

CUSTOMER SERVICE: ESSENTIAL TO BUSINESS SURVIVAL!

Good customer service is an important goal for businesses that plan to prosper during the 21st century. Studies show that businesses that incur customer dissatisfaction don't often have the opportunity to reverse that customer's opinion. **Only five percent of dissatisfied customers bother to complain. The others just don't come back.**

Experience indicates that **68 percent of the customers do not return because of the indifferent attitude of an employee.** How might an employee approach customers so they are assured that the business is very much interested in meeting their needs?

When a customer enters a store, the salesperson should cease any other activities, such as personal conversation, stock work, paper work, and cleaning.

The salesperson should show a sincere interest in the customer's needs and display self-confidence about the merchandise and the store. It is important to listen carefully to the customer to determine preference for quality, quantity, color, size, and price.

The salesperson should be informed about the merchandise in the store to the extent he or she is able to make alternate suggestions if the store does not carry the item requested. If a variety of styles and/or price points are available, these should be shown.

The customer should be allowed time to reach a decision without any show of impatience on the part of the salesperson. He or she should be made to feel that the most important part of the purchase is that the customer be satisfied.

If a firm reflects the attitude that the customer is the most important person ever to walk in the door to the business, it has taken a big step toward good customer relations. Many businesses are too concerned with making things easy and convenient for the employees of the firm rather than focusing on the convenience and satisfaction of the customer.

Successful businesses are in tune with customer traits that are constantly changing. They must adapt to the needs and wants of customers, including staying open at hours that suit customers and offering the kinds of goods and services that will attract them.

A cardinal rule in your business should be "customer service takes precedence over any task in the store." Not only is that rule important for you, but that philosophy must be conveyed to and be reflected by all of your employees!

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