

FIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE MISTAKES THAT DRIVE US CRAZY



We all work hard for our money, so when it comes to spending it, we expect a certain level of customer service. We also should experience a real sense of appreciation for choosing one business over another.

However, as many of us know, we don't always experience this sense of appreciation, and that creates a degree of disappointment, why is it that they don't seem to care that I selected them today? Whether it's splashing out for a special dinner, buying a new car, or booking

in for a new haircut, we all face frustrating buying experiences that let us down. But it's what businesses do about it that counts.

From conducting hundreds of thousands of end-user phone-based surveys on customer experience across a range of industries, I've identified the five key areas that generate the most common complaints. These five areas reflect a very common thread; it doesn't matter what you sell, the simple fact is, we all sell to people. Therefore, the same solutions apply across all types of businesses.

1 Communication

Communication is by far the most significant; calls or emails don't go answered as expected, the frequency isn't enough, and customers have to follow up with the business when it should be the other way around.

"How often do you review your procedures around customer service? Ensure you always involve your team to design service excellence; that way, they own the solution."

Miscommunication and confusion cause a lot of wasted time when all of it is avoidable.

Solution

Make it a rule that a customer never has to contact you twice for the same reason, involve your team in developing the solution as they have the experience to fix the issues.

2 Knowledge

Lack of training and awareness of what's required and not ensuring the responsibility of being able to give the correct advice leaves customers in a predicament they didn't expect. These situations always have a negative impact, and a few wasted hours can be very expensive to a customer.

Solution

Train your team to have the experience required to be a champion of knowledge; make sure there is an experienced mentor to support them until they are competent. Then test their ability to be certain, if it's still lacking go back to the training process as the issue is most likely around training.

3 Efficiency

The impact of being inefficient has a deep and lasting effect. This effect is often due to systems and procedures not being optimised. Have you ever been messed around from a bad process or attitude and in that



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moment decided you aren't ever going back? Think telcos, banks, energy and automotive companies.

Solution

You must have the ability to measure optimal efficiency and then predict how to achieve it. How often do you review your procedures around customer service? Ensure you always involve your team to design service excellence; that way, they own the solution.

4 Delivery

Delivery is often the last point of a transaction, and the real human experience from a company and many businesses fail to ensure their delivery team is clear on the vital importance of this touchpoint. Have you ever had a purchase where it all seems terrific and then at the very end the delivery process ruins your whole experience?

Solution

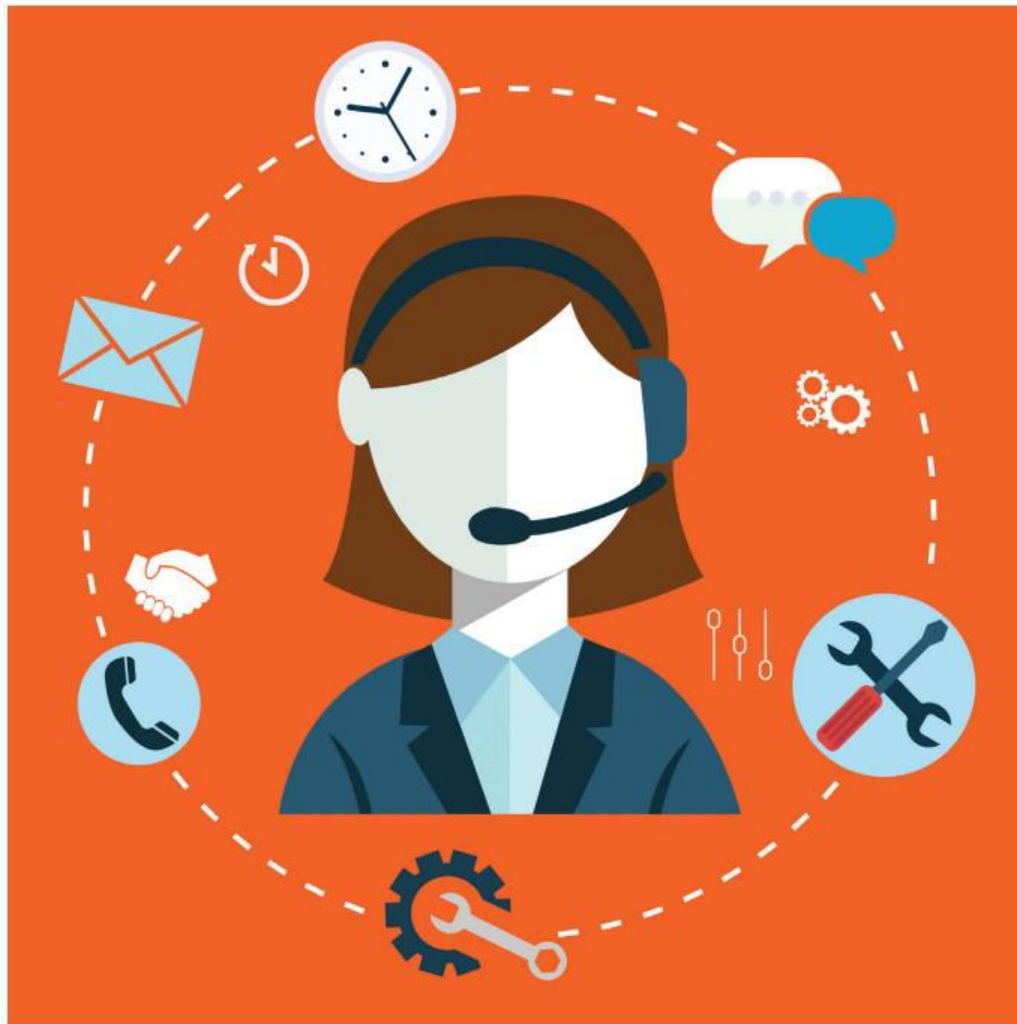
Train your delivery team to be the custodians of customer experience and understand their critical importance in being the face of the company. Provide basic sales and customer service training to all your delivery team. Make sure you check in on how well they are taking care of your customers

5 Price

There is one indisputable relationship around price - the relationship between service experience and the price tag. If your service experience is very high, customers are happy to pay a premium. If the experience is low, then it better be cheap or why else should I buy from you? Ask any person loyal to their hairdresser if they can find a cheaper one. The answer is always yes, but it's the service excellence the keeps you there, otherwise, if the skill were comparable, you would choose the cheaper option.

Solution

You must become a value-driven customer service model to optimise revenue and margin; if you don't, then it's all about your price tag.



Research your customers to discover the key distinctions that define what they value about your company that has nothing to do with price.

The most common complaints from customers are often quite easy to resolve. Most complaints could be easily avoided in the first place if the focus were on the outcome rather than being reactive to problems. I know a business that lives by the mantra 'we haven't mastered our service with a customer until they refer a friend to us'. This mantra is a true commitment to excellence as they

always focus on the future to first ensure their customer returns. While this can be hard to deliver on, at least they know they'll have loyal customers like you and me.

Darrell Hardidge is a customer experience strategy expert and CEO of customer research company Saguity, specialising in driving revenue growth from customer appreciation. Darrell is the author of The Client Revolution and The 10 Commandments of Client Appreciation.

To find out more, visit www.saguity.com