

Why You Should Always Say Yes to Your Customer

Want to attract and retain customers? This week on North Report, we spoke with Micah Solomon, customer service evangelist, and author of *Ignore your Customer and They Will Go Away*, and discovered the true value of quality customer service.

We discussed some key areas to address in order create a business focused on your customers, including the importance of hiring the right employees, what today's customers really want, and why you should give it to them.

Hiring the Right Employees

Every experienced business owner knows the value of a good employee, they are your most important resource, but it's especially pertinent to those in the customer service industry. Solomon indexes the attributes of a quality customer service employee with the acronym WETCO - warmth, empathy, teamwork, consciousness, and optimism.

Hiring the right people for your team is vital because *every* employee contributes to the customer's experience - whether they are interacting directly with the customers, or supporting those who do.

Solomon is by no means alone in this school of thought. [Business magnate Richard Branson](#) is one of many other business leaders who are ardent believers in the importance of selecting your customer service staff carefully, because "when you have engaged and friendly people at every point of the customer experience, they grow the business."

The Evolved Customer

Today's consumers expect more - they want authentic customer service customized to their individual needs. Amazon, a company that prides itself on being "customer obsessed", [retains over 90%](#) of their customers by providing a tailored customer experienced and fast and inexpensive, often free, shipping.

All service is not equal. Contemporary consumers prefer an informal, peer-to-peer style service, instead of the Stepford-style customer service, where the standard of service may be high, but it seems scripted and insincere.

Speed is also vital because people don't like waiting, they expect things to work as they do online - instantaneously. Unfortunately, the offline world can't yet work as quickly as the online world so it's crucial to develop strategies to keep your customers happy, even when they have to wait. Starbucks has mastered this by getting drinks started for those in line, handing out samples, and if the lines are routinely long, by opening up a second location close-by. Responding quickly to questions, comments, and complaints on social media is also crucial.

The Default of Yes

“Customers expect a yes, and they expect that yes quickly”. Solomon continues on to detail how the customer is in charge and they know it. At any moment they can go onto social media and tear down your company with a single tweet, or build it up, the outcome is wholly dependent on their experience.

Thus, a great company will say yes, before even knowing the question. This is the 5-star experience customers expect, and if you can't provide them with the yes, you better have a few reasonable alternatives to provide them.

“Every customer is indispensable”, and you want to do everything in your power to keep them happy. You can market your product or service all you want, but people won't buy into your message unless it matches what their family and friends have experienced. Customer service is indeed the new marketing.