



THE ESSENTIAL
CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS
THAT TRANSLATE TO
INCREASED SALES



A WHITEPAPER BY THE BROOKS GROUP

In a world where the customer is king, the secret to growing your business is keeping your customers happy.

Many businesses are predominantly focused on bringing in new customers, but it's just as important, if not more so, to work towards keeping those customers in the long term.

According to Marketing Metrics, the probability of selling to an existing customer is up to 14 times higher than the probability of selling to a new customer. Not to mention the fact that satisfied customers can help you bring in more new customers, by referring their friends to the company that took care of them.

Customers are more likely to buy from you when you provide great customer service. Great customer service can not only influence the number of customers you have, it can impact how much your customers are willing to spend. An American Express customer survey found that customers are willing to pay a premium for great customer service.

Clearly, good customer service is very important. With this in mind, what does good customer service look like? It all comes down to understanding your customer. You must understand what your customers want or need, and then meet those needs.

Understanding Your Customers – What Drives Buying Behavior?

What your customers want and need varies by industry, product, and a variety of internal factors that drive their need for your support or service. However, when it comes down to it, customers' wants are generally motivated by many of the same things. Here are five of the most common motivating factors:

Desire for Savings and Long-Term Gains

Many customers are motivated to save money now or have the assurance of earning more in the future. These customers want products that cost less or make work more efficient. In either case, these customers want durable products that promise to perform well over the long-term.



Fear of Loss

Nobody wants to lose what they have. Products that protect your health, property, or safety will always have a place. However, sometimes loss is inevitable. In these cases, customers depend on insurance to help them recover.

Longing for Comfort and Pleasure

Everyone wants to feel good, and enjoy the best things in life. Customers want to be entertained. They want good health, good food, and nice houses. They want to feel attractive. Products that deliver comfort and pleasure will always have a place.

Hope for Love and Affection

Nobody wants to be lonely. While no product can truly provide companionship, friendship, and love, many products claim to deliver exactly these. Marketing products based on this premise is ultimately dishonest. However, customers will flock to any product they perceive to fill this need.

People Want Power, Pride, and Prestige

These desirable qualities can take many forms. For the most part, this is the territory of luxury items. Flashy cars, high-fashion brands, and Smartphones all attempt to serve consumers in this market.

Beyond these emotionally-driven motivating factors, all consumers face challenges. Consumers want products that meet these challenges. Knowing the challenges your consumers face should be the primary goal of your sales team. Every member of your customer support team should become an expert in your industry and the day-to-day operations of the businesses you serve, in order to truly understand the wants, needs, and desires of each individual client.

Customer Service Reps Become an Extension of the Sales Team

When you communicate with your customers, it is important to maintain a consistent message and other communications, from pre-sales through post-sales. The primary goal of your customer service team is to ensure that your customers' needs are met. However, there is a way to be helpful to the customer and still increase your sales numbers with up selling and cross-selling.



Your customer service team and your sales team both serve the same purpose; to serve your customers and improve your bottom line. To accomplish these two goals, they need to work together seamlessly. All too often, these different divisions work separately, with little to no communication. By encouraging a close relationship between these groups, you can help both to be better at their jobs.



What Great Customer Service Looks Like

What does great customer service look like in the real world? It's found in the way your team goes about their business. Here are four areas where your customer service team can improve your sales:

Handling Complaints

Mistakes happen. Even the best companies can make mistakes from time to time. The way you respond to mistakes sends a message to your customers. Fortunately, you get to decide what message you want to send. Blaming your mistakes on other people, uncontrollable circumstances or bad luck will quickly give you a bad reputation. When you make a mistake, the best course of action is to accept responsibility, fix the problem and move on. Trying to avoid mistakes is great, but responding in the right way is even more important.



Presenting Solutions

Your customers have problems. Ideally, you have products and services that solve their problems. The goal is to bring the problems and solutions together. This starts with listening closely to your customers. Teach reps not to jump straight to problem-solving mode, but instead, first take the time to understand the customer's concern and to let the customer know they're listening. This is the only way to identify their needs and how your products and services can overcome them.

Increasing Customer Loyalty

Your customers need to feel like you are putting their needs first. Every conversation you have with a customer should further this goal. Before you take any action, communicate what you are doing, and why. Then, be sure to follow through on your promises. When your customers have questions, you have the opportunity to provide insight and make their lives easier. Your customers expect a certain level of service from you. When you exceed this minimum, you not only gain a happy customer, you make that customer much more likely to come back to you again.

Asking for Referrals

Beyond the obvious benefit of increased sales, one of the best things about having satisfied customers is customer referrals. How valuable are customer referrals? According to a recent Nielsen poll, customer referrals are the most credible form of advertising. The poll found that 83% of respondents trust recommendations from their family and friends. How do you get referrals? If your customers are happy, you can get a lot of referrals by just asking. When you serve your customers well, many of them are willing to return the favor.

When it comes to making your customers happy, your customer service team could be the crucial part of your operation.

Generating Repeat Customers

If your business is not generating as many new customers as you are hoping for, your first instinct is usually to step up your marketing efforts. The focus of all of these marketing strategies is to attract new customers to your product or service. However, there is something better than a new customer. What can be better than a new customer? A repeat customer.





No matter what marketing strategy you choose, new customers are much less valuable than your current customers. Repeat customers typically spend more and require less effort from your sales team. Nothing that gives you the ability to generate more revenue with a smaller investment can be ignored.

Acquiring new customers is still important. Without new customers, you cannot have repeat customers. However, many companies spend the majority of their marketing budget trying to attract new customers and too little focused on retaining the more valuable customers you already have.

Most of your revenue likely comes from a small portion of your customers. The 80/20 Rule, otherwise known as the Pareto Principle suggests that around 80% of your revenue will come from just 20% of your customers. Why is this often the case? Here are five reasons:

A Repeat Customer Is a Reliable Revenue Stream

Once a customer has bought from you more than once, they are likely to come back to you again and again. This creates a reliable source of revenue. This may seem obvious, but it is worth stating.



What is not as obvious is that repeat customers spend more. According to many studies, the average repeat customer spends 67% more than a typical new customer does.^[iii] The more times you can get a customer to purchase from you, the greater their value to your business becomes. How can you keep your customers coming back? There are many ways, ranging from discounts to regular customer promotions, but the most effective lure is to consistently give great customer service.

Repeat Customers Have High Conversion Rates

The typical conversion rate for online advertising is around 4%. Getting a happy customer to buy from you again is much easier than getting a new customer to buy from you. As stated at the beginning of this white paper, the probability of selling to an existing customer is 14 times higher than selling to a new customer, making it a significant portion of your revenue stream. No business can afford to ignore the potential value of repeat customers.

Repeat Customers Spend More

According to the marketing metrics firm RJMetrics, repeat customers spend much more than first-time customers. According to the marketing consulting firm Bain & Company, apparel customers spend 67% more per purchase than they spent on their initial purchase. They found similar results in many other categories.



Repeat Customers Spend During Your Busy Season

Many businesses have a busy season when they sell more of their products or services. For retailers, this is the Christmas shopping season. For tourism-based industries, summer is usually the busiest time. Whatever industry you are in, repeat customers tend to buy more from you during your busiest times. This is a potential huge benefit to your business.

According to a study conducted by the software giant Adobe, the typical shopper spends nearly 20% more during the holiday shopping season. For repeat customers, this number is even higher.

Repeat Customers Generate More Referrals

Referrals from existing customers are one of the best forms of marketing. As customers get more comfortable with your business, they are more likely to refer other customers to you. How much more likely? According to Bain & Company, repeat customers generate 50% more referrals than one-time customers.



Conclusion

What does every business need? Every business in every industry needs customers. While most businesses focus on marketing efforts intended to draw in customers, marketing can only take your business so far. If you want to make your sales better, delivering stellar customer service is the most valuable tool in your arsenal.

The first step in delivering customer service is to understand your customers. This starts by knowing their motivations, as well as their wants and needs. Once your sales and customer service teams understand these factors they will be equipped to respond correctly to any situation they may be faced with.

Finally, your customer service team can turn one time customers into repeat customers, who will be a long-term source of increased sales and word-of-mouth marketing.

Fortunately, The Brooks Group can help. We understand customer service and can provide your team with the skills and confidence they need to identify opportunities and present exceptional solutions in every interaction they have with a customer, in order to improve satisfaction, increase customer retention, and create more repeat business.

Our IMPACT for Customer Service training program is designed to give your customer service team the skills needed to delight customers, grow customer loyalty, and differentiate your company from the competition.

IMPACT for Customer Service

Give your team the customer service skills training needed to win customers and keep them coming back.

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Founded in 1977, The Brooks Group is an award-winning B2B sales training company focused on bringing practical, straightforward solutions to your sales force selection and training challenges.

The Brooks Group provides a suite of proven sales and sales management development programs, industry-leading reinforcement tools, and best-in-class assessments.

For more information

The Brooks Group can be reached by phone at (800) 633-7762, by email at Contact@TheBrooksGroup.com or online at TheBrooksGroup.com.



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