

# The Customer Service Handbook



A concise guide to delivering  
a memorable, professional  
experience for your customer...

# The Customer Service Handbook



**BELL HOMESTEAD NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, BRANTFORD**

## Acknowledgements

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**Serafina Good Food**, Simcoe  
**Strodes BBQ & Deli**, Brantford  
**The Blue Heron**, Port Rowan  
**Waterous Holden Amey Hitchon**, Brantford

## Dear Colleagues:

We all know how important helpful, friendly customer service is in keeping our customers happy.

This customer service handbook is designed to help you and your staff remember seven simple customer service strategies that will make your organization shine!

Please enjoy your copy and remember that you can download as many as you need by visiting our website:

[www.workforceplanningboard.org](http://www.workforceplanningboard.org)  
Look for it under **Build Your Business**.

This handbook has been produced by the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie in partnership with the South West Ontario Tourism Corporation.



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# First Impressions Matter



**SERAFINA GOOD FOOD, SIMCOE**

## Greeting

Your greeting should be immediate, welcoming and friendly. Make sure it demonstrates a genuine interest in meeting your customer's needs.

## Appearance

Your cleanliness, grooming, clothing/uniform and name tags are unspoken communicators... make sure they send a positive message to your customer.

## Posture

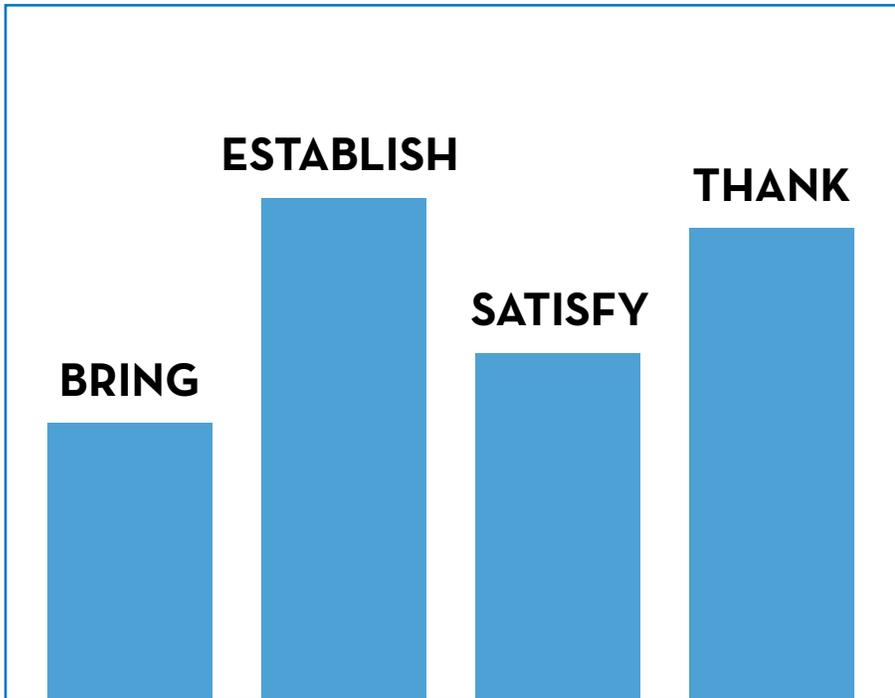
Positive body language and a warm, engaging smile builds your customers' confidence; it lets them know they made the right decision in choosing your business, to find the solution for their needs.



**J.H. YOUNG JEWELLERS, BRANTFORD**

*"We want customers to be met and greeted with a smile, and then engage them in friendly conversation."*

# Build the Foundation



## The **BEST** Model of Exceptional Customer Service

**B**ring the “guest” interaction

- Gauge mood
- Build Rapport

**E**stablish the customer’s agenda

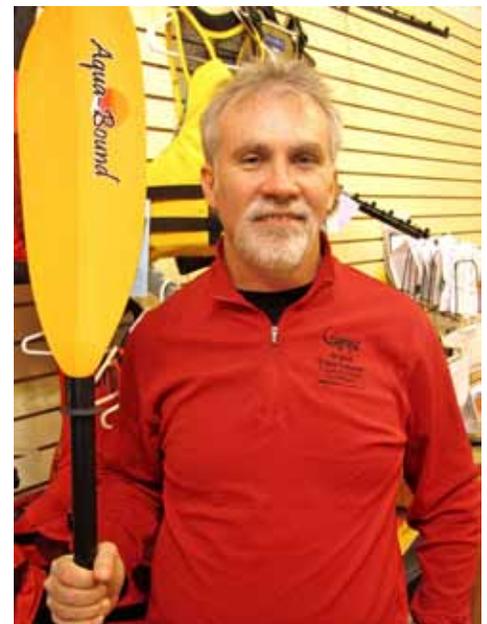
- Open and closed ended questions
- Be quiet
- Listen actively
- Probe for specifics
- Paraphrase

**S**atisfy the customer’s needs

- Generate more than one option
- Consider the customer’s perspective

**T**hank the customer

- Express thanks sincerely and verify the next step: who’s doing what when



**GRAND EXPERIENCES CANOE & KAYAK OUTFITTERS, PARIS**

*“A big part of good service is building rapport and seeing what the customer wants. Understanding your customer’s personality is a starting point for building rapport.”*

# Talking with your Customer: The Do's



THE BLUE HERON, PORT ROWAN

## Active Listening

What does it mean?

- **Listen** attentively to what your customer needs.
- **Answer** by reframing the need statement back to the customer. When possible, say it in the form of a benefit: "So, as I understand it, you want to be sure your vehicle is safe to take for this long trip."
- **Use** open, positive body language.
- **Make** and keep eye contact throughout the conversation. Don't be distracted or permit any interruptions.

## Remember to:

1. **Greet** the customer. (by name, when possible)
2. **Listen** to the customer.
3. **Understand** what the customer is saying.
4. **Act** by providing clear, accurate information.
5. **Perform** your job in a positive, professional manner.
6. **Thank** the customer, always.



DGB ACCOUNTING SERVICES, BRANTFORD

*"Every client is unique. In order to provide the best customer service experience, I need to determine the client's needs/expectations. Effective communication and a little intuition are essential skills in customer service."*

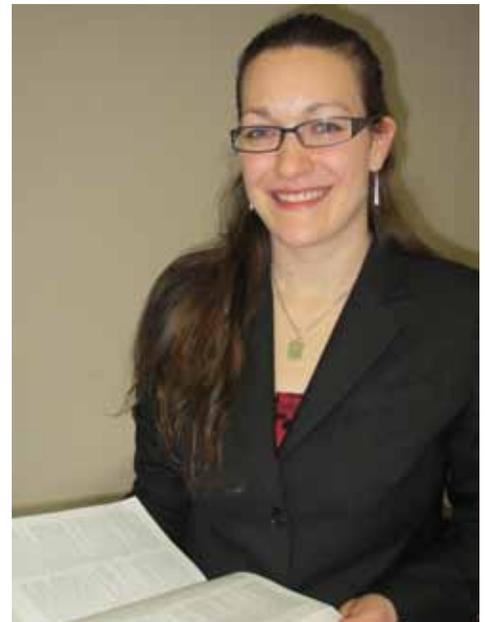
# Talking with your Customer: The Don'ts



**STRODES BBQ & DELI, BRANTFORD**

## What to Avoid:

- Don't say "But..." Instead say "Yes..." and provide an appropriate explanation that is not simply an excuse.
- Don't use the phrase "I don't know". Instead say "I'm not sure, let me check with my colleague; come with me and we'll find what you need."
- Never interrupt your customer or try to finish their sentences.
- Don't say "It's not our policy." Instead, go with "I am unable to provide that for you."
- Avoid the phrase, "We don't carry that item anymore". Use, "We don't have that item anymore; let's see if we have a similar product".
- Never say "It's not my job." Instead use "Let's see what I can do to help."
- Never suggest for your customer to call back tomorrow because the computer is down (or for any other reason). Instead, offer to take their contact information so you can get back to them promptly when you can provide the answer.



**WATEROUS HOLDEN AMEY HITCHON,  
BRANTFORD**

*"Be courteous and treat others as you would like to be treated."*

# Types of Communication



ROULSTON'S PHARMACY, SIMCOE

## Verbal

- **Know** the language and the product.
- **Organize** your thoughts.
- **Speak** clearly, concisely and know when to stop and listen.
- **Avoid** the use of slang, acronyms or industry jargon.

## Vocal

- **Tone:** Always show enthusiasm and match it to a tone that is appropriate for the setting.
- **Volume:** Loud enough to be clearly heard, but not overbearing.
- **Cadence & Pitch:** Using an engaging speech pattern demonstrates interest in the customer's need and confidence in your abilities.
- **Speed:** Speaking slow enough to be easily understood, yet quick enough that the customer stays engaged.

## Visual and Non-Verbal

- **Body language** that includes facial expressions, eye contact and a body position that shows genuine interest in helping the customer.
- **Appearance and Grooming** to demonstrate personal and organizational professionalism.
- **Respect** their personal space.



ROULSTON'S PHARMACY, SIMCOE

*"Providing excellent customer service means that a customer has received exceptional standards of service and leaves the store feeling satisfied."*

# Creating a LASTing Impression



## A Simple Way to Address any Customer Issue, Large or Small.

### LISTEN

It is vital that you really listen. Customers will not appreciate having to repeat themselves. So, allow them to explain what has happened and listen hard to get the details.

### APOLOGIZE

You are not accepting liability when you apologize. It is simply an expression of sympathy to someone who is upset. Example: "I am very sorry that you've had this experience."

### SOLVE

There are several parts to this phase. First: be sure of the root cause. This will need effective questioning with your funnel".

Once you are sure of the issue, it is time to present possible solutions.

Presentation of the possible solutions is key. The most important consideration... how do you want the customer to feel.

### THANK

Thank the customer for:

- › bringing the problem to your attention.
- › giving you the chance to fix the problem.
- › their patience.

Like the apology, this must be sincere. A good "LAST Impression" is multiplied if the "thank you" comes in a followup call or note.



**SANDERSON CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, BRANTFORD**

*"Customer service is knowing that it isn't just the service delivered during the sale, but about the customer having an excellent experience before, during and even after the sale is complete."*

# Cell Phone Use on the Job



IC SUPERCOMPUTERS, SIX NATIONS

## Cell Phone Rules for Good Customer Service

On the job, proper cell phone etiquette is a must. Here are some important rules to remember.

1. Know when to turn the device off or to silent mode.
2. For most situations, it should be “off” during work hours, and most most importantly, when dealing with customers.
3. Do not text during work hours.
4. Use silent mode when in public places where it is possible to take a call, but the ringing would disturb others.
5. Remove yourself if your conversation is to take place in an area where it could be distracting to others.
6. Lower your ring tone.

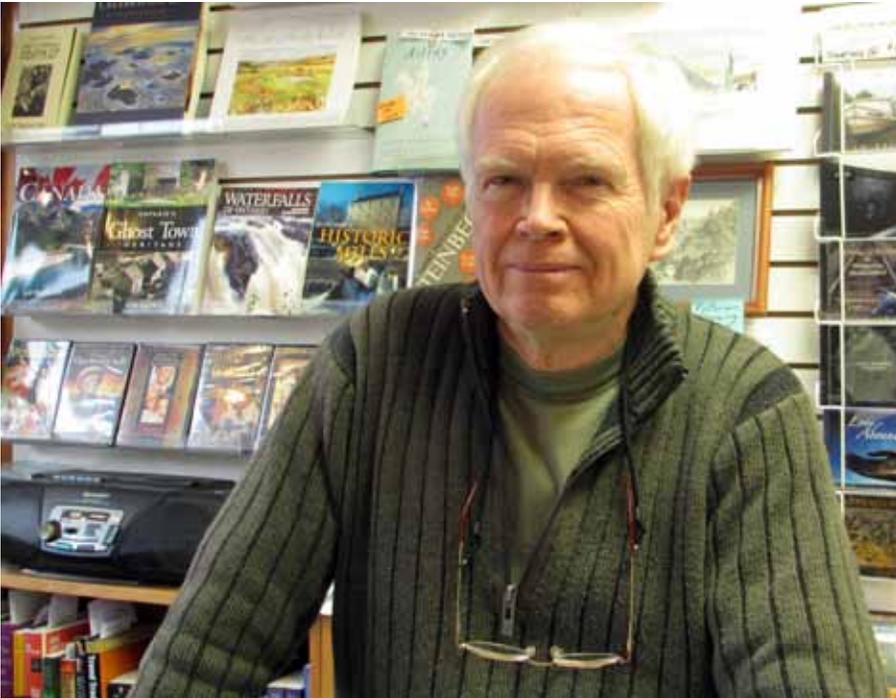
Always remember that a customer has the right to expect your complete and undivided attention.



BELL HOMESTEAD NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE,  
BRANTFORD

*“Our customers come to us with their own vision of what they want their museum experience to be. Determining and meeting the needs of those customers is our top priority for ensuring that it is a great experience.”*

# Customer Service Review



**GREEN HERON BOOKS, PARIS**

1. What are the three P's of customer service?

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2. What are the cues that form a first impression?

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3. What are the three types of communication?

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4. What is the acronym for dealing with an irate customer?

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5. What mode should your cell phone be on at work?

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**THE BLUE HERON, PORT ROWAN**

*“Without the customers we don't have a business, so it's important that we listen to their needs.”*





# Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

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