



Customer service is a critical part of your small business. Based on this, it's incredibly important to hire the right people for the job. Your customer service team will ultimately be the face of your company and the main point of human contact with your customers. Excellent customer service is the key to loyalty, retention, business growth, and profits.

In other words, your customer service reps are your business's secret weapon. Just have a look at some of the data:

- 81% of companies with strong competencies for delivering an excellent customer experience are outperforming their competition. (Peppers & Rogers Group)
- 70% of buying experiences are based on how the customer feels they are being treated. (McKinsey)
- 9 out of 10 U.S. consumers say they would pay more to ensure a superior customer experience. (Harris Interactive/RightNow)
- 7 in 10 Americans said they were willing to spend more with companies they believe provide ideal customer service. (American Express)

What is Good Customer Service?

Good customer service is an essential component of any successful business, but what exactly constitutes *good* customer service?

First and foremost, good customer service must be friendly and welcoming. When customers interact with your team, they should feel comfortable bringing their concerns to your attention. They should also feel that they are being listened to and that their concerns are being taken seriously. Making sure your customer service representatives are approachable and friendly goes a long way in creating a positive customer experience.

Your customer service team should also be knowledgeable and well-informed. Customers should feel like they are talking to experts who can answer all of their questions and address their concerns promptly and accurately. Taking the time to thoroughly train your team on your product/service and industry will help ensure that customers always get the answers they're looking for.

Availability and responsiveness are two crucial aspects of outstanding customer service. Customers should be able to reach out to customer service representatives easily and quickly and preferably always be able to receive a prompt response. This could be accomplished through various communication channels such as a dedicated phone line, email, or live chat.

Finally, though an underrated trait, customer service should be personal. Taking the time to get to know your customers and their individual needs will help you provide better customer service. This could mean offering tailored solutions or simply remembering their name when they contact you.

10 Characteristics Every Customer Service Representative Should Have

It's clear that delivering exceptional customer service is paramount to your business's success. And training your reps to develop the right skills is the first step to getting there. If you want to be an excellent customer service representative, here's where you should focus your efforts:

1. Problem-Solving Skills

The number one skill you need to excel in for good customer service is problem-solving. Every other part of the job is somehow related to problem-solving abilities.

Ultimately, a customer service rep's job is to keep your clients happy. That often includes navigating through a complex set of issues and problems to find a sufficient solution.

2. Clear Communication

Your team will have a hard time solving a customer's problem if they can't communicate the solution clearly. However, clear communication isn't as easy as it sounds.

Effective correspondence means being able to put yourself in the client's shoes and using concise explanations to get to a solution as quickly as possible.

Often, that means cutting out the jargon in favor of language that even the non-technical can understand.

In addition to communicating well with customers, your customer service reps will need to be strong communicators with your team. This means following processes and protocols for entering information into your help desk software or CRM.

3. Friendly Attitude

People hate to be treated like a number. Most people prefer to interact with a human when faced with issues. However, in today's fast-paced society, customers are often seen as numbers on a spreadsheet.

The ability to stay genuine and show clients that they really matter to your business can make a whole world of a difference in their customer experience.

4. Empathy

We touched on this already. A stellar customer service rep can put herself in the customer's shoes and understand where frustrations come from.

Empathy is necessary to offer the right solution. Often when people complain, they really just want their problem to be acknowledged and to see that you care. Being empathetic can ease frustrations and maintain your brand's reputation.

5. Business Acumen

This might be a bit surprising since customer service usually has nothing to do with making sales. Customer service *is* a business role though. While you aim to solve a customer's issue and be their advocate, at the same time, you represent the business interests of your company.

Solving a customer's problem means finding a compromise between the two.

6. Product/Service Knowledge

The best customer service representatives have deep knowledge of how your product (or service) works. Nothing is more frustrating for a customer than having an issue and ending up on the phone with someone who doesn't understand their problem.

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8. Strong Time Management

Your customer service team will likely deal with multiple customer tickets at one time. Making everyone happy will require a great deal of organization and superb time management skills.

With that said, make sure your employees aren't spread so thin that they become robots checking customers off their list.

9. Patience

Customers may not always understand how a product or service works, and they may be frustrated or upset when they reach out for help. Customer service representatives should remain calm and patient in these situations.

Many instances of bad customer interactions can be fueled by frustration on the customer's part—making them harder to approach and quicker to anger. A good customer service rep should be able to handle these situations with care and defuse the tension.

10. Willingness to Go Above and Beyond

Going the extra mile is what sets good customer service apart from the rest. It's about doing more than what is expected and providing customers with the best possible experience.

Companies and their customer service representatives should be willing to ensure customer satisfaction even after the problem is solved. Simple gestures like offering a discount or even just a well-meaning follow-up help show your customers that you care about them and their loyalty.