



THE 7 SECRETS OF WOW! CUSTOMER SERVICE

Your aim in giving your customers exceptional service is to make them say "Wow!" as soon as you disappear. You can do that if you make the following 7 tips part of your normal pattern of service.

1. Give Your Customers Plenty of Strokes. People love to be stroked. Just like domestic pets, we like it when we are fussed at, smiled at, and given gentle touches. Strokes can include any greeting, the use of people's names, and good wishes of the "Have-a-nice-day" kind. But the best stroke you can give others is your undivided attention.

2. Surprise Them With The Unexpected. British Airways airline discovered that passenger goodwill increases when staff do unexpected extras such as spontaneous conversations or invitations to visit the flight deck. These have to remain extras and not the norm if they are to retain their surprise value.

3. Attend To The Little Things. Paying attention to the little things which don't significantly affect the main service is a way of saying: "If we look after the little things, just think what we'll do with the big ones." Such detail includes sparkling washrooms that you could eat your meals from and customer notices that don't talk down to people.

4. Anticipate Customers' Needs. In a survey of airport check-in staff, customers rated the best staff as those who anticipated their needs. These were staff who would routinely glance down the queue and anticipate the different needs customers had, from the grandmother needing help with her luggage to the business executive wanting a quick service.

5. Always Say "Yes". Great customer carers never turn down a request for help. Even if they can't do it themselves, they'll know someone who can and put you onto them. They always use positive language. Even if the answer is "No, we're closed", it's expressed as "Yes, we can do that first thing tomorrow for you."

6. Treat Them The Same By Treating Them Differently. We hate to see others get better customer service than we do, for example in a restaurant. It makes us feel second-class and devalued. Equally, we don't want to be treated the same as everyone else if that means a standard, soulless response, as you sometimes get in a fast-food restaurant. The secret is to treat everyone the same by treating them differently.

7. Use Tact With Tact. Tact means using adroitness in handling other people's feelings. In awkward or embarrassing moments, tact saves everyone's blushes. It's something your customers will notice but that you should aim to go unnoticed.

Practise these 7 responses until they are as familiar to you as breathing, and you are guaranteed to have customers queueing up for your attention.

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