

Retain Clients and Get New Jobs with Better Communication

Communication skills define how you progress in your personal as well as professional life. You could have a great idea for a new business but if you are unable to communicate it to your partners or investors, you will be shot down.

The same goes with your customers. If you can't convince them about your product or service, they will simply move ahead to the other available options. Communication happens on different levels: from ads to hoardings, emails to messages and now-a-days, on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

While effective communication skills must be ingrained in all employees of an organization, service representatives who deal directly with customers face a bigger challenge than their counterparts that deal with customers online or via telephone. The lack of key service skills can risk putting the business in embarrassing situations or worse yet, the business could end up losing customers due to poor customer service.

Here are a few communication concepts that all organizations can use to communicate effectively with the customer, delighting him and increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

- **Patience is a must.**

A customer reaches out to you when they are unsure, confused or have a grievance. He may, sometimes, be angry because of miscommunication or because he feels that he has been treated unfairly. Many-a-times, a great deal of patience is required just to understand the problem, let alone offer a solution. But, in the end, being patient will make you a winner. Be patient and capture the finer details; keep in mind that great service is better than fast service.

- **Accuracy of information is key.**

The turnaround time for any service that is communicated to the customer must be the same across all levels and departments. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that staff is communicated accurate turnaround times, which can be used to set the customers' expectations. Any disparity in this will definitely lead to an unhappy customer.

- **Proactive approach always delights customers.**

When a customer has called you to get an issue resolved, it is possible that the resolution takes more time than required. In such situations, when you have a customer waiting for your response, be proactive and keep the customer informed of the progress rather than have the customer get in touch with you time and again for an update.

Also, isn't it a good idea to have some FAQs put up on your website instead of get the customer call you with queries?

- **Attentiveness helps.**

While attending to a customer complaint, if you happen to miss out any important details, it would just aggravate the situation. So, block out the noise and focus entirely on the query at hand; have a pen and paper handy to help you make notes.

- **Avoid interrupting.**

When customers are complaining or telling you the events that led to their disappointment, do not interrupt. You might have heard the same lines before and you might think that offering a quick solution would make for great customer service. However, interrupting customers actually upsets them and makes them feel less valued.

- **Know your product/service offered inside out.**

Customer queries can be anything under the sun, but mostly they related to the product/service your brand offers. There is no excuse for an employee to not be aware or well versed with the products/services that his organization offers. The management must ensure that all the employees are trained effectively for the same.

- **Honesty works every time**

In case you are not aware of any aspect of the details that the business has to offer, tell the customer you will get the exact information for them. Don't wing it by saying 'I think...' or 'It could be...'. This sort of communication will create doubts about your organization and your brand.

Also, if resolving an issue is going to take longer than usual, communicate that to your customers transparently. Most often, customers are angered because their expectations are not set right. Also, it is a great idea to communicate the process that you will follow to resolve the issue. This awareness will make the customer more confident and less irate.

- **Active listening and acknowledgements do wonders**

Your body language speaks louder than words. When customers are communicating with you, they should not feel uncared for. Make sure you actively listen, ensuring that the customer doesn't have to repeat himself. Also, ensure that you acknowledge the customers' messages by using positive words. Give them the confidence that you are around to help them and that you will find the best possible solution for them.

- **Analogies help in getting your message across**

If you feel that the customer is finding it difficult to understand your solution, then convey the message with an analogy. Use non technical terms and put it in simple language.

- **Don't take short cuts**

At the end of a long day, you tend to provide short cuts or slack service to complaints and queries. Do remember that the customer might be the fiftieth one you are attending to on that day, but you are his FIRST service representative. Most of the awesome customer service stories out there are of employees who did more than what they were expected to do!

Source: Kishal Dev, Customer Think