teresa lambert**  
@teresalambert

@virginmedia #reARKtion amazing customer service Huge thank you !!!



8:24 p.m. - 15 Oct 2015



Reply to @teresalambert @virginmedia

# ACTS OF RANDOM KINDNESS IN ACTION

**John Crossley**  
@Jcrossle

Follow

@virginmedia and Olajide..thanks for the present for our lil nipper!No sign of them arriving just yet! #reARKtion



7:39 PM - 11 May 2016

Retweet Like Comment



**caro\_urbanvegpa...**  
FOLLOW

vikiclegg, speakingofdaisies, dianalou9, snowfallm, paradiesgarten, flowerholica, sam\_acostalplot, jude\_magee and virginmedia like this

caro\_urbanvegpatch Ooh yeah! Very useful trowel set from Spear and Jackson. Thanks for the gift @virginmedia #reARKtion - not sure what I've done to deserve this but yay, great!

Add a comment...

**Sally Mallalieu**  
@SallyNWWilliams

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Lovely touch from @NatWest\_Help Chorley Branch for the beautiful flowers they sent me after changing my name!



LIKES  
5

**Rachel Kehoe**  
@kehoerl

Follow

Thanks @NatWest\_Help for the lovely flowers!



LIKE  
1

3:57 p.m. - 20 Oct 2015



# ACTS OF RANDOM KINDNESS IN ACTION

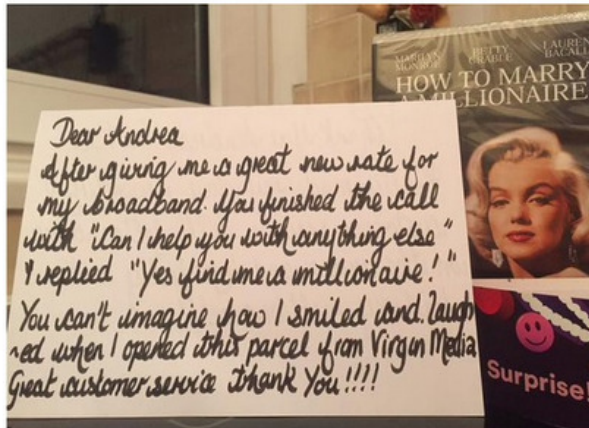


teresa lambert  
@teresalambert



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@virginmedia #reARKtion amazing customer service Huge thank you !!!



8:24 p.m. - 15 Oct 2015



Reply to @teresalambert @virginmedia



Full Time Writer  
@TessEgerton



Follow

@Npower, @npowerhelp, thank you very much to the team for our gift! Customer service at its best 🍷🍷🍷🍷💡

← ↻ ⭐ 👤 ⋮



Marianna Maniatakis  
@ManiatakisM



Follow

Just got a lovely gift from @santanderuk for selecting one of their mortgages. Great business nicely done - thanks!



LIKE  
1



Chris Lindsay  
@cclindsay8662



Follow

@AskBankOfScot thank you for the gift! We shall put it to good use! #surprise #newhome



8:38 AM - 12 Nov 2015



# MAKING THE MOST OF SERVICE RECOVERY GESTURES

Having a customer service recovery program on hand for when things go wrong is the best way to mitigate customer churn due to service failure. Service, product and technology errors are inevitable for most – but a gesture of good will sends a message that goes further than apology to reassure customers you appreciate their feedback and care about their experience. Here's how to make the gesture count.

## Takeaways:

- Address the error in detail and apologise for the mistake
- Say thanks for understanding, and patience for the fix
- Follow up by describing the resolution

## Address the Error

Do you know that for every customer who complains, another 26 have simply left and never come back? Your complaining customers aren't doing it for fun, they're giving you an opportunity to put things right – so send an apology gesture with a card or letter signed off by a manager or other senior member of staff in a position to make a detailed apology. It may seem that going back over the problem will compound the issue, but it actually reinforces the fact that your company is listening, and truly considering the details of the issue and its repercussions, so make sure customer service reps are trained to take down the details, ask questions and spot the root of the problem.

## Apologise

A service recovery gift is all about saying you're sorry for the failure, so be sure to make the apology clear; train customer service staff to take control of the situation and apologise on behalf of your brand. It's not about rehashing the complaint, but taking responsibility. It's inevitable that sometimes, an error experienced by a customer might not seem like such a big deal, but shirking responsibility for a customer's issue is a surefire way to lose them, so avoid the cardinal sin of customer service – denial - and accept accountability.

## Say Thanks for Patience and Understanding

We already know complaining customers are taking time out of their day to let you know about a problematic experience – but how long would it have taken you to discover the fault if they hadn't taken the time to get in touch? Saying thanks for getting in touch, and for hanging on while you fix the problem, is an important step in making sure a complaining customer doesn't choose to take their business elsewhere in the meantime.

## Follow Up

Not all product or service errors can be fixed in moments over the phone, so it works to have a team in place to follow up on complaints to let customers know that the issue has been fixed, and how it will be avoided in the future. Some complaints can lead to big changes: further product development, website redesign or better customer service training for example. Letting a customer know how their complaint has been taken on board, by following up with a phone call or email, further confirms that your brand is grateful for the feedback.

# MAKING THE MOST OF CUSTOMER ACQUISITION GESTURES

Using a Customer Acquisition program is a fast and effective way to grow your customer base over a short period of time or, with an incentive strategy, longer durations too. Acquisition rewards are a generous way to say thanks to new customers for signing up, and begin the relationship with a promise of great things to come. Here are a few ways to make your brand memorable from the outset.

## Takeaways:

- Say thanks for new customers
- Incentivise existing customers to recommend their friends, leave reviews and answer surveys
- Don't forget the value of surprise and delight

## Welcome New Customers

You can use an Acquisition program to welcome new customers in a variety of ways to let them know you're excited they're on board; say thanks for signing up to a service, joining a club, buying a certain product or spending above a designated threshold with a personalised reward gift. Branded pens and keyrings don't cut it any more, so empower customer service staff to collect information about customers and send them a gift that suits their lifestyle – having a range of welcome gifts available in a reward matrix makes it really simple.

## Reward Recommendations, Reviews and Survey Completion

Don't just reward newcomers – keep it fair by asking your existing customers to tell their friends and family about your brand, services and products. When people in their network make a purchase with you, reward the new customer and the loyal customer who brought them your way.

When it comes to customers who take the time to leave reviews and complete surveys – whether positive or otherwise – sending rewards is an effective way to thank customers for their feedback, ensuring a steady flow of content to attract new customers to your brand, and identify opportunities for improvement which, in the long run, means new customers too. This kind of reward works really well with a points based program.

## Make it a Surprise!

We love to talk about the power of surprise and delight – these emotions really are powerful. There's no need to keep your Acquisition reward program a secret, but refraining from advertising it means when customers receive their reward gift, they are truly surprised, which creates an emotional spark they remember. It also increases the likelihood that they'll share updates, photographs and reviews online with friends and family using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – the ideal way for new customers to hear others sing your praises.

# ADDING THE FINISHING TOUCHES

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Not all customer service gestures are created equal; add a flourish to put yours ahead of the competition.

With a Simply Thank You program, the finishing touches are included, ready to make the most of every customer service gesture you choose to use.

## **Bespoke Branding**

We'll build your multifaceted site in line with your brand guideline so logos, fonts, colours and everything in between represent your company, not ours. Simply Thank You remains anonymous.

## **Pantone Matched Wrap and Ribbon**

If you're sending physical reward gifts, they'll arrive wrapped in pantone matched paper with logo ribbon. If you choose to send digital reward by email, we'll create a HTML email template that matches your brand, too.

## **Message Cards**

Message cards will all be company branded too, with message in your corporate font. Adding Twitter, Facebook and Instagram handles allows people to reach you on their favourite network, and you can start conversations online by including a dedicated campaign hashtag – a proven way to generate and find positive feedback and word of mouth marketing.



# GET IN TOUCH

Get started on the journey to perfect service moments by visiting our website, following us on social media, or getting in touch for a no obligation consultation with one of our experts.



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