

The "How To" Guide

Creating an Exceptional Customer Service Experience

Employers often have challenges getting their staff to understand the importance of customer service. Granted, customer service is not always easy, but with the right training and attitude, your employees can meet your customer's expectations and deliver outstanding service.

One of the biggest reasons for customers not returning to an establishment is due to a staff member's attitude or indifference. Here are a few pointers that you can share with your staff so they know what is expected from them.

- **Always give a warm greeting with a smile;** don't forget to introduce yourself!
- **Listen carefully to the customer's request;** ask them to repeat themselves if needed, to make sure you have it right.
- **Share Guest's problems with your co-workers,** they may be able to help find a solution, and ways to not have it happen again.
- **Anticipate your guests' needs before being asked-** "would you like water with your dinner/extra sauce/another drink?"
- **Be the expert!** Know your menu inside and out.
 - **Be positive!** Even if things go wrong, or you make a mistake, be sincere and learn from it.
 - **Your mom was right- Manners Count!** When a customer says "thank you", smile and say "you're welcome!"
 - **End on a positive note;** a cheerful smile and a warm "Thank you, see you soon", is just as important as a friendly welcome!
 - **If you get a complaint from a customer,** take ownership and work to solve the problem as best as you can.



These suggestions may improve the overall satisfaction of your employees, provide increased tips for staff and help your employees take ownership in customer dissatisfaction.



Perspectives to consider, when approaching your customers;

- Treat them as an honoured guest in your home. “Host” them and welcome them into your establishment and workspace. This takes into consideration making prompt apologies for the inevitable mistakes that happen, being considerate of your customers’ time (are they in for a quick meal before a meeting or are they friends catching up? Pace their meal accordingly).
- Be enthusiastic about your work -- and yes, sometimes you may have to fake it.
- Making eye contact is important when interacting with anyone, but especially your customers. This lets people know you are speaking to them, that you’re paying attention, and if you throw in a smile that you care about meeting their needs!
- While it’s important to know the policies of your employer, it’s just as important (if not more) to understand the ‘why’; you may run into a situation where you need to explain them to a customer, or may be required to make an exception.
- Remember that the customer is NOT always right. When you are dealing with someone who is causing trouble (being noisy, disruptive or causing a threat to health and safety), other customers are watching you, to see how you handle the situation. You will gain more by standing up to them, than what you will lose, by losing that one bad customer.

How do you ensure the first impression you leave your customers is a good one?

Here are some suggestions:

1. Go through the guest experience yourself and see how easy or difficult you have made it for your guests to do what you want them to do: namely to come in, sit down and order.
2. Check that you have appropriate internal signage such as “Washrooms”, “More Seating Upstairs”, “Pay Here” and any other directions that will help your customers spend more time and money with you.
3. Create a clear easy to read menu for customers. Not every customer knows what you have and not every customer knows what they want.

Do you or your staff need to ‘REFRESH’ your customer service knowledge?

- Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) offers a Service Excellence Series of full and half day workshops that focus on the critical role individuals play in building customer loyalty and creating positive service experiences. Some of their course offerings include: Customer Loyalty, Creating Memorable Experiences, Essentials of Service Excellence and Conflict Management Strategies.

For more information visit: www.otec.org

- Whether your organization is large or small, attracting every potential customer is essential to your business. Improving your services for customer with disabilities can help you increase your customer base and bottom line.

For more information visit, the Serve-Ability FREE e-learning course: www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/serve-ability/splash.html

Source: thebarblogger.com, by Barry Chandler

Source: www.otec.org, Ontario Tourism Education Corporation

Source: Training Resource For Small Businesses and Organizations, www.accesson.ca

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