37 Techniques to Achieve Excellent Customer Service
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
General Techniques
Follow Up Techniques
Damage Control Techniques
Conflict Techniques
Conclusion
Introduction

Customer-centric companies are benefitting from increasing the service quality of their phone conversations. Making these customer interactions more personal, professional and effective can increase customer satisfaction, promote a positive brand image and increase revenue for the company. It is therefore a critical skill that should be encouraged and enhanced in any employee who interacts with customers over the phone.
General Techniques

Engage in Active Listening
Highlight Understanding
Be Courteous
Call the Customer by His Name
Go the Extra Mile
Ask, Don’t Demand
Empower
Be Proactive
Highlight Pros and Cons
Explain
Use Plain Language
Refer When Necessary
Keep the Right Distance
Summarize Conversation
ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is essential for effective communication. It allows for a better understanding of the customers’ needs and shows a willingness to help. Allow the customer to talk without interruption, reflect back their main question or concern and ask clarifying questions when necessary.

HIGHLIGHT UNDERSTANDING

Ensure that each customer is aware that you understood their needs. By using active listening techniques and asking relevant questions, you will communicate that you understand them and are making an effort to help solve their problem.
BE COURTEOUS

Be polite and have respect for your customers. Always use “please” and “thank you” and create an inviting environment for the customers.

CALL THE CUSTOMER BY HIS NAME

Ask the customer their name and pronounce it correctly. This communicates respect for the customer and lets them know that they are important.

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Demonstrate through actions that the customer is important by giving more than the minimum effort required. By taking the initiative to provide better service or give the customer something extra, customers will feel valued and appreciated.
ASK, DON’T DEMAND

Statements can sound harsh. Asking appropriate questions makes the conversation more collaborative.

EMPOWER

Empower customers with adequate information to make informed decisions. When there are options, thoroughly describe each available alternative. By offering choices, customers will be more involved in solving their problems. This results in a higher level of customer satisfaction.

BE PROACTIVE

Engage in proactive steps to satisfy the customer’s needs. Being proactive will also help to reduce barriers when problem solving.
HIGHLIGHT PROS AND CONS

When describing a product or service, include both its strengths and weaknesses relative to alternatives. By providing balanced recommendations, customers will view you as more credible. This increases trust and customer satisfaction.

EXPLAIN

Customers are not always familiar with your company's policies or procedures. Thoroughly explain to customers what you're doing and why you're doing it. A clear understanding tends to decrease customer frustration.

USE PLAIN LANGUAGE

Avoid technical terms, jargon and acronyms. Be professional, concise and clear.
REFER WHEN NECESSARY

When the customer’s needs are beyond your expertise or level of competency, refer them to a colleague, a supervisor or manager. Always explain to the customer that they will be transferred to someone that can effectively address their problem. Ensure that the referred party is provided with the necessary information to help the customer.
KEEP THE RIGHT DISTANCE

When describing a product or service, include both its strengths and weaknesses relative to alternatives. By providing balanced recommendations, customers will view you as more credible. This increases trust and customer satisfaction.

SUMMARIZE CONVERSATIONS

Customers are not always familiar with your company's policies or procedures. Thoroughly explain to customers what you're doing and why you're doing it. A clear understanding tends to decrease customer frustration.
FOLLOW UP TECHNIQUES

Give Informative Material
Suggest Alternative to Waiting
Schedule a Follow Up
Give Your Best Effort
Commit
Follow Up
Keep Customers Informed
GIVE INFORMATIVE MATERIALS
Give customers tangible information they can refer to after the interaction has ended. These can be brochures, links, a summary of the conversation or any other informative materials.

SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES TO WAITING
When a situation arises where a customer is waiting for an answer or solution, provide an alternative. Allow them to reschedule or have someone call them back.

SCHEDULE A FOLLOW UP
When an answer to a customer’s question is not readily available, clearly explain how you will find the solution, set appropriate expectations of when and how you will follow up and then follow through as planned.
GIVE YOUR BEST EFFORT

Trying your hardest to solve a customer's problem in a timely manner is essential to having a positive customer interaction.

COMMIT

Explain to the customer when you expect to have the desired results. Ensure that you follow through as planned.

FOLLOW UP

Follow up with the customer at the scheduled time. Ensure that you adequately addressed their needs and that you answer any additional questions.

KEEP CUSTOMERS INFORMED

If you can’t follow up during the scheduled time, inform the customers with adequate notice and manage expectations appropriately.
DAMAGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Assume Responsibility

Admit Mistakes

Apologize

Reward With a Bonus
ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY
When something goes wrong, assume responsibility. Assume that every problem is your company’s fault.

ADMIT MISTAKES
Be honest and open about mistakes. This will increase the customer’s respect for you and your company.

APOLOGIZE
After an error, apologize and be sincere. Then, refocus on solving the problem.

REWARD WITH A BONUS
Give useful and valuable rewards for inconveniences or issues. The customer will appreciate the effort.
CONFLICT TECHNIQUES

Allow Customers to Talk
Show Your Care
Use the Correct Tone
Be Neutral
Don’t React
Focus
Use Verbal Softeners
Make Angry Conversation Private
Agree
Use Silences
Use Timeouts
Set Limits
ALLOW CUSTOMERS TO TALK
Allow angry customers to talk and express their feelings until they release their frustration and calm down.

SHOW YOU CARE
Use empathy statements to show you understand the customer’s feelings or frustrations.

USE THE CORRECT TONE
Don’t smile, laugh or mock upset customers. Convey empathy with a soft tone.

BE NEUTRAL
Do not offer your opinion, agree or disagree with customers. Offer empathic support and work to solve their problems effectively.
DON’T REACT

Never respond to angry comments. Allow the customer to voice their opinion and interject with a helpful redirection when appropriate.

FOCUS

When a customer is tangential, redirect the conversation back to the important issues and focus his attention on constructive solutions.

USE VERBAL SOFTENERS

Use words like “likely”, “typically”, “perhaps”, “sometime”, “possibly” or “occasionally” with customers who might not respond well to categorical words like “always” or “never”.

MAKE ANGRY CONVERSATIONS PRIVATE

Avoid talking with angry customers within earshot of employees or other customers.
AGREE

Find something to agree with the customer about. An agreement will result in collaboration and cooperation.

USE SILENCES

When customers talk, listen and wait for a silence. When your customer has stopped talking, then summarize their main point and work together on a solution.

USE TIMEOUTS

If customers are frustrated, annoyed, or are not capable of engaging in a productive conversation, allow them the opportunity to think by themselves for short periods of time. Then, address their concerns effectively.

SET LIMITS

When customers refuse to act constructively and alternative methods have been exhausted, set limits and end the interaction.
CONCLUSION

Excellent customer support is essential for any business. The techniques described below will allow your customers to feel important and respected, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. When implemented correctly, these techniques can have a large impact on your bottom line.
About Talkdesk

Talkdesk is easy-to-use, cloud-based call center software that helps growing businesses provide excellent customer service with phone support. Talkdesk makes it possible to have real time, personalized conversations with customers, without hardware, coding or downloads - all that is needed is a computer and an Internet connection. With Talkdesk, companies can have a call center up-and-running in minutes and have access to robust call center functionality including IVR, skills-based routing, call conferencing, comprehensive reporting, all in an intuitive web-based interface. Integrations with top business tools and CRM systems, such as Salesforce, Desk.com and Zendesk, make customer data easily accessible, so agents never have to wade through endless systems to provide superior service.

For more information, visit www.talkdesk.com.