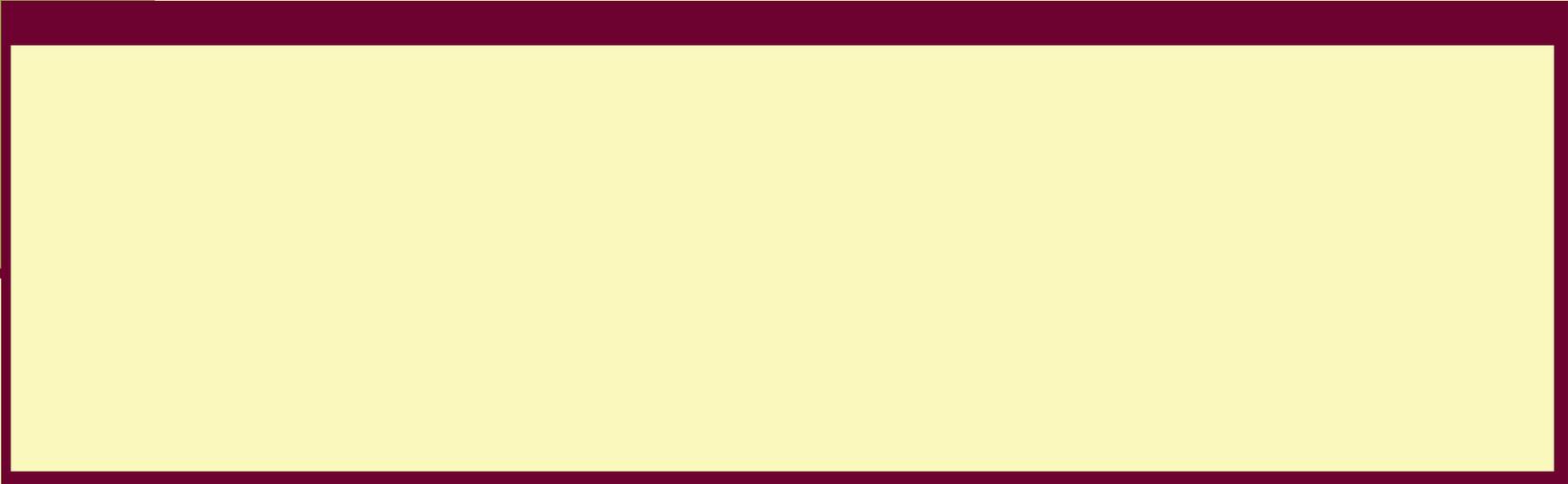


# Providing Exceptional Customer Service



# Introduction

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Providing exceptional customer service will build the bond that keeps customers coming back time and time again.

Providing exceptional customer service is accomplished by positively interacting with customers through effective communication and relationship building.



# The Basics of Customer Service

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You begin providing customer service the moment a customer comes into your business, calls on the telephone, or emails you. When customers physically walk through your door, they take a mental snapshot of you and your surroundings. Without even thinking, they form a first impression. First impressions are also formed over the telephone and through online contact. How you speak, how well you listen, the words you choose, and how you write and respond using email contribute to first impressions. If a customer's first impression is favorable, you have laid the foundation for providing great customer service. If the first impression is not favorable, you will have to dig deeper to build your foundation.

Being courteous promotes a positive first impression. Customers appreciate courteous treatment. Courteous words, phrases, and behaviors contain powerful messages. They show you care.



# The Basics of Customer Service

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Your attitude can also foster a positive first impression. Customers appreciate a positive attitude. A great attitude can help overcome a poor first impression. Similarly, a negative attitude can destroy a favorable first impression.

By combining a favorable first impression, courteous treatment, and a positive attitude, you form the basis for a strong customer service foundation. Add effective communication skills, and you will be on your way to building long lasting relationships with your customers. Once you master these customer service basics, learn how to effectively communicate, and develop skills to build strong relationships, you will confidently handle any customer in any situation.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 1: First Impressions

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First impressions are mental snapshots you take when you first encounter a person or situation. First impressions include a person's looks and actions, including general grooming and cleanliness, clothing, voice tone, attitude, body language, and posture. These elements, put together, make up your personal style. First impressions do matter. They matter a lot. When people see you for the first time, what is their first impression of you?

### **People see you first, hear you second**

The first step to making a good first impression is your appearance. When you do not have a nice appearance, you might present an obstacle that blocks your customers from forming a positive first impression. This does not mean you have to sacrifice your personal style to please others, but when you are at work make sure your appearance is fitting to your business.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 1: First Impressions

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### **Wear appropriate clothing for the type of work you do**

If you work in an office, you will dress quite differently than if you work in a fast food restaurant. When in doubt about what type of clothing is suitable for your job, always lean toward dressing conservatively.

### **Make sure you are groomed**

This means your hair and fingernails are clean and neat; your face, body, and teeth are clean; your clothes are clean and pressed; your shoes are polished; your hair is styled; and your overall image is professional.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 1: First Impressions

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### **Maintain a relaxed and open demeanor**

You can wear nice clothes, be clean and groomed, yet still convey a negative first impression. Your body language counts as much as your grooming. Whether you present an angry, bored, or friendly demeanor, it shows. Make eye contact when talking with someone. Smile as often as appropriate; smile often. A smile goes a long way, both personally and interpersonally. When you smile, you feel better. When you smile, you make others feel better.

Doing these three things will help your customers begin forming a positive first impression on you. Doing these three things show you care about yourself.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 2: Courtesy Counts

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Young children are praised for doing and saying the right things. When a young child says please and thank you, people respond positively. When a young child says I'm sorry, people readily accept the apology. When children wait to speak without interrupting, people notice how well mannered they are. Children who receive positive reinforcement develop valuable skills for getting along with others.

As an adult, you are not going to receive constant praise for being courteous, but people will appreciate your behavior. When you act courteously, you send a positive and powerful message. When you make a conscious effort to use courteous words and phrases, they will soon become a natural part of your vocabulary and personality.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 2: Courtesy Counts

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### Say please, thank you, and you're welcome

Make it a habit to incorporate these words into your vocabulary and use them frequently.

### Say excuse me and I'm sorry

When you do not understand someone, when someone is in your way, or when you inadvertently do something incorrectly, say excuse me. When you do something wrong or make a mistake, say I'm sorry. Get in the habit of adding these words to your vocabulary. These two phrases go a long way in repairing relationship damage.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 2: Courtesy Counts

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### **Use a person's name when you know it**

Everyone enjoys hearing his or her name, so if you know your customer's name use it. Also be sure to give the customer your name.

### **Use yes rather than yeah**

Yes sounds professional, intelligent, and respectful.

### **Say it with a smile**

This is an old saying with a timely meaning. In today's fast-paced world, smiling when you speak does come across loud and clear. Whether you are speaking face to face or by telephone, your customers will see or hear the smile in your voice.

**Tip:** There are also things you should not do in the presence of customers. They include talking on a personal call, smoking, eating (or having food at your workstation), and chewing gum.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 3: Attitude is Everything

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People may not remember the color of the shirt you wore or the exact words you said, but they will remember your attitude. Projecting a positive attitude is another way to make a good – and long lasting – impression on others. It really is all in the presentation. The “**it**” factor is the attitude you present to the world.

When you interact with customers, you may not get a second chance. Even if you are not a naturally positive person you can learn to have a more positive attitude. It begins by learning to appreciate.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 3: Attitude is Everything

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### Appreciate the good in yourself and in others

Appreciation can be learned by changing your self-talk (the words you use when you think) to positive thoughts. This goes for thoughts about yourself: change *I'll never do this right to next time I'll do better*. This also goes for thoughts about your customers: *look at this elderly woman. She doesn't look like she has a clue about television sets. This is going to be a tough one to handle. Change the mindset to I'll do what I can to help this customer. She mentioned she doesn't know a whole lot about all the new type sets, so I'll do my best to explain them all.* Changing your self-talk helps you appreciate yourself and others. When you find yourself falling into old habits of negative self-talk, make a conscious effort to change your thought process.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 3: Attitude is Everything

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### Believe in yourself

When you stop your negative self-talk, you will start to believe in yourself. Saying things such as, *I'll never do this right*, only sets you up for failure. Changing your self-talk to *next time I'll do it differently* sets you up for success.

When you begin to believe in yourself, you will begin to feel more confident. When you feel more confident, you will begin projecting a powerful image to others. To your customers, you will project an image of someone who believes in yourself, your company, and your product/services.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 3: Attitude is Everything

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### **Believe you can make a difference**

When you believe in yourself and gain confidence, you will naturally progress to believing that you can make a difference in the lives of others. When you believe you can make a difference, you will find ways to make it happen. At work, look for ways to make a difference by being helpful, interested, and caring toward your customers.

### **Keep an open mind; do not stereotype people**

Stereotypes can skew first impressions. Do you want people to stereotype you? When you change your thought process and stop stereotyping others, you will change the way you present yourself.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 3: Attitude is Everything

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**TIP:** Stress can easily zap anyone's positive attitude. If you find yourself getting stressed at work, try to get away from the situation for a few minutes. Getting away will not only help you calm down, it will help put things in perspective. The best remedy for keeping stress at bay, though, is to take care of you everyday. Get enough rest, exercise your body and mind. Eat healthy foods. Do something fun. Do something just for you. When you do these things every day, you will have a better outlook and be able to keep stress at arm's length.

**TIP:** We all carry emotional baggage. When you arrive at work, leave your emotional baggage at the door. Never make your customers and coworkers suffer because you are having a problem. Remember that everyone has problems. Use your work time to let go of personal baggage.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 4: Doing the Right Thing: Ethical Issues

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The last step of customer service basics deals with ethics. Being ethical means being honest, doing the right thing, and being accountable for your actions.

### Always be honest

Being honest at all times will make your life far less complicated. When you are truthful, you do not have to remember what you said to whom. Being truthful is important to your customers. When you are dishonest, people find out. Maybe not right away, but the truth has a way of coming out. When people find out you have not been completely honest, they will no longer trust you.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 4: Doing the Right Thing: Ethical Issues

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### Doing the Right Thing

When you make the decision to always do the right thing for others, you will go out of your way to do your best. At work, when you are faced with a dilemma, base your decision on doing what is right and ethical. Being ethical includes treating all your customers fairly and equally.

**TIP:** One of your customers asks you for a special favor. Doing so will mean crossing the ethical line. How do you tactfully refuse? You could say, “I don’t feel comfortable doing that because it is against our company’s policy.” If the customer persists, ask your manager for help.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 4: Doing the Right Thing: Ethical Issues

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### Do what you say you will when you say you will

Become a person others can rely on. When you give a customer your word, mean it. Let your word be your bond. Erase the words *I can't* or *no* from your vocabulary. If you cannot do what the customer asks, explain instead what you can do. It is all right to say “I don't know.” Follow up with “I'll find out for you.”

**TIP:** Always be truthful about your products, services, and policies. Never make misleading claims.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Step 4: Doing the Right Thing: Ethical Issues

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**TIP:** Never comment negatively about your competitors. If a customer asks for a comparison or leads you to say something negative, say, “I don’t know about that but let me explain our policy...” or “I don’t know enough about that to comment.”

### **Be accountable for your actions.**

If you think you have done something incorrect or unethical, be up front and talk it over with your manager. When you take responsibility and own up to your mistakes, people will respect you. No one expects you to make the right decision 100% of the time. We are all human and are all going to make mistakes. What sets ethical people apart is that they hold themselves accountable for their mistakes. This may not be easy at first, but it is the right thing to do. People will appreciate that you are able to admit you did something wrong. You will also have an added benefit: You will respect yourself more when you take responsibility for your actions.



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Key Points

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### **Step 1: First Impressions Matter**

- People see you first, hear you second
- Wear appropriate clothing for the type of work you do
- Make sure you are well groomed
- Maintain a relaxed and open demeanor

### **Step 2: Courtesy Counts**

- Say please, thank you, and you're welcome
- Say excuse me and I'm sorry
- Use a person's name when you know it
- Use yes, rather than yeah
- Say it with a smile



# The Basics of Customer Service

## Key Points

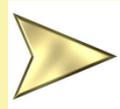
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### **Step 3: Attitude is Everything**

- Attitude is everything—good or bad
- Appreciate the good in yourself and in others
- Believe in yourself
- Believe you can make a difference
- Keep an open mind; do not stereotype people

### **Step 4: Doing the Right Thing: Ethical Issues**

- Always be honest
- Do the right thing
- Do what you say you will when you say you will
- Be accountable for your actions



# Effective Communication

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Did you know that almost everything you do in life involves some form of communication? Anytime you interact with another person, you communicate. Whether you smile at a stranger, speak to a friend, or listen attentively when someone is talking to you, you communicate. You can even communicate by doing nothing at all. When you ignore someone, let a door close on the person behind you, or look the other way when someone is approaching, you communicate.

We communicate for numerous reasons. When we need to make decisions, solve problems, get answers, gather information, or resolve conflicts. A smile communicates volumes. So does a scowl. Communicating is so important that a person's success often depends on good communication skills.



# Effective Communication

## Step 1: Saying what you mean and meaning what you say

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When you communicate, you can either speak or listen. It is impossible to do both well at the same time. As the speaker, you control the conversation. You have the listener's interest—as long as you are saying something that is receptive. As the speaker, it is your responsibility to get your message across the way you mean it. You may not get a second chance to explain.

### Choose the right words

In other words, think before you speak. Choose words that will be understandable to the listener. When you speak to a customer who may not be familiar with your company or products, choosing the right words will help convey the correct message. Opt for easy and familiar words. Trying to impress people with big words may only add confusion to your message.



# Effective Communication

## Step 1: Saying what you mean and meaning what you say

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### Make sure your tone fits the message you are sending

How you say something is more important than what you say. In addition to choosing the right words, think about how you want to say the words. When you talk to someone and use the wrong tone, your message will be misinterpreted. Use a serious, helpful tone when speaking to a customer who is upset. Use an enthusiastic tone when asking a customer if you can help. When asking questions, use a tone that shows you are truly interested in the answer. Pay attention to your listener's nonverbal cues to make sure your tone fits your customer.



# Effective Communication

## Step 1: Saying what you mean and meaning what you say

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### Add welcome words to your vocabulary

When you use words that sound positive and confident, you will project a positive and confident attitude. Words and phrases like “Yes!, I’ll be happy to!,” and “Sure I can!” send a message to your customers that you really are happy to help them. Words like definitely and absolutely send a message that you are enthusiastic and interested. Interjecting these and other welcome words into your conversation convey a sense of conviction that you truly want to help.



# Effective Communication

## Step 1: Saying what you mean and meaning what you say

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### **Keep business conversations professional**

When you interact with customers, draw the line between being professional and getting personal. Even though you may establish a friendly rapport, your customer is still your customer. Keep your conversation with your customers on a professional level.

**TIP:** When you are speaking with a customer of a different culture who does not understand what you are saying, speak in the same tone and voice level but choose different words to convey your message. Repeating the same words over and over will most likely frustrate the customer—and you.



# Effective Communication

## Step 2: What You Don't Say: Nonverbal Communication

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How you say something is more important than the words you choose, but what you do when you convey a message is also important. You can choose the right words and use an appropriate tone, but convey an entirely different message through nonverbal communication.

### Actions speak louder than words

You may have a great attitude and personality, but your actions will leave a lasting impression on your customers. Always be aware of your body language to make sure you are sending the right nonverbal message.



# Effective Communication

## Step 2: What You Don't Say: Nonverbal Communication

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### Smile Often

A smile is one of the most powerful messages you can send. A smile translates into any language, to any age group, across any culture. Smile and people will smile back at you. Get in the habit of smiling often. When you make it a habit to smile, your smile will look natural, not forced. A forced smile looks phony; sometimes a forced smile looks frozen on your face. When you smile often, your smile will become a natural part of your demeanor.



# Effective Communication

## Step 2: What You Don't Say: Nonverbal Communication

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### Make eye contact

This is one of the most important components of communication, yet it can be a tough habit to get into. If you are uncomfortable making eye contact when you speak, first try to get into the habit of making eye contact when you listen. Nod, smile, stay interested. When you are comfortable doing that, make a conscious effort to look at the other person when you speak. When your eyes stray, bring them back. Wandering eyes sends a message that you are bored or more interested in someone or something other than the person you are with. Making eye contact is a powerful tool. Eye contact shows you are interested, honest, and confident.



# Effective Communication

## Step 2: What You Don't Say: Nonverbal Communication

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### Maintain good posture

Standing straight also sends the message that you are confident. Get in the habit of holding your head high, but keep it in a relaxed position. When you hold your head comfortably high, your body will naturally have good posture.



# Effective Communication

## Step 3: Putting Words Together: Grammar Usage

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Proper grammar is critical to effective communication. When you use proper grammar, it is easier to send the right message.

### Reflect your company's personality

At work you are the voice of your business, and you should always choose words that reflect your company's personality. If you are unclear how you should speak to customers, how friendly or casual you should be, ask your manager for guidance.

### Speak Clearly

Using overly casual terms and running words together can be difficult for some people to understand. Get in the habit of always sounding out words in their correct form. Speak clearly, and you will present yourself as an intelligent, competent person.



# Effective Communication

## Step 3: Putting Words Together: Grammar Usage

### Use everyday language

Choosing the right words helps you send the right message to your listener. When you have a choice between two words, always opt for the simpler of the two. Keep your words short and simple whenever you can. They are easy for everyone to understand, and you do not risk the chance of sending the wrong message.

### Avoid using slang, jargon, company terms, and technical language

Your customers are not likely to know company terms, acronyms, and jargon, so stick to common, generic words. Most customers will not understand the technical terms you use. When you need to give technical explanations convert difficult-to-understand words into words to which your customer will relate. Always speak the language that your customers will understand. Try to match your speech to each customer's level of comprehension.



# Effective Communication

## Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly

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We ask questions for many reasons. As customers, we ask questions to gather new information and acquire additional information. Employees ask questions to figure out how to solve a customer's problem or to resolve a customer's complaint.

There are two types of questions: open and closed. Open questions require more than a yes or no answer and encourage the responder to give information. Closed questions require only a one word or short answer and are often used for clarification.



# Effective Communication

## Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly

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### **Keep your questions simple**

Stick to one type of question. When you lump the two types of questions together, you run the risk that your customers may not register all the responses.

### **Ask open questions when you need information**

Questions that require more than a one word or short answer will get the customer talking. Open questions begin with what, why, or how. Use open questions when you need information from a customer. Use open questions when you begin the questioning process to encourage your customer to talk.



# Effective Communication

## Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly

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**TIP:** Be careful when asking a “why” question. For example, “Why do you want to do that?” may put your customer on the defensive. They might reply, “It’s none of your business.” Smiling and using a reflective or helpful tone indicates you are asking out of interest to learn more about your customer’s needs.

### **Ask closed questions to control the conversation**

When you need short answers to clarify information or when you need a specific yes, no, or short answer, choose closed questions. Questions beginning with is, are, do, can, or will require only a yes or no answer. Questions beginning with who, would, how, or where require a short answer. Closed questions are good to use toward the end of the questioning portion of our contact to narrow down the information you need to help your customer.



# Effective Communication

## Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly

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### **Before answering a customer's question, make sure you understand it**

If you do not clearly understand the question, recap the question or ask a clarifying question rather than guessing an answer. It is better to ask another question than to answer the wrong question. Also, never answer a question unless you are sure your answer is accurate. It is better to say "I don't know," than to give an answer that may be incorrect. If you do not know, say so; follow up with "I'll find out for you."

### **Try to give more than a one word answer**

No matter which questioning technique customers use, try to answer as though the question is open ended. Try to give customers sufficient information to help them make decisions. Giving more than a one word answer can have an added bonus.



# Effective Communication

## Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly

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**TIP:** Try to erase the words I can't from your vocabulary. Always try to focus on what you can do. If a customer asks you to do something you cannot do, say, "Here's what I can do for you..."

**TIP:** When a customer asks for another employee who is not available, never say that the employee is at lunch, on break, went home early, has not come in yet, or that you do not know where the employee is. Rather, say, "John is unavailable now. How can I help you?" or "John is out of the office now. I'll be happy to help you."



# Effective Communication

## Step 5: When the Customer Says No

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You will absolutely, definitely, positively, have to handle customers who say no. When you offer a valid solution and your customer says no, your job is to uncover the reason for your customer's objections. The bottom line, always, is to do what is right for your customer. When you get to the real reason for the objection, you will figure out the best solution for that particular customer.

### **Listen to the customer's objection**

When a customer says no, an objection is made to your proposed solution. To learn the reason behind the no, ask a combination of open and closed questions. You need to understand why the customer is saying no so you can best help them.



# Effective Communication

## Step 5: When the Customer Says No

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### Acknowledge the objection

Always validate the customer's reason, then respond with a positive statement. Emphasize with the customer's objection, while adding another benefit to the solution you proposed.

### Follow up with a question

The customer objected. You listen to the customer's objection, acknowledge it, and give more information about your proposal. Next, you need to follow up. "How does that sound?" By following up with a clarifying question, you will know how to proceed.



# Effective Communication

## Step 5: When the Customer Says No

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### Consider the customer's answer

The customer's response will determine whether he or she is objecting because they do not agree with your proposal or whether they are looking for more information. The customer's response will help you determine whether to continue.

**TIP:** Always be truthful when stating your point of view. In other words, never try to glorify the point you are trying to make to get the customer to agree with you. When you are not truthful, you will come across in a phony manner and the customer will figure out what you are doing.



# Effective Communication

## Step 6: Listening Actively

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Speaking is important because you are delivering a message, but listening is often more important than speaking. Without the ability to listen well, communication can never be effective. If you do not listen to the message, you might easily give the wrong response.

### **Focus entirely on your customer**

Think of the customer you are helping as the only customer in your business. When you do this, you will be able to give your full attention to that customer. When you are listening to the customer, stay interested, even if your customer's message is long. When that happens, you can show empathy in your facial expressions or by nodding to show you are still with the customer. When you nod occasionally and say something like, "I see," "tell me more," or "hmm," you show you are still listening. If your customer rambles or gets off track, you may politely interrupt and ask some clarifying questions to take control of the conversation.



# Effective Communication

## Step 6: Listening Actively

**TIP:** If someone else interrupts you, and it is an avoidable interruption, explain to the interrupter that you will be with him or her as soon as you are done helping your customer. If it is an unavoidable interruption, excuse yourself momentarily from your customer to answer the other person. Quickly return your attention and apologize for the interruption.

### **Listen completely**

When you try to listen and talk at the same time, you do not do either one effectively. Pay attention to the speaker. You are going to get the ball tossed back to you and, when it is your turn to speak, you will want the other person to pay attention to you. Try not to think of your response when the speaker is still talking. Wait until the message is winding down before thinking how you want to respond. Unless you hear the customer's complete statement or question, you might come up with the incorrect response.



# Effective Communication

## Step 6: Listening Actively

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### **Remain objective, do not judge**

Before coming to a conclusion or making a judgment, gather as much information as you can. This will help you avoid jumping to conclusions. If you are not sure you understand correctly, paraphrase the customer's words or ask more questions to gather additional information.

**TIP:** Never assume you know what your customers want. If you are unsure, ask a clarifying question.

### **Listen for what is not said**

It is important to pay attention to your customers' nonverbal signals to see if their words match their emotions. Pay attention to what your customers are really saying. If a customer appears on edge, upset, or angry, show empathy in your replies.



# Effective Communication

## Key Points

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### **Step 1: Saying What You Mean and Meaning What You Say**

- Choose the right words
- Make sure your tone fits the message you are sending
- Add welcome words to your vocabulary
- Keep business conversations professional

### **Step 2: What You Don't Say: Nonverbal Communication**

- Actions speak louder than words
- Smile often
- Make eye contact
- Maintain good posture



# Effective Communication

## Key Points

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### **Step 3: Putting Words Together: Grammar Usage**

- Reflect your company's personality
- Speak clearly
- Use everyday language
- Avoid using slang, jargon, company terms, and technical language.

### **Step 4: Asking the Correct Questions and Answering the Questions Correctly**

- Keep your questions simple
- Ask open questions when you need information
- Ask closed questions to control the conversation
- Before answering a customer's question, make sure you understand it.
- Try to give more than one word answer.



# Effective Communication

## Key Points

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### **Step 5: When the Customer Says No**

- Listen to the customer's objection
- Acknowledge the objection
- Follow up with a question
- Consider the customer's answer

### **Step 6: Listening Actively**

- Focus entirely on your customer
- Listen completely
- Remain objective; do not judge
- Listen for what is not said.



# Relationship Building

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Relationship building is the cornerstone of customer service. Remember, to your customers you are the company. Customers judge a business by their interactions with its employees. From the moment a customer forms their first impression to the moment you complete your interaction with them, you have a valuable opportunity to build a strong relationship. The same applies to those customers who may not come back. When you interact positively and go out of your way to help each customer, you build a relationship. Those customers will remember the great service and will tell others about their experiences.

When you are courteous and have a positive attitude toward your customers, you show that you care. When you demonstrate good communication skills by thinking before you speak, keeping your nonverbal body language relaxed and open, and using correct grammar, you present yourself as intelligent and confident. When you ask the correct questions to help the customer and answer all questions the customer asks you, you present yourself as a competent employee. When listening carefully, you demonstrate that you are truly interested in each and every customer.



# Relationship Building

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You interact with customers in two ways. You work to build new relationships, and you work to maintain ongoing relationships. Both types of interactions are equally important. Without new business relationships, your company will not grow. Without ongoing business relationships, you will not develop a loyal customer base. The principles of basic courtesies and effective communications result in building and maintaining positive relationships.

Your relationship begins when a customer forms a first impression of you and your company. It continues when you establish rapport.



# Relationship Building

## Step 1: Establishing Rapport

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Establishing a rapport begins the moment you start communicating with your customers. Smiling at a customer can help establish a rapport by showing you are interested. How you establish a rapport depends on your customer interactions. Establishing a rapport is the first step of relationship building.

### **Be friendly**

No matter who your customers are, everyone appreciates someone who is friendly. When you smile and offer a friendly greeting, you put your customers at ease. You show them, from the start, that you are a person who is approachable and willing to help.



# Relationship Building

## Step 1: Establishing Rapport

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### **Be interested**

The smile and greeting also show that you are interested. When you ask people how they are doing or ask how you can help, you are conveying the message that you are interested. Being interested means listening when customers respond. Being interested means listening and responding accordingly. Being interested means thinking of ways to brighten other people's days.

### **Be sensitive**

Being sensitive means being empathetic and considerate of other people's situations. Even if you can not personally understand or relate to what the customer is saying, you can be sensitive in your response.



# Relationship Building

## Step 1: Establishing Rapport

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### **Be trustful**

The best way to demonstrate that you can be trusted is by being honest and ethical in everything you do. When you always act with integrity, your personality reflects your honesty. Being trustful includes treating people with dignity and respect.



# Relationship Building

## Step 2: Interacting Positively with Customers

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Once you establish a rapport, continue building your relationships by interacting with your customers in a positive manner. When you are positive and upbeat, people will respond likewise. It is hard to stay down with someone who is upbeat.

### **Be helpful**

Show your customers you care. Go the extra mile for them. Do something to make other people feel good about themselves. Set a personal goal to help someone every day. You will feel better when you meet that goal. It is a great personal habit to get into.

### **Be committed**

When you commit yourself to your company and to your customers, you will look for ways to make things better. No matter what you do today, do your best. Give today and every day 110%. Give your customers 110%.



# Relationship Building

## Step 2: Interacting Positively with Customers

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### **Be a problem solver**

Be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Look for answers rather than focusing on what is wrong. When you adopt a problem-solving approach you will find it hard to be negative. People who focus on problems complain; people who focus on solutions find ways to make a difference.



# Relationship Building

## Step 3: Identifying Customers' Needs

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Customers come into your business for a reason. Sometimes they are not very clear about their needs. When you deal with customers, your job is to uncover their needs.

### Ask questions

When customers do not know how to tell you what they need, it is your job to figure out what they need. Sometimes customers are not even sure they know what they need. Use open questions to get the customer talking. Use closed questions to clarify an answer.



# Relationship Building

## Step 3: Identifying Customers' Needs

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### Summarize customers' needs

After you have asked enough questions to determine your customer's needs, summarize your understanding of what the customer has told you. If your understanding is incorrect, ask more open and closed questions until you get it right.

### Recommend appropriate solutions

When you ask enough questions, you get enough information to recommend the best solution. Make sure that your recommendations are based on what the customer told you. Refer to things the customer said when making your recommendation.



# Relationship Building

## Step 3: Identifying Customers' Needs

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### Handle Objections

Listen to the customer's objections. Acknowledge it. Follow up with a question. Consider the customer's answer. Answer the customer's silent question, What is this going to do for me? When you can answer this question, you will be better able to get past the customer's objections.



# Relationship Building

## Step 4: Making the Customer Feel Valued

When you establish a rapport, interact positively, identify customer needs to make a valid recommendation, and make customers feel valued, you are on your way to building strong relationships.

Whether your interaction is a one-time conversation or an ongoing interaction with a customer who does repeat business with your company, your primary job is to communicate effectively and build positive relationships.

### **Go out of your way for your customer**

Do what you can to help them. Try to give them more than they asked for. When a customer asks a question, give a thorough explanation rather than a one word answer. Your customers will know when you go out of your way for them.



# Relationship Building

## Step 4: Making the Customer Feel Valued

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### Validate customers' decisions

Even if you do not agree with customers' choices, always validate their decisions.

### Instill positive feelings

Never make customers feel bad about their decisions.



# Relationship Building

## Step 5: Maintaining Ongoing Relationships

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Once you build strong relationships with customers, your work is not done. In any relationship, whether business or personal, you have to work to maintain the relationship. Customers come back a second time because you established a relationship with them. Imagine how valued they will feel if you remember them.

### **Remember your customers**

Nothing makes a customer feel more valued than being remembered. Remember your repeat customers and acknowledge them. Customers who do repeat business with a company appreciate being recognized. When customers are treated as though they are invisible, they might just become invisible.



# Relationship Building

## Step 5: Maintaining Ongoing Relationships

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### Learn customers' names

When customers come into your business repeatedly, make it a point to learn their names. People love hearing their names, especially when they come into a business. Addressing a customer by name will let them know they are important to you. If you do not know the customer well, use the last name. Leave it up to the customer to tell you whether you should call them by their first name.



# Relationship Building

## Step 6: Different Strokes: Handling Different Types of Customers

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Most of your customers will be average people with average needs. Most of your customers will be pleasant people who appreciate your help. Some customers, though, will test your skills and, at times, your patience.

Besides the average, everyday people with whom you regularly interact, here are some other customer “types” and tips on how to interact positively with them.



# Relationship Building

## Step 6: Different Strokes: Handling Different Types of Customers

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### **The pushy, obnoxious customer—remain calm**

Maintain a professional demeanor. Smile. Try to put the customer at ease. Speak softly and control your voice inflection. Never take on the same tone this type of customer uses with you. Speak in a positive upbeat tone of voice. When you stay calm, you stay in control.

### **The timid, indecisive customer—be patient**

Help draw these customers out and get them to talk more. Ask open ended questions. Listen closely to their responses and try to guide them to give you enough information to help them reach a decision.

### **The overly friendly, flirty customer—be professional**

Keep your end of the conversation on business. These customers can be difficult to handle because they do not see their behavior as being out of line. It is up to you to control the conversation. Do not foster overly friendly or flirty behavior by being overly friendly in return.



# Relationship Building

## Step 6: Different Strokes: Handling Different Types of Customers

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### The culturally different customer—be tolerant

We live in a society made up of many cultures, languages, and customers, yet, people often do not know how to talk or act in the presence of a person from another culture. Kindness, a smile, honesty, empathy translate into any language and across any barrier. People who do not look like us or act like we do can make us uncomfortable. By learning to be tolerant of differences, you will overcome any cultural obstacles.

### A special note on people with disabilities—be respectful

People with disabilities want to be treated like everyone else. Make eye contact and speak in your normal tone and pace of speech. Once you get used to dealing with people with disabilities, you will see that they want to be treated like anyone else, with dignity and respect.



# Relationship Building

## Step 6: Different Strokes: Handling Different Types of Customers

**TIP:** When interacting with people with disabilities, focus on the person first and the disability second. Putting the disability first, such as saying “the handicapped person,” places the focus on the disability rather than on the person. When referring to a person with a disability, use terms such as “the man who uses a wheelchair,” “the woman who is blind,” or “the person with epilepsy.” Terms such as crippled, retarded, deformed, lame, or crazy are considered unacceptable, so drop these and other terms with negative connotations from your vocabulary. If you do not know how to refer to a person, use the term “person with a disability.”

In all cases when interacting with people with disabilities, be patient. Also, don't be embarrassed or overly apologetic if you make a blunder.

When you learn to interact with different types of people and personalities, you will confidently handle any customer in any situation. By building and maintaining positive relationships, you are on your way to providing great customer service.



# Relationship Building

## Key Points

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### Step 1: Establishing Rapport

- Be friendly
- Be interested
- Be sensitive
- Be trustful

### Step 2: Interacting Positively with Customers

- Be helpful
- Be committed
- Be a problem solver



# Relationship Building

## Key Points

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### **Step 3: Identifying Customers' Needs**

- Ask questions
- Summarize customers' needs
- Recommend appropriate solutions
- Handle objections

### **Step 4: Making the Customer Feel Valued**

- Go out of your way for your customer
- Validate customers' decisions
- Instill positive feelings



# Relationship Building

## Key Points

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### Step 5: Maintaining Ongoing Relationships

- Remember your customers
- Learn customers' names

### Step 6: Different Strokes: Handling Different Types of Customers

- Pushy, obnoxious customers—remain calm
- Timid, indecisive customers—be patient
- Overly friendly, flirty customers—be professional
- Culturally different customers—be tolerant
- People with disabilities—be respectful



# Face-to-Face Contacts

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Customers judge a business in its entirety. Their assessment, particularly when forming that crucial first impression, includes how you look and act, how your business looks and feels, and how well you interact with them.

A customer's first impression is based on both the employee and the overall atmosphere of the company. A company can have a messy appearance and great employees. Likewise, a company may have a great appearance and employees with terrible attitudes. When you interact with customers face to face, presenting a positive business personality means a lot.



# Face-to-Face Contacts

## Step 1: Saying Hello: Greeting the Customer

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### Greet every customer

A quick smile, an interested look, and a friendly greeting will show your customers that you are genuinely happy they came in to your business. A friendly greeting will help overcome any negative vibes customers may have as they are forming their first impression.

### Make an impressionable opening statement

What you say is important in presenting yourself well to your customers. When you greet your customers, say more than hello. When you say more than hello, your customers know you are interested in them and you appreciate that they chose your business. If you remember the customers from a previous visit, acknowledge them differently. Address them by name if you know it.



# Face-to-Face Contacts

## Step 1: Saying Hello: Greeting the Customer

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### Ask, or say how you can provide help and give your name

After greeting your customers and making an impressionable opening statement, ask how you can help. Even if your customers come in to browse, let them know you are there to help. You might say, “Are you looking for anything in particular today?” or “My name is Sarah, and I’ll be happy to help you in any way.”

### Tune in to your customer

Pay close attention to your customer’s body language. Watch for cues. Make eye contact, and smile at your customers. See how quickly and easily they smile back. Pick up on their attitudes. When you are interested in your customers, you will be able to pick up on their moods, and they will notice your interest.



# Face-to-Face Contacts

## Step 2: Between Hello and Goodbye: Helping the Customer

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After greeting customers, it is time to get to the nuts and bolts of helping them. They came to you for a reason. Finding out that reason and finding the best solution is your next step in helping your customers.

### Pay attention to that one customer

And only that one customer. Show you are interested in helping by listening actively and making eye contact with the customer you are helping. Looking at other people sends a clear message that those people are more important than your customer.



# Face-to-Face Contacts

## Key Points

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### **Step 1: Saying Hello: Greeting the Customer**

- Greet every customer
- Make an impressionable opening statement
- Ask, or say how you can provide help and give your name
- Tune in to your customer

### **Step 2: Between Hello and Goodbye: Helping the Customer**

- Pay attention to that one customer



# Telephone Contacts

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Conducting business by telephone requires a different skill set than dealing with people face to face. Listening becomes even more important when you cannot see your customers. If you fail to listen, it is impossible to pick up on the nonverbal cues you get when you can see the other person.

When customers cannot see you, what you say, how you say it, and what you do not say are equally important. It is important to verbalize what you are doing. Silence, to a customer, can mean different things: Are you still there? Or what are you doing? Answer your customers' silent questions before they ask them. "I'm reading through the notes on my computer. It'll be just a moment." Now the customer knows you are still there and you are working on the problem.



# Telephone Contacts

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Maintaining a professional and friendly telephone demeanor, keeping an ongoing dialogue, asking appropriate questions, and responding appropriately to your customers are important skills to have when you interact with customers by phone.

When you deal with customers on the telephone, your verbal communication skills, particularly your tone, are important. Your customers will “see” you through your voice, because they cannot see you through your appearance. Your attitude will come through the phone line, so whether your attitude is tinged with enthusiasm, sarcasm, boredom, or of robotic quality, your customer will hear you—loudly and clearly. Make sure the attitude you convey is a helpful and interested one.

Talking on the phone also requires greater listening ability, both on the customer’s part and on your own. Focus on the customer you are helping rather than on the events happening around you. Be a complete listener. Never make a customer repeat a statement because you were not paying attention.



# Tips for Great Customer Service on the Telephone

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1. Check your attitude!
2. Answer the phone by the 2<sup>nd</sup> ring!
3. Check your tone of voice for –
  - Warmth, clarity, enthusiasm, inflection, confidence, sincerity, volume, enunciation, and pace.
4. Manage the call!
  - Greet the caller with “good morning” or “good afternoon”, give your name, offer to help, take notes, use the caller’s name, solve the caller’s problem, thank the caller.
5. Give the caller control!
  - Explain next steps, ask permission to put the caller on hold, wait for response.



# Tips for Great Customer Service on the Telephone

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## 6. Transfer with care!

- Ask permission to transfer the caller, explain why the transfer is necessary.
- Make sure someone is available to receive the transfer
- Tell the receiver of the transfer and the caller's situation.

## 7. Identify the problem

- Listen for facts, reflect with words of understanding, probe for information, determine potential solutions, and provide options to the caller.

## 8. Bring the call to a polite close!

- Thank the caller.



# E-Commerce Contacts

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When conducting E-commerce, communication requires yet another skill set. Communication, primarily handled through email, is a great way to formulate thoughts, but you must take special care to make sure that what you write is what you mean to write. Learning to write well by formulating your thoughts clearly and conveying the correct message is the most important skill for E-commerce customer service contacts.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 1: What does the E-customer Expect?

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### They want to know you are trustworthy

You show you are trustworthy by the way you interact with your customers. Promptly answer all customer email queries. When you demonstrate to customers you are reliable and informative by responding quickly and effectively through E-communication, they will be more comfortable placing their trust in you and your company.

### They want to know you will do what you say you will when you say you will

When customers ask questions, respond to their emails promptly. Do not make your E-customers wait longer than if they came in to your business. If a customer sends you an email inquiry and you take a week to answer it or answer it in a haphazard manner, you do not look very reputable. If it takes so long to send an email, how long will it take to handle a problem? Responding to email queries promptly shows you are interested in your E-customers.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 1: What does the E-customer Expect?

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### **They want to know you have a human touch**

When customers email you for information, always put a human touch in your replies. Imagine you are communicating with a customer who is in your business. Let your personality come through in your emails by being responsive, friendly, and professional.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 2: Hanging the Open Sign: Being Accessible

### Respond to E-customers quickly

You build credibility as a company by being responsive to all your customers. Give your E-customers the same importance as if they were in your business looking at you. Anticipate other questions the customer may have and address them in your email. In other words, give more than is asked for.

### Build customer loyalty through emailing

Always thank customers for their interest in your company. Use emails to tell customers about pertinent information. Send information to your repeat customers to let them know what is happening in your business. Always include an opt-out for those customers who do not want to receive unsolicited emails. If you deal with the same E-customers repeatedly, keep in contact with them through *thinking of you or how are you doing* emails. Keeping your company's name in the customers' minds tells your customers you value their business.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 3: Writing What you Mean: Email Communication

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When email is your means of communicating with your customers, you want to make sure that what you write is what you mean to write. Take special care before hitting the send button.

### Use good communication skills

Begin with your subject line. Make sure it reflects the content of your email. For example, Order Confirmation tells your customer exactly what they will be reading when they open the email. In the body of the letter, interject words like yes, I'll be happy to take care of that, absolutely, or I've taken care of that for you. Using the same words in emails that you use in oral communication lets your personality come through. Writing Thank you for doing business... or We appreciate your business... lets your company's personality come through as well.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 3: Writing What you Mean: Email Communication

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### **Begin with a salutation**

Begin your emails with a personal touch: Dear Mr. Bowman... Mr. Bowman knows the email is directed to him specifically. If you do not know the name, begin with a generic salutation reflective of your business, such as Greetings from Nineteenth Hole Golf Company or Dear Fellow Golfer.

### **Make messages visually interesting**

Keep your messages short. When customers see a long block of print, chances are they are going to skip over parts of the message. Use short sentences and action verbs to express yourself: We shipped your order...rather than The order was shipped... Use short paragraphs and double spacing between them to create open space in the body of your messages. Use bullets or headings when possible.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 3: Writing What you Mean: Email Communication

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### Write as you would say it

If you are unsure of your wording, speak the message out loud to hear how it sounds. Put the most important items first. Write clearly and specifically. Do not depend solely on your computer's spell-check to spot misspellings. Carefully proofread all messages. Keep the shortcut lingo (lol, jk, etc) for your friends, not your business customers. Reread all email messages before hitting the send button.

### Add an interesting closing

Say something specific. This is a good place to interject your company's personality by adding a line to show our customer you value the business. Always sign with your name and title, rather than only your title or the name of your business.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 4: Speaking Around the World: Cross-Cultural Etiquette

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We live in a world made up of many cultures, customs, and languages. Technology has shrunk our world so much that it is important to learn how to speak around the globe. Even though we may speak different languages, some communication skills are universal. Did you know there is a version of the Golden Rule in every culture? The words depending on the origin, are different from those we learned as children, but the meaning is the same.

### **Treat other people as you want to be treated**

The following qualities translate into every language: showing respect, being considerate of others, having a helping attitude, using basic courtesies, displaying compassion and empathy for others, and treating people as individuals. When you do these things, you can learn to effectively communicate across language or cultural barriers.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 4: Speaking Around the World: Cross-Cultural Etiquette

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### Read carefully so you will “listen” well

People may write in a way that makes it difficult for you to understand the message when you first read it. When you receive an email that is not clear, reread it carefully word for word to make sure you understand the meaning correctly.

### Use correct grammar

Your E-customers may not understand jargon or slang. When you get in the habit of using correct grammar every time you speak and write, people will better understand your message. Do not try to mimic other peoples' manner of speaking. Be yourself and speak and write in your normal voice, but be mindful that language differences may hamper communication effectiveness.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Step 4: Speaking Around the World: Cross-Cultural Etiquette

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### **Be a professional**

You show you are a professional by not stereotyping other people, not talking down to others, and not making assumptions. When you treat other people with dignity, you show that you are respectful and tolerant. Always be professional in your responses and give a complete explanation of any words or terms your E-customer might not understand.



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Key Points

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### **Step 1: What does the E-customer Expect?**

- They want to know you are trustworthy
- They want to know you will do what you say you will when you say you will
- They want to know you have a human touch.

### **Step 2: Hanging the Open Sign: Being Accessible**

- Respond to E-customers quickly
- Build customer loyalty through emailing



# E-Commerce Contacts

## Key Points

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### **Step 3: Writing What You Mean: Email Communication**

- Use good communication skills
- Begin with a salutation
- Make messages visually interesting
- Write as you would say it
- Add an interesting closing

### **Step 4: Speaking Around the World: Cross-Cultural Etiquette**

- Treat other people as you want to be treated
- Read carefully so you will “listen” well
- Use proper grammar
- Be a professional



# Difficult Customer Contacts

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It is not always easy to know what to say or how to handle customers who are upset from the moment you begin your conversation. However, satisfying a customer who is angry, upset, aggressive, or even rude can be accomplished in any situation. How well you are able to calm difficult customers will make the difference between satisfying them and fostering their feelings of frustration.

Remember the next time a customer complains, there usually is a legitimate reason. Sometimes, though, you will deal with customers who have no basis for their complaints. By learning how to tactfully handle a difficult customer in any situation you can make every customer feel satisfied at the end of the contact.

The customer's perception about the situation is what is important. Who is right and who is wrong is not important. Making the transition from difficult to satisfied customer is important.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 1: What is going on: Determine the Reason

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The first step is the most critical. What you say, what you do not say, and how you say it are all important. Your customer is upset, and you do not want to do anything to make him or her more upset.

### **Assure the customer you are going to help**

In your opening statement, tell your customer you will do what you can to resolve the problem. When you give your assurance up front, it can help put your customer in a different frame of mind.

### **Restate the customer's opening statement**

Customers who are upset or angry may not communicate well. They may ramble, raise their voices, and not be able to verbalize what is going on. By restating the opening statement before going any further, you will make sure you are on the right track.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 1: What is going on: Determine the Reason

---

### Listen carefully

After assuring the customer you are going to help, listen to the story without interrupting. Listen to the complaint and the reason why the customer is being difficult. By actively listening to what the customer is saying rather than the way it is said, you will be able to stay focused on providing help. If the customer is having trouble articulating, say something such as, “Please tell me what happened when you called earlier.”

### Write down key details

Pay attention to clues that will help you understand what happened. Make note of things that will help you solve the problem, such as the dates the customer called, what he or she was told by whom, and what actually happened.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 1: What is going on: Determine the Reason

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### Display empathy

Before you proceed, let the customer know that you understand their feelings. Reassure them again that you will help. Try to put yourself in your customer's shoes. No matter how a customer speaks to you, look at the problem from his or her perspective. You will be surprised how much clearer the problem will be when you see the situation from the customer's vantage point rather than your own.

### Remain composed

It is important that you stay composed from the beginning of your contact with a difficult customer. A customer speaking angrily or condescendingly may cause you to react in the same manner and tone. Becoming defensive and mirroring a customer's behavior will only agitate the customer further. By maintaining self-control, you will give yourself time to analyze the cause for the customer's anger. When you remain calm, the customer will begin to calm down. You will defuse the fuse.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 1: What is going on: Determine the Reason

---

**TIP:** Remember that a difficult customer is not angry at you personally. Think about this the next time someone is upset or difficult. Even if the customer refers to the company as you, and you know you personally were not the cause of the problem, remember the customer is not attacking you. The customer sees you as the company. Focus solely on the customer's problem to keep from becoming defensive.

**TIP:** If an angry customer immediately asks for your manager or the owner of your company without first giving you a chance to help, try this approach: "Ms. Customer, please give me the opportunity to resolve the problem. I'm confident that I will be able to help you, but if you are still not satisfied, I will personally refer your problem to my manager (or owner)." Your confident manner will give the customer the peace of mind that you are truly interested in resolving her problem.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 1: What is going on: Determine the Reason

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**TIP:** If a customer uses profanity, calmly say “Mr. Customer, I understand you are upset, and I am going to help you, but there is no reason to use profanity.” In most cases the customer will stop. If they continue, calmly say, “I am going to work with you to resolve your problem. Will you please explain to me what happened without using profanity?” Again, by maintaining a calm demeanor, your customer will begin to calm down.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 2: What caused it: Identify the root cause of the problem

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Once you determine the reason the customer is upset, your next step is to figure out the cause of the problem.

### **Investigate the situation**

Ask the customer if you can put them on hold while you find out what happened. When the investigation will take longer, make a specific commitment to get back to the customer. When making commitments to call back it is important to give a specific time frame rather than telling the customer you will call back “as soon as possible” or “right away.” Terms like these mean different things to different people. Right away might mean sometime today to you—it could mean within fifteen minutes to your customer.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 2: What caused it: Identify the root cause of the problem

---

### Explain what happened

After you apologize, tell the customer what happened. Stick to the facts. Keep the emotion out of it. Be truthful, even when your company made a mistake. The customer may not like the answer, but your honesty will be appreciated. In the end, a customer is going to respect an employee who is frank and honest over one who evades, covers up, or lies.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 3: What Can I Do: Rectify the Situation

### Offer your best solution

This is not the time to offer something mediocre and begin a bartering session for a better solution. By offering the best you can do, you will be more confident in presenting the solution. Putting yourself in the customer's shoes will help you understand how your solution may be received.

### Never assign blame

When you offer your solution, do not fault the customer. For example, how would you feel hearing the following: "If you had scheduled your appointment the first time you called we would have come out." Statements like this will put the customer on the defensive. When you are trying to help a difficult customer, blaming serves no purpose. Likewise, never blame another employee or department. Saying, "The first employee you spoke with should have scheduled your appointment." may relieve you from blame, but this statement serves no purpose. To the customer, you are the company. Use I or we when referring to your company to show you are accountable.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 3: What Can I Do: Rectify the Situation

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### Display empathy

If the customer expresses dissatisfaction, which he or she very well may do, let them know you understand. Understanding can often help mend broken bridges. You may not be able to fix the problem exactly how they would like but at least you can let them know you understand his or her feelings and what they are going through.

### Offer an alternative solution

If your best solution is not suitable for the customer, try to find something that will work. If you are at a loss to know how to resolve a problem, ask the customer what they would do to solve the problem if this was their business. Asking that question will help the customer walk in your shoes. Work together to come up with a realistic solution that is mutually acceptable.

**TIP:** Taking the time to adequately explain your solution will help you communicate more effectively. Tell the customer what you can do, but also explain why this is our best solution.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 4: What needs to be done: Fix what needs to be fixed

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### Analyze what went wrong

This step is crucial. Sometimes it will not be easy to analyze what went wrong.

### Review your company's policies and procedures

If you have frequent customer complaints in one area, it is a good idea to look at your policies and procedures. Are there some aspects of your business that customers frequently complain about? It should be your main goal to make it easy for your customers to do business with your company. When it is easy for customers to do business with you, it is easier for you to satisfy them.



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Step 4: What needs to be done: Fix what needs to be fixed

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### Change what you can to make things better

When you are part of the solution, you will be satisfied with the work you do. Remember, that you can make a difference.

**TIP:** If you cannot easily determine which areas make it difficult for your customers to do business with you, try this. Do a “walk through” of each step of a customer transaction. Look at your company from a customer’s perspective. Talk to your manager about the specific ways your company can improve.

### How to fix what needs fixing

Discuss any areas that make it difficult for your customers to do business with you. Try to come up with ways to change those areas and rewrite your company’s policies to address them.

**Make sure your attitude is never indifferent but always interested in making a difference.**



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Key Points

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### **Step 1: What is Going on: Determine the Reason**

- Assure the customer you are going to help
- Restate the customer's opening statement
- Listen carefully
- Write down key details
- Display empathy
- Remain composed.

### **Step 2: What caused it: Identify the root cause of the problem**

- Investigate the situation
- Explain what happened



# Difficult Customer Contacts

## Key Points

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### **Step 3: What can I do: Rectify the Situation**

- Offer your best solution
- Never assign blame
- Display empathy
- Offer an alternative solution

### **Step 4: What needs to be done: Fix what needs to be fixed**

- Analyze what went wrong
- Review company policies and procedures
- Change what you can to make things better.



# Customer Service Training

## Quick Reference

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### The Basics

- First impressions matter
- Courtesy counts
- Attitude is everything
- Do the right thing at all times

### Effective Communications

- Say what you mean and mean what you say
- Pay attention to your body language
- Use correct grammar
- Ask the correct questions and answer the questions correctly
- When the customer says no, find out why
- Listen actively



# Customer Service Training

## Quick Reference

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### Relationship Building

- Establish a rapport
- Interact positively with customers
- Identify customers' needs
- Make customers feel valued
- Maintain ongoing relationships

### Face-to-Face Contacts

- Greet the customer
- Help the customer
- End the transaction by thanking the customer



# Customer Service Training

## Quick Reference

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### Telephone Contacts

- Listen completely
- Greet the customer
- Help the customer
- End the call by thanking the customer

### E-Commerce Contacts

- The E-customer is looking for trust, and a human touch
- Be accessible
- Write carefully so that you write what you intend
- When speaking around the world, be mindful of cross-cultural etiquette



# Customer Service Training

## Quick Reference

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### Difficult Customer Contacts

- Determine the reason the customer is being difficult
- Identify the root cause of the problem
- Rectify the situation
- Acknowledge the problem
- Fix what needs to be fixed



# Communication Skills

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- Understand the benefit of asking questions in providing customer service.
- Investigate a variety of questioning styles to achieve specific outcomes.
- Employ paraphrasing skills to ensure accuracy of understanding.
- Develop listening skills, and look into what creates barriers to our listening, and how to overcome these issues.



# What Results Can You Expect From Great Customer Service?

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- Customers come back because of the way they were treated.
- Company image represents highest of service standards.
- Positive word of mouth about your company.
- Internal customer service practices increase morale and reduce turnover.



# Survey

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- Select the link below to complete an online Zoomerang survey.

NOTE: To launch survey right click on mouse and select open hyperlink.

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CMQ5N5RXA/>

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Select Close and Save Progress  
to record your completion

**THANK YOU!**