

# Customer Service

Good customer service is  
easy

**ITO**  
Accounting



---

## Introduction

Good customer service is easy.

Once you have been through the hard work of attracting customers, and have successfully sold them something, you will want to encourage repeat business. It is far easier to sell more to your existing customers than it is to find new ones.

One of the keys to attracting new customers and keeping existing customers is your customer service.

Good customer service is very easy to give, whereas changing a customer's mind once you have let them down is very very difficult.

Plan your business' customer service culture and stick to it. Post a list of customer service tips in your staff area and ensure everyone follows them.

---

## Contents

This guide contains the following topics:

Topic	See page
Set your service up right	3
Planning your customer service style	4
Top tips for great customer service	5
Delivering great service	7

---

## Set your service up right

---

### Start with the right people

All team members who come into contact with customers, particularly reception, front of house and sales people, need to have the right attitude.

You can give a team member more skills and knowledge through training, but a good attitude cannot be taught.

If a team member has a negative attitude, or worse, no attitude at all, move them away from the customers before it impacts on your business.

---

### Educate your team

Your team members should be armed with as much knowledge as possible. If a customer has to go somewhere else for the information they need e.g. the internet or another business, you have lost them.

Give your team the tools and authority they need to look after customers well.

---

### Reward and recognise

Recognise your team members' outstanding customer service and publicly reward them for it.

---

### Happiness is key

Happy team members = happy customers = happy business.

Focus on making your business a happy place to work and the rest will take care of itself.

---

## Planning your customer service style

---

### What is a style

You may already have your own style, but it is important as a business owner, that all of your staff take a similar approach to customer service.

This generally falls into one of two categories: The Best Mate or the Butler.

---

### The Best Mate

One successful approach to customer service is the Best Mate approach.

This is where you treat your clients as equals, but as good friends who you would do anything for. You may tease them and push the boundaries, but never lean into the disrespectful.

When you build a community of customers who see you as a friend, they are more likely to take your advice, trust your judgement and also bring their own friends into your circle.

The best mate approach relies on trust so keep your promises. Give your clients the heads up when you have a new product or service you think they'd enjoy.

Keep their experience personal and ensure your team members know the client's name, preferences and can help the customer just as well as you can.

---

### The Butler

The Butler approach is about good old-fashioned service. Clients are addressed as Sir or Madam and introduced as Mr or Mrs.

The Butler is knowledgeable but subservient, and is polite and patient at all times.

The customer feels special and valued and knows they're in capable hands. They won't hesitate in recommending your business as you're the soul of professionalism.

The Butler approach relies on discretion and professionalism, so no banter around the clients or gossip. Always ensure everything is followed up and right the first time.

This approach works well when each team member has certain clients they look after – the client feels special and the business holds a certain type of exclusivity.

---

### Conclusion

In reality most business' customer service culture floats between these two and the nature of the business and the personality of the business owner will generally determine what approach the customer service takes.

The main thing to take away is that the entire business' customer service needs to be consistent across all team members. If a team member is not naturally suited to a customer service role, some things can be learned, but the safest solution is to move the team member into a role with less client contact.

---

## Top tips for great customer service

---

### Listen

No matter what the client is saying, you need to be completely present. Listen to what they have to say and respond accordingly.

The customer is not the enemy. Orders, invoicing, pricing and quoting can wait – the client talking to you should always be your sole focus.

---

### Acknowledge

If you have walk-in customers ensure they are always acknowledged immediately. But be careful sales staff - you don't have to harass them to let them know you're aware of their presence.

If a client emails, email them back immediately, even just to say you will follow up tomorrow.

---

### Help

Consider yourself there to solve problems, whether you are solving the problem by providing the right product or service, or by making a phone call to a distributor, service provider or business associate.

---

### Keep your promises

We've all heard it before – under promise and over deliver. Never ever promise something you cannot deliver on.

If you do promise the world to make a sale, be prepared to make it happen personally, don't expect someone else to make it happen for you.

If you say you'll call back by 3pm, call back by 3pm.

---

### Follow up

If you pass something on to a third party, always ensure you know the outcome for your customer.

Don't let another business' poor customer service affect yours.

---

### Be professional

You can be friendly without being unprofessional.

Malicious gossip, complaints and general griping have no place in customer relationships.

---

### Value

Even if the client or prospective client is not buying something from you right now, they may come back and they will certainly tell others if you treat them badly.

All queries have merit. If you can help someone on the spot, even for free, they will come back and bring others.

Value every customer whether they are paying you money or not.

---

---

**Don't judge**

Never take a client at face value. The scruffiest, most downtrodden-looking person may be a business-savvy millionaire. The well-dressed, charmer may be a thief.

Treat every customer as you would expect to be treated and refrain from passing judgement.

---

**Keep cool**

No matter how frustrating a situation, never get angry or defensive.

Your client may be having a terrible day and you are just bearing the brunt of it. Maybe a product has broken or a service has been performed badly. Don't take it personally.

Be a practical problem solver and take it as a personal challenge to send them away with a smile on their face.

---

## Delivering great service

---

### Mystery Shopper

If you need to spot-check your business' customer service, consider hiring a mystery shopper to go through a typical customer experience. Have that person report back on how they were treated and what they experienced.

Start with a phone call where the shopper asks a prescribed question, then have the person walk in off the street and make an appointment or shop for a product.

---

### Put systems in place

Professional customer service relies on good systems that all team members follow, for example procedures for answering the phone in a professional manner or greeting customers when they walk through the door.

No matter who a customer deals with in your business, they should receive the same high levels of service.

Having a basic systems manual and some checklists will help your team deliver consistently good customer service.

---