

Customer Service in a Supply Chain Management World



Going the Extra Mile

Once you have met that customer's basic needs, what could you do to show that you are committed to providing the best service possible?



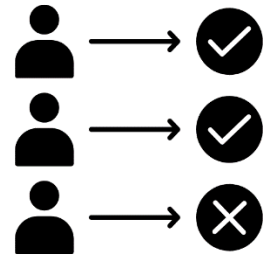
Try these simple tasks where applicable:

- Remember someone's name and use it frequently in conversation
- Remember what someone has purchased
- Learn your customers' likes and dislikes
- Contact your customers regularly
- Put their needs high on your priority list
- Inform customers of specials and sales
- Be available to meet their needs
- Follow up when you say you will
- Be organized and thorough
- Return customer calls promptly

The Seven Situations of Difficult Customers

1. You don't know the answer to a customer's question (Tell the customer that you don't know the answer, but you will find out)
2. You have to say no to a customer's request (Explain why you have to say no; offer alternatives)
3. Your computer is working slowly and the customer is getting impatient (Tell the customer your computer is working slowly; keep the customer informed about what's happening)
4. The customer makes an unrealistic request (Explain what alternatives you can offer)
5. The customers don't seem to believe you (Offer to show proof or backup information)
6. The customer is angry (Stay calm; acknowledge the customer's feelings)
7. The customer doesn't want to give you the information you need (Explain why you need the information)

- To be taken seriously
- To be listened to
- To be respected
- To receive a quick response



Customer's Bill of Rights

Telephone Etiquette

- Answer promptly, on the third ring at the latest.
- Before you pick up the phone, end any conversation you are having.
- Greet the caller, identify yourself, and ask if you can help.
- Speak clearly in a pleasant tone of voice. Avoid speaking too quickly.
- Give the caller time to explain the reason for the call. Don't interrupt. Don't sound like you're in a hurry.
- When you need to put someone on hold, ask first: "Can I put you on hold for just a minute?" After you return to the line, thank the customer for holding.
- If you need to transfer a call, explain what you're doing.
- When you end a call, let the customer hang up first. This will ensure that you don't cut the customer off prematurely.



Meeting Basic Needs

1. **Friendliness** - Friendliness is the most basic of all customers needs, usually associated with being greeted graciously and with a smile. We all want to be acknowledged and welcomed by someone who is glad to see us. A customer should never feel they are an intrusion on your work day.
2. **Understanding and empathy** - Customers need to feel that you understand and appreciate their circumstances without criticism or judgment.
3. **Fairness** - We all need to feel we are being treated fairly. Customers may get annoyed and defensive when they feel they are subject to unfair treatment.
4. **Control** - Control represents the customers' need to feel they have an impact on the way things turn out.
5. **Options and alternatives** - Customers need to feel that other avenues are available to getting what they want accomplished. They realize that they may be in uncharted waters, and they depend on us to be "in the know".
6. **Information** - Customers need to be educated and informed about our products and services, and they don't want us leaving anything out!