Dale Carnegie®
Quick Tips for Outstanding Customer Service
Outstanding service starts with solid relationships. Here are nine ways to strengthen relationships with customers.

**Principles from “How to Win Friends and Influence People”:**

**Enhance Relationships**

1. Become a Friendlier Person
   - Don’t criticize, condemn, or complain.
   - Give honest, sincere appreciation.
   - Arouse in the other person an eager want.
   - Become genuinely interested in other people.
   - Smile.
   - Remember that a person’s name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
   - Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
   - Talk in terms of the other person’s interests.
   - Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

**Complaint Resolution Process**

Having a process to resolve complaints helps assure that we deal with the emotional and practical aspects of the issue.

1. **Greet**
   - Always answer the phone or greet people in person as though you are happy to hear from them. Begin in a friendly way. This is easy to say, but can be difficult to do. We need to be able to “live in day-tight compartments” and separate previous negative experiences from this customer contact.

2. **Listen**
   - We often get the same kinds of complaints, so it becomes challenging to really listen to people. Give them an opportunity to vent some of their frustration. Be empathetic. Listen for facts and feelings. Resist the temptation to start responding too quickly. Show signs of active listening, like brief interjections or clarifying questions.
3. Questions
Ask questions to clarify the concern. Again, we need to resist responding until we understand people and their issues.

a. Elementary questions capture the basic facts of the problem. This gives us an opportunity to take some of the emotion out of the complaint.

b. Elaborative questions gather more details. This gives the customer a chance to expand on their issues and feelings. These questions should be relatively short, to encourage the customer to talk more.

c. Evaluative questions help us gain an understanding of the severity of the issue, in the mind of the customer. This is also where we evaluate what will satisfy the customer.

4. Empathize
Find a point of agreement with the person. This does not necessarily mean that we agree with the complaint. This is where we show the customer that we heard and understood their concern, and we recognize that it is important to them.

5. Address the Issue
Now that the emotional issues have been addressed, do everything in your power to resolve the practical aspects of the complaint. Take responsibility for the actions of your organization. This is your opportunity to turn a lemon into lemonade. People who have their problems successfully resolved tend to continue to do business with you.

6. Test Questions
Ask questions to test how well you have resolved the emotional and practical sides of the complaint. Give the customer another opportunity to talk. Be a good listener.

7. Offer Additional Help
Ask what else you can do for this customer. This allows an opportunity to turn the conversation away from the complaint, which makes it easier to end on a positive note.

8. Follow Through
Often, complaints cannot be resolved completely on the first point of contact. If you need to get back to the customer, do so quickly and thoroughly. Even if the complaint has been resolved, create a reason to contact the customer again. For example, find a way to give added value. Also, look for ways to solve the root causes of problems within your organization.
Resolving Customer Complaints

Guidelines for Resolving Complaints

• Don’t take it personally.
• Listen empathetically.
• Use the customer’s name.
• Show respect for their point of view.
• Take ownership of the problem.
• Avoid citing corporate guidelines or policies.
• Create an opportunity to be a hero.
• Treat the diseases, not the symptoms.

Dealing with Irate Customers

Keeping these principles in mind will help us to improve, rather than deteriorate the situation with the customer.

• Stay calm. Try to remain diplomatic and polite. Getting angry will only make the customer angrier.
• Try to see things from the caller’s point of view. Perhaps you would feel as upset as they are, given the same situation.
• Thank the person for raising the concern and do it sincerely. Emphasize the importance of satisfied customers to you and your organization.
• Listen for understanding. Sometimes the irate caller just wants someone to listen to their story, even if you are unable to help them.
• Ask questions to get their facts and feelings. Listen to learn rather than just preparing your response. Don’t respond too quickly.
• Find points of agreement with their concerns. Establish common ground to show the person you are listening.
• Always show a willingness to resolve the problem or conflict. Make the resolution seem as easy as possible.
• Be genuine and show your personality. Respond as an understanding friend rather than citing policies.
• Be firm but understanding with your answers.
• As a last resort, offer to have your supervisor talk to the caller. Your supervisor may say the same things as you, but sometimes hearing it from someone else has a positive effect on the customer.
Telephone Courtesy

- Push your personality through the phone.
- Be conversational.
- Use the customer's name.
- Give your full name.
- Listen for understanding.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Allow the person time to think and speak.
- Fill the silence when appropriate.
- Be a responsive listener.
- Smile.
- Call instead of using e-mail.
- Take ownership. Don't blame others.
- Stand up when you can.
- Ask permission before using speaker phone.
- Speak at the same rate as the other person.
- Pause between ideas for clarity.
- Always thank the caller.

Gaining a Referral

When to Ask

When asking for referrals:

- Think of your buyers as partners who can refer you to a steady stream of new business.
- Don't underestimate the power of a satisfied buyer's good will or influence.
- People who are referred are more likely to buy.
- Bear in mind that people who buy are more likely to refer others.
- Ask for an introduction in writing, by phone, or in person.

Asking for a Referral

How do we ask without feeling or sounding pushy or aggressive? We want to maintain a good relationship, and we want to create win-win-win scenarios. Having a simple, conversational process helps us know what to say and how to say it. The most important aspect is to remind ourselves of the benefits of asking, then just ask.
Asking for a Referral (cont’d)

Step 1: Remind customer of their specific benefits.

If you know these benefits, this becomes very easy. Paraphrase something they told you or relate something you know based on your own knowledge or experience. Ask for their agreement, in a conversational way.

Example: Terri, I am so happy to hear that Dale Carnegie Training® has helped your team focus on resolving specific process issues and saved over $65,000 in reduced downtime. You told me your boss gave you recognition at the last staff meeting.

Step 2: Describe your customer profile.

Briefly describe the range of challenges faced and benefits received by your customers. This may remind your existing customer of opportunities they are missing. It will also help them start to think of other people.

Example: We work with a full spectrum of people, from plant managers to front line personnel. Our company provides solutions for a wide variety of industries, including over 400 of the Fortune 500 companies. They are faced with shrinking budgets, fewer people, and higher demands, like you. They desperately need to get the most from their current staff, reduce staff turnover, develop the new generation of leadership, increase morale, and get bottom line results for top management. As you know, we are able to impact business results, and develop an empowered environment that creates accountability. We customize our solutions to address the key issues these people face.

Step 3: Identify a benefit for giving a referral.

How could your current customer (or anyone) benefit from referring this person to you? Identify the value it creates for this person, not their company, the prospect, or you. Try honestly to see things from their point of view.

Example: I know you are hoping to become a leader in the Chamber of Commerce. Being able to help some of your friends there could increase your profile.
Step 4: Suggest they already know someone.

Provide examples of people or job positions who could benefit from your offerings. Make it easy for them. If you have a specific person or people in mind, mention them by name. Give a variety of names and positions, and talk slowly so the person has a chance to think. Listen.

Example: I know that John Smith from Company ABC is a strong player at the chamber. You probably could think of other people from Company XYZ1, XYZ2, etc. In addition to directors, there are project managers, account executives, salespeople, managers. Who do you know outside of work, like your neighbors and friends? I know you are involved at ...

Step 5: Ask for an introduction.

Ask your contact if he or she is willing to give you an introduction before you contact the new person. This will help make the process more friendly and open the door wider. Consider asking them to send an e-mail, make a phone call, or introduce you personally at a networking event. You could even suggest a conference call.

Example: Could you call this person so he/she will know why I am calling? Or send an e-mail, including the results you experienced from working with us? When should I follow up with them, so I know they have heard from you?
1. Ask Questions

Effective questions help us and the buyer see additional opportunities:

   a. Elementary Questions determine basic information about use levels, time frames, features required, user needs, technical specifications, etc.

   b. Elaborative Questions unearth more details like sense of urgency, undiscovered needs, additional uses for the solution, etc.

   c. Evaluative Questions test the waters to see if the customer is receptive to paying for added value.

2. Open the Door

Say something brief to get favorable attention and help open the customer’s mind to options.

   • “Some of our customers appreciate …”

   • “Did you know about the benefits of …”

   • “You could save some time by …”

   • “Here is a way to save some money …”

   • “Would you like to reduce some aggravation by …”
A Process to Add Value (cont’d)

3. Present Added Value
Tell the customer a specific benefit they can receive and the investment needed.

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4. Test Question
These are brief questions to see how the customer feels about making the additional investment. For example:

- “What do you think?”
- “How would this help you?”
- “How do you like the extra benefits?”
- “How will this give you a return on your investment?”

To learn how we can provide strategic, customized, and on-site Customer Service training for your organization, contact your local Dale Carnegie office today. Please go to: dalecarnegie.com/office