

12 BIZARRE CUSTOMER SERVICE QUERIES

Just one aspect of successful Customer Relationship Management, the customer services desk – or any similar point of contact between business and consumer – is the frontline when it comes to providing a satisfactory level of support away from core services. As with all things CRM-related, it can be a delicate balancing act ensuring all customers are dealt with in a way that reflects well upon the business, even in the face of more “unorthodox” requests.

Fortunately, customer service desks across the nation are prepared for such moments, when, for want of a better description, a fool ceases to bang his head against the wall and figures out how to use the phone. From the technologically inebriated to the diagnosed hard of thinking, below are 12 such incidences where, in the name of customer services, rationality has yielded to silliness, without so much as a frank exchange of views.

FIRST OFF, A PLAIN AND INDEED SIMPLE REQUEST, LEVELLED AT AN UNSUSPECTING INDIVIDUAL WORKING FOR A NO-FRILLS RESTAURANT CHAIN:

1 **Caller:** “On what day is your Sunday Brunch available?”
Operator: “Erm... most weeks it’s on a Sunday...”



2 **Caller:** “Can I pay for the items over the phone with cash?”
Operator: “Yes. Do you have a fax machine?”

3 **Caller:** “I’d like the number of the Tanton Chip Shop, please.”
Operator: “Sorry, there doesn’t appear to be a listing for that business. Are you sure the spelling is correct?”
Caller: “Well it used to be called the Stanton Chip Shop, but the ‘S’ fell off.”



4 **Caller:** “The Highland Knitwear Company in Woven, please.”
Operator: “Woven? Can’t seem to find a Woven on the map. Are you sure?”
Caller: “Positive. That’s what it says on the label – Woven in Scotland.”

MAYBE IT’S TIME TO SHIFT UP A GEAR AND ENTERTAIN A SPOT OF MOTORING-RELATED MADNESS:



5 **Caller:** “I’ve been trying 0700 2300 for two days now and I can’t get through to enquiries. Can you help?”
Operator: “Where did you get the number from, sir?”
Caller: “It was on the door.”
Operator: “Sir, those are our opening hours.”

6 **Caller:** “If I register my car in France and then take it to England, do I need to change the steering wheel to the left hand side?”



7 **Caller:** “Does my European Breakdown Policy cover me when travelling across America?”
Operator: “Yes, but only in New England.”

THE WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY IS A PARTICULARLY FERTILE GROUND FOR SILLINESS. WHEN IT COMES TO THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ALL THINGS NEW-FANGLED, SOME PEOPLE ARE NEVER GOING TO ADAPT. AND THERE’S NOTHING THE HUMBLE HELP DESK OPERATOR CAN EVER DO TO REMEDY THIS:

8 **Caller:** “My 14 year-old son put a password on my computer and I can’t get in.”
Operator: “Did he forget it?”
Caller: “No. I grounded him and now he won’t tell me.”

9 **Caller:** “Can you give me the phone number of Jack, please?”
Operator: “Excuse me. I don’t think I know who you’re referring to.”
Caller: “It’s here in the manual. Page one, section five; it clearly states that I should unplug the fax machine from the wall socket and telephone jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me the number of this Jack?”



10 **Operator:** “I want you to close all the open windows before installing the update.” [5 minutes of silence follows]
Caller: “Right. The only open window was the bathroom. I’ve closed that, now what?”

11 **Operator:** “Thanks for calling HP’s printer support. How can I help you today?”
Caller: “I can’t send any emails.”



12 **Caller:** “I keep getting inappropriate pop-ups on my computer and I’m worried my wife will think they’re down to me.”
Operator: “Don’t worry, sir. I’ll help you to remove them.”
Caller: “Great... Will I be able to get them back when she’s not in?”

In the meantime, for some serious ideas on how to improve the way you serve your customers, please read our eGuide ‘Your CRM is broken: but we can fix it’.