

**THE
CUSTOMER SERVICE
POCKETBOOK**

3rd Edition

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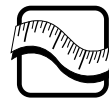
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DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

WHAT YOU NEED



To deliver good customer service, you will need:

- Good quality products and services
- Consistent and accurate information on products, orders, customers, and the organisation. You can't know or remember everything, but you should be able to find it out
- A good understanding of the products or services you supply and the needs of external customers, so you can match them up
- A thorough knowledge of the systems, procedures and teams in your organisation
- Reliable systems and suppliers

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

PERSONAL QUALITIES REQUIRED



To deliver good customer service, you will also need these personal qualities:

- A positive attitude, with dedication to getting it right first time, and a commitment to helping colleagues
- Attention to detail
- A willingness to take responsibility
- The confidence to stay calm under pressure
- Excellent communication skills



DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

QUALITY



Good customer service is about:

- The quality of what you deliver; and
- The quality of how you deliver it

Quality isn't an abstract notion of how good something is. It's about how appropriate something is for your customers' needs, and how well it meets their expectations.

A carrier bag and a rucksack can both be high-quality bags, because they satisfy different needs.

Quality is about making sure you're delivering the right things to the right people at the right time.

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

To deliver good customer service, you need to have a 'can do' attitude, and be willing to help customers and colleagues.

It's challenging at times, but every query or complaint is an opportunity to delight a customer, and create a company ambassador.



DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

ATTENTION TO DETAIL



Good customer service is the product of close attention to important small details.

For example:

- A shop assistant who remembers a customer's favourite magazine and tells her when a new issue comes out
- An unprompted phone call to check that the customer is happy
- A restaurant where the waiters can advise customers who have an allergy to certain ingredients

Conversely, bad customer service often results from poor attention to names, numbers, dates, orders and other details.

Most of the improvements needed to achieve excellent customer service require very small changes in the way we work day-to-day.

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY



When customers turn to you for help, they want to know that you will take responsibility for getting them what they need.

Sometimes you might be let down by tools or suppliers, but it's still **your** responsibility to satisfy your customers, and find a solution.

You might deliver service across multiple channels, and customers expect to be able to switch between them at will. They want to pop into a shop as they're passing, send a message through your social media page, or pick up the phone. Their choice of channel might not be ideal for the organisation, but whoever receives the enquiry is responsible for getting it to someone who can help.

Customers want to work with a single, harmonious company. If you can't help them, you are responsible for finding the people who can.

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE



Give customers confidence that you are taking responsibility:

- Be prepared to apologise on behalf of the company if mistakes have been made
- Introduce yourself by name on the phone, or wear a name badge so customers know you're accountable
- Help customers to navigate your organisation. Introduce them to the right person to help, or show them to the shelves where the products they need are kept
- Offer to follow up personally. Give your name and number. Customers want consistency in their dealings with the company, and prefer not to explain their situation again to someone new
- Tell customers what you're doing. Give them confidence that any delays they suffer are because you're trying to help them

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

HOW TO DELIGHT CUSTOMERS



It's easy to think of ways to delight customers, but the important thing is that your surprises meet their needs. For example:

- If a customer buys an expensive and cumbersome table, will they be more impressed if they're given a 5% discount or if the sales team spends half an hour helping them to get it into their car? The cost to the company might be the same, but the impact on the customer will be very different
- If a shop doesn't stock something the customer needs, it can still leave an impression of good service. Imagine how pleased customers would feel if the shop recommended another company to help them. The shop has helped create a future buyer by offering great service to a browser. Remember, the shop couldn't have made the sale and the customer had to go to a competitor anyway

How can you delight your customers?

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE



There are examples of great customer service all around us, which can inspire us. Here are some I've spotted:

- At John Lewis, they have a central service desk where an assistant takes your name and query, and then finds a sales assistant who can help you. You don't have to try to find free staff on the shop floor, and the team takes responsibility for finding someone with expertise in the products you're looking at
- Air Asia keeps racks of umbrellas that passengers can use to shelter from the rain as they walk across the tarmac, from the airport to the plane. A small touch like this can result in a much more comfortable flight, and make customers feel more appreciated
- My mobile phone company noticed when I tried to call a couple of times and couldn't get through, and it automatically texted me an apology and a £5 credit on my bill



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What examples of great customer service have you come across?

About the Authors

Sean McManus

Sean McManus writes inspiring books about business and technology. His books include *Web Design in Easy Steps*, *iPad for the Older and Wiser*, *Microsoft Office for the Older and Wiser*, and *Raspberry Pi For Dummies*. His magazine contributions have appeared in *Marketing Week*, *Customer Loyalty Today* and *Business 2.0* among others. Visit his website at www.sean.co.uk for bonus content and free chapters from his books.



The late Tony Newby

Tony Newby, BA, MA, wrote the first edition of this popular guide to customer service in 1991, drawing on his extensive experience consulting and training in multinational and growing companies, as well as within local and central government. These assignments involved creating and delivering bespoke training courses, covering topics as diverse as culture change, assertiveness, creativity, effective listening, computer skills and customer service quality. His books on management training topics have been published in the UK and the USA.

