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### 101 CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS FOR BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONALS

*HINT: IT DOESN'T TAKE A MILLION-DOLLAR BUDGET OR LARGE MARKETING STAFF!*

Whether yours is an organization of 1,000 employees or just one, you can deliver the kind of knock-your-socks-off service that will boost customer loyalty and grow your business. Here are 20 easy ways you can deliver great customer service:

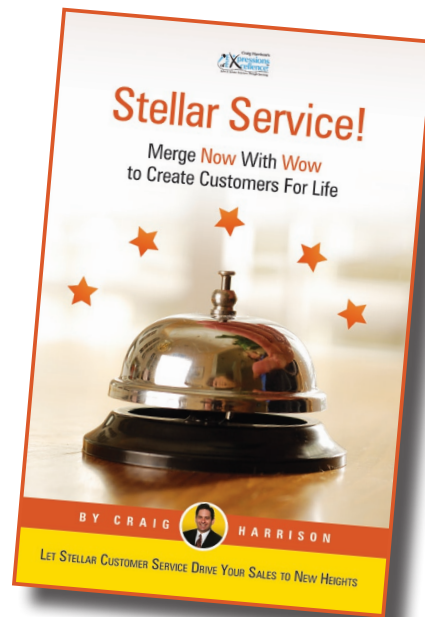
**1 Smile.** It takes fewer muscles than frowning, is a universal sign of friendliness, and transmits your desire to begin new relationships that can last a lifetime.

**2 Learn and use the names of your customers.** Take pride in knowing and correctly pronouncing their names. It's a sign of respect and shows that you know, see, and value your customers as individuals

**3 Use magic words and phrases.** In addition to hearing their names, customers love to hear words and phrases such as yes, we'd be glad to, consider it done!, We're sorry and let us fix it for you. They also love the words free, credit, at our expense and let us make it right.

**4 Say "Thank you!"** Perhaps the second most important phrase after "we're sorry." Thank customers for their patronage, referrals, patience and for taking the time and having the

courage to complain. They do you a favor when they complain. Now you know what to fix and why other customers have also left!



**5 Look professional.** Take pride in your appearance. Show respect for your customers by dressing the part. While attire varies by job and industry, customers will buy from those they like, trust and respect. Looking professional will help you act professionally and be seen as such by others.

**6 Ask questions!** The skilled professionals, whether in sales or service, management or front lines, asks questions to better understand customer needs, desires, fears and futures.

**7 Listen actively!** This is not an oxymoron. Listen with your ears, eyes, mind and heart. Use body language to convey comprehension, agreement or consternation. Give great eye contact and avoid distractions. Let your customers know they've been heard.

**8 Master phone etiquette.** Learn to answer your phone with confidence, poise, sincerity and a caring attitude. Learn to ask customers for permission to put them on hold, and to thank them for their patience.

**9 Keep in touch.** Building lasting relationships with customers means keeping in touch throughout the year. Vary the mechanisms: phone calls, hand written notes, e-mails, newsletters, etc.

**10** Create a system **for tracking and remembering key details of your customers** to better help you serve their various needs. Birthdays, milestones, future plans, etc. are all opportunities to further serve and sell customers. Don't tax your memory. Write it down.

**11** Cross-train. The better you understand other roles and functions in your organization and the better others understand yours, the stronger your organization becomes. Teamwork and efficiency will improve and the impact of illnesses and vacations will be minimized.

**12** **Be A Customer For A Day.** A great way to think like your customers is to become a customer of your own products or services. When you live their customer experience you can review your own policies, procedures and protocols and improve them for your customers' convenience and benefit.

**13** **Give something away.** Often you can generate new customers through freebies. Identify something of value you can give to prospects. It's a form of saying We Care.

**14** **Demonstrate a touch of class.** Seize the etiquette edge through the classy way you value and treat your customers. When you treat them like royalty they respond with loyalty. Find elegant ways to show your love for your customers.

**15** **Empower your employees to "make it right."** Teach employees to use common sense in correcting mistakes, fixing problems customers bring to their attention, without involving the CEO. Closing calls and solving problems quickly helps your company save money.

**16** **Replace negative language with positive language.** Focus on the positive in resolving customer problems. Emphasize what you can do instead of telling them what you can't or won't do or what is unavailable to them.



**17** **Think about the Lifetime Value of each customer.** A well cared for customer can be a customer for life, and buy thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars of products / services from you, or more. It may even start with a 10¢ part. Focus more on keeping existing customers and less on attracting new ones without minding the back door.

**18** **Value Kaizen,** the Japanese concept of continuous improvement. Always be attentive to improving all aspects of your

business. This company value will help you outshine your competitors and stand the test of time.

**19** **Ask your customers what else and what more you can do for them.** It's that simple: ask them how you can serve them better. Ask them what more you can do for them. Many times your customers offer insights into ways you can improve, expand and grow with them. But you have to ask, listen and, if warranted, act upon this information.

**20** **Honor the diversity of your customers.** Learn about their culture, religion and values. Show respect and appreciation for their needs, preferences and desires. Don't assume "one size fits all" because there is great variance by nationality, religion and even generations. Become a student of all these variables and more.

**21** **Give a little something extra.** Employ the Cajun concept of lagniappe (LAN-Yapp): giving customers a little something extra. Promise 101 tips and deliver 102! That extra, unexpected delight leaves a pleasant aftertaste. It's also a way of saying Thank you.

*These tips were excerpted from Craig's upcoming book on Customer Service entitled STELLAR SERVICE!*

*For more on Craig's Customer Service offerings, including information on the program STELLAR SERVICE!, please visit [www.VoiceOfCustomerService.com](http://www.VoiceOfCustomerService.com)*





## 101 Top-Drawer Customer Service Techniques For Bottom Line Results:

# Stellar Service! Delivering Great Service... Every Day in Every Way



IN A TIGHT ECONOMY, CUSTOMER SERVICE IS often the differentiator! Is your service stellar or stinky? Seize the service edge and keep customers for life! Let me show you how!

There will always be competitors with lower prices. Yet you become unbeatable when you earn the trust, loyalty and devotion of your customers, clients and constituents...through STELLAR SERVICE!

STELLAR SERVICE! teaches you myriad strategies, methods and techniques for successfully serving your customers with style, swiftness and aplomb. You will complete this program with a checklist of action items to immediately and instantaneously implement. It's time you *Express Your Excellence!*

Excerpted from his book *STELLAR SERVICE! Merge Now with Wow to win customers for Life*, this presentation addresses customer service in person, over the telephone, through the Internet, and also addresses dealing with problem customers. Examples and role plays augment the instruction and stories used to teach improved customer service techniques.



### Designed For YOU!

STELLAR SERVICE! cultivates a “bias to action” among service personnel. There is always a service response. Find out what it is and how to apply it — in every situation. Whether you are in hospitality, high-tech or health care, are in a call center, support or help desk environment or in a retail environment, master STELLAR SERVICE and results will ensue!



### Learning Objectives

- ▶ Learn magic words and phrases that please customers; Replace unproductive language with Lingo Franca — the language of service.
- ▶ Develop a phone demeanor reflecting compassion, concern, empathy, respect to build customer/brand loyalty.
- ▶ Sharpen your listening skills to hear the meta-message in each exchange: key concepts, ideas, fears and quell them.
- ▶ Develop a methodology for handling difficult customers to strengthen loyalty and retain customers for life.
- ▶ Learn valuable physical and psychological relaxation techniques for reducing stress and avoiding burnout.

### How The Presentation Is Delivered

Role plays, scripts, stories, assessments and exercises make this training fun, easy, interactive and replicable.

### About Your Presenter

CRAIG HARRISON is past president of the INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOCIATION's San Francisco-Silicon Valley chapter, and the NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION's Northern California chapter. His clients include UNITED AIRLINES, HILTON HOTELS, RAGAN MANAGEMENT SEMINARS, SBC PACIFIC BELL, PFIZER, US ARMY, THE SALVATION ARMY, NOLO.COM and HITACHI AMERICA. His service articles have appeared in SUPPORT WORLD and EXECUTIVE EXCELLENCE, and his columns in *Transaction World* and *Customer Service Newsletter* appear regularly.

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