

Customer Service

In today's marketplace, customers are bombarded with offers for products and services. Newspaper, radio, and television ads vie for their attention. Interesting sites on the Internet, charming store displays, and colorful catalogs compete for their dollars. It's a buyer's market.

In this type of marketplace, customers call the shots. And what customers want—what they demand—is superior service. They have neither the time nor the patience for anything less. Dissatisfied customers simply take their business elsewhere.

Smart companies have responded by making customer service their number one priority. Everyone from the CEO to the newest hire focuses on providing excellent service. Whether you are a mechanic, bookkeeper, researcher, librarian, sales clerk, computer programmer, or custodian, your actions influence whether customers will remain loyal to your company.

In this workshop, you will learn how to put the customer first, every day, in every interaction. And that knowledge will help you succeed at work, as well as in every other area of your life.

Workshop 1 views customers as the most important people in a business. It describes the value of repeat buyers and emphasizes the importance of providing superior service. In Workshop 2 you'll learn to identify your customers and what they want, and to use the knowledge when selling products or services. Workshop 3 provides strategies for showing customers that you care about them. Workshop 4 teaches you how to form a partnership with your customers by building rapport, creating win-win

solutions, and demonstrating how they will benefit from every transaction.

Workshop 5 ties all of the previous ideas together, presenting

an overall strategy for developing loyal customers.

Ways of dealing with difficult customers and transforming them into satisfied, repeat buyers are discussed in Workshop 6. In Workshop 7, you'll learn how to use the telephone as a powerful customer service tool. Guidelines for providing superior online customer service are given in Workshop 8, and in Workshop 9 you'll learn how to relate to all customers in our increasingly diverse business world.



Introduction

Take a few minutes now to complete this self-assessment to see where you stand on important issues in customer service. For each statement, mark the response that best applies to you.

	Yes	No
1. I get impatient when I think people are taking too much of my time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I often have trouble getting my thoughts across to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. When I'm pressured, I tend to get curt with people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I'm easily distracted while people are talking to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I usually judge people by how they look and sound.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I get defensive when someone criticizes me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I tend to procrastinate instead of telling people something I know they don't want to hear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I really don't want to hear about problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. When I'm involved in a disagreement, I make sure others understand the point I'm trying to make.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. It's hard for me to not jump in before others are finished talking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. What I say is more important than how I say it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The attitude that the customer is always right is old-fashioned.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How many times did you mark “Yes”? If you marked “Yes” even once, you will benefit from the workshops in this book. Remember, customer service is not solely the job of a few people with the title of customer service representative. It must be embraced and practiced by everyone in a company, every day, and with every customer. In the following

workshops, you will learn how to build relationships with customers—that is, you’ll gain the skills you need to keep customers loyal.

