

Great Customer Service is Personal

Good customer service is about listening, and learning, so you can deliver what is expected... and more.

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When I think of customer service, I think of my sister Cindy. Cindy has been the customer service “whisperer” at Ziglar, Inc. for several years now, and if anybody knows anything about how to keep customers happy, my sister does. I called her for some input.

Cindy told me that the most important thing she does is LISTEN to what her customer has to say... all of it! She doesn't interrupt. Through the years she has noticed that people mostly want someone to express their frustration to.

In most instances, their complaints can be dealt with in a way that is satisfactory to them, but on occasion someone might remain upset regardless of what Cindy does for them, including refunding their money.

That's when true customer service begins, and it is very personal... because it begins with you. The ability to stay concerned and helpful in the face of someone's emotional ranting and raving is more than a special talent. It is more than a gift. It is the result of taking excellent care of you.

That's right; the first step to excellent customer service is servicing the customer service representative. A car can't run on an empty tank of gas and a customer service rep can't function well on just a few hours of sleep and sub par nutrition... a tired, run down customer service rep is a bad customer run-in waiting to happen.

In any organization the most important link to the outside world is customer service. No service, no customer. It doesn't matter if you have a one man or woman office and you do it all, if you don't take care of your customers problems you'll lose them to someone else. When you find yourself in the position of problem solver, the attitude you convey must be cheerful and show your willingness to help, as well as your sincere desire to set right anything the customer says is wrong. Keeping an uplifting lilt in your voice insures the customer that you don't feel defensive or put-upon by their request for help. Nothing turns a customer away faster than the feeling that they are being discounted, or worse, dismissed as a complainer without a real problem.

My first experience with a disgruntled customer happened when I was in my early twenties. I was selling tickets to a big Success Rally with Paul Harvey, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, my dad Zig Ziglar, Art Linkletter and several others. In those days if a company was closing down for the day and sending all of their staff we'd go out to their place of business and get them all excited about attending the event. The owners wanted to be sure their team looked forward to the event and expected to get lots of good information they could use to get better business results. I had an appointment to do just that and I showed up as scheduled, on time. I could tell as soon as I saw the owners face that he was more than just a little upset with me.

He pulled me aside and told me he'd been a nervous wreck. He said he didn't know if I was coming or not and that he almost decided to cancel the whole affair. I was shocked. I didn't know I'd done anything wrong. I was still green when it came to business etiquette and didn't know reconfirming was not only a good idea, but was the right thing to do. I apologized sincerely and, obviously since I'm writing about it 30 years later, I never forgot the lesson.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the only problem that day. I stood before his employees and told them what a great day they were going to have. I told them about the different speakers, what they would learn from each one, and about the special boxed lunch their employer had ordered for them so they wouldn't have to leave the venue and risk missing even one minute of the life transforming information that would be shared. That all sounds pretty good, right? Well, I was revved up to full throttle and in my excitement I told them that the program was SO POWERFUL that even if they could only attend for half of the day it would still impact their lives!

Oops. That was the wrong thing to say. I finished my talk and was escorted to my car with a speech only a really upset customer could give. I'd made another mistake that was honestly the result of inexperience. I didn't realize that my statement might have planted the idea that someone could attend half a day and leave. I was young and didn't fully understand how much it was costing this man to close his business for a whole day, buy tickets for his staff of almost 50 people, and provide lunch, as well. He was making a huge investment and I had minimized and jeopardized the outcome he was hoping for.

I learned more about customer service from that one incident than I have learned since.

Make an appointment with me and you'll enjoy the benefit of what I learned that day so many years ago. I will call to reconfirm. Have me come speak to your group and you can be assured that what I say will be in line with what you want your group to hear! I'm going to visit with you at length to be sure I know what you want.

Good customer service is about listening, and learning, so you can deliver what is expected... and more. Great customer service is about you being your best you.



Julie Ziglar Norman shared the Get Motivated Seminars platform with her legendary father, motivational icon Zig Ziglar, for several years before becoming the dynamic, disarming and refreshingly transparent motivational speaker and author she is today. Her unique experience of being raised by the motivators' motivator has given her a perspective on life and work that keeps her audiences laughing, crying, and taking notes.

Carrying her father's Legacy of Encouragement into the next generation is an honor and a privilege that Julie never expected or sought but her willingness to accept the challenge is inspiring audiences in America and abroad. Her vibrant style of delivery, her honest and transparent assessment of life, and her willingness to share intimate details of personal failures, as well as personal triumphs, has made her a popular crowd favorite.

Julie has been her father's editor for almost 20 years and is a winner of the coveted Guideposts Writers Workshop contest. Her background in sales, business management, and the service industry, as well as her experience as a parent, step-parent and grandmother, enable her to relate well to just about everyone!

Julie lives in the sleepy little town of Alvord, Texas with her beloved husband of 28 years, Jim Norman, three rescued cats, four rescued dogs and three on purpose horses. She is the proud mother of DeDe Galindo, Jim Norman, Jenni Haecker and Amey Fair and the thrilled grandmother of Kristina, Desiree, Jake, Sam Parker, Robert, Mable, Molly, Benjamin, Averic, Deacon, and Phoebe. Her hobbies include trail riding on her Quarter horse Kup, reading, and Herpetology, the study of reptiles and amphibians.