



Demanding Quality Customer Service

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- ***Who is Responsible for Customer Service Quality?***

- ***What is the Service Standard – What should you Expect?***
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 - Timeliness – Give it to Me When You Promised
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 - Courtesy – Show Me Your Pleasant Attitude
 - Consistency – Let Me Know What to Expect
 - Accessibility & convenience– Easy to obtain
 - Accuracy – Performance correct the first time
 - Responsiveness – Acting quickly to resolve unexpected problems

- ***Service Quality Scripts/Letters***

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Bottom Line Up Front

A great many of us would like to avoid the drama associated with demanding quality customer service; we would prefer businesses to simply provide quality customer service as a routine matter

Unfortunately, more and more businesses are not willing to invest in what is required to ensure quality customer service; they prefer to take the short cut and hope that most customers won't demand quality – they seem to be winning with this strategy!!!

The aim of this guide is to help reverse this trend by helping you to understand what to expect and to urge you to demand the service for which you are paying.

In most cases, you will be surprised by the results of your demands – you see, most businesses (at least the management) understand the standards of quality customer service – we just need to demand they comply at every turn.

Let's all demand the quality customer service we deserve!!!

The State of Customer Service in America

America is great in so many ways, and I would not want to call any other country my home. With its many areas for improvement, I still consider myself blessed to have been born in America.

One major area that requires significant improvement in America is quality of service. Americans do not receive the customer service they deserve. Good service in America is not the norm. I make the preceding two statements based on a host of experiences and almost daily observations. In this short title, I will share with you some of my customer experiences; the standards that should apply; and what you can do to help improve the service we receive here in our great country. You might wonder who I am to feel qualified to write such a document. Well, I'm a graduate school educated American in my 50s who has traveled the world. An African-American who has been so frustrated with poor service that I've wanted to forgo the conveniences like cell phones, cable television, and others. Because so many Americans accept poor customer service, it seems like the norm – when it should not be. Many customers are afraid to speak up when they are clearly not being provided the service they deserve. Although I am adamant that the service industry owes us a much greater standard of service quality, I will admit that there are bad customers; however, a bad customer is better for a company than no customer at all. Many Americans avoid voicing their dissatisfaction because they fear appearing rude or reprisal from the service worker. How do you

criticize the waiter that will handle your food during your current or future visit? How do you get the service you deserve in this environment where it appears acceptable for a clerk to make you wait while he talks with a friend? In this book, I will delve in to options for handling poor service situations; these options will assist you in getting the service you deserve without feeling guilty, awkward, or rude. These options will avoid creating a situation that demeans or embarrasses the service provider. I will also provide proven methods for dealing with a variety of service industries in person as well as over the phone. Many service companies today are only interested in getting your money; my desire and goal of this book is to reverse this current trend in America and cause companies to focus on a value proposition – that is, meet the expectation of their customers.

One last but important point I must make is that quality service is a critical element when it comes to saving money. For those of us that have limited or fixed income, we really can't afford to pay for unwanted or sub standard service; however, each time we pay for extras we don't need or pay to have a poor job re-done, we're really wasting money. This short book should help you to understand what to expect and demand the standard that will undoubtedly save you a significant amount of money over time.

The Federal Trade Commission

This section is to introduce the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for your awareness. The FTC is the nation's consumer protection agency. The FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection works for the consumer to prevent fraud, deception, and unfair business practices in the marketplace. Although the FTC **does not resolve individual complaints**, it does collect complaints that can be used to make a case against a company violating the statute.

The following is the actual federal statute that is enforced when the FTC decides to hold a company accountable and pursue litigation on behalf of consumers.

15 U.S.C., 41-58 – Sections 5(a) and 12 and U.S.C. 45(a) and 52, prohibit, respectively, unfair or deceptive acts or practices, and false advertisements for food, drugs, devices, services, or cosmetics in or affecting commerce.

A significant purpose of this book is to provide you an understanding of what to expect from businesses and help you to deal with businesses that do not provide the service they should. Armed with the proper understanding and tools, you are less likely to be victimized – and less likely to need the FTC to eventually act on your behalf.

Save Money by Demanding Quality Customer Service

You may not realize it, but you're wasting your hard earned money when you don't get the service for which you've paid. This section will give you rules to live by so that you are not getting less than you should for your money. It takes a bit of energy to demand that you receive quality service at every turn, but it is worth your money, and I submit to you that over time demanding quality service will become second nature. Below are some ways in which you waste your money by not demanding service. - some of these situations are obvious, while some are a bit more subtle.

○ **You're paying more for your cable than the brand new customer**

- Many businesses will offer significant discounts to new customers as they attempt to grow their business. If you're a longtime customer, they feel no need to offer you anything unless you ask – with the intent of cancelling your service if you don't get a discount.

○ **You're paying for a service or product you don't want/ you didn't order**

- Many businesses will quite readily add on additional services for a small fee if you don't notice or speak up.

○ **You're paying for premium when moderate service is about the same**

- Premium services may offer a bit more, but they typically cost more than they're worth. Don't waste your money for what businesses advertise as the premium; instead buy a moderately better service or product if you don't want to feel cheap.

○ **You were given bad advice by an incompetent service clerk**

- This is one of the most frustrating ways we lose money!!! Unless you've done significant research before you shop or unless the service provider is genuinely concerned about providing quality service, you are guaranteed to pay for an unnecessary service or product buy not knowing what questions to ask, who to ask, when to shop, where to shop, etc.

Top Ten Customer Service Rules

This section is designed to get to the point of what you need to do to get the customer service that you deserve – the service that will allow you to avoid drama, stress, and waste of your precious resources (time and money). Apply these principles in most cases and you will get the service you want with as little pain as possible. For many of us, getting the results we seek will cause frustration, drama, and stress; however, the energy expended should ensure that you get the service you deserve and avoid wasting money.

I'm specifically dedicating a page each to these rules because their importance can not be overstated. As a customer, you will eliminate a good deal of the drama and stress for you and the service provider by following these rules.

Number 1

Be clear about what you want and what you expect to pay for the product or service

Putting your request in writing is always a good practice, but is not always practicable; consequently, ensure that you are clear on performance and payments to avoid misunderstanding after the fact.

Number 2

Plan your questions, so that you ask the right question

Asking the right questions before and after the transaction or key to getting the service you want and resolving issues. This can be tricky because we tend to expect service providers to be honest and trustworthy; however, if you don't ask the proper question, you will pay for more or less than you want. For example, you should always ask the following questions such as is this the best price, are there other options, etc.

Number 3

Exhibiting anger hurts your case

It's easy to get angry when there is an obvious mistake by the service provider; however, you must keep in mind that you're seeking a remedy that requires action on the part of the service provider. If they don't like your attitude, they are likely to delay or give you the run around – even if they ultimately resolve your complaint.

Number 4

Always record the name of the customer service employee and
the time/date of the call

Doing this will allow you to reference your call/conversation with some credibility; you will generally only get a first name of the person to whom you're speaking – take it.

Number 5

Don't hesitate to verify that you've been provided that for which
you paid

If you think that you've gotten the wrong item or something less than you expect, by all means speak up – don't be shy. I would advise that if you're not 100% sure that you've been mis-served, simply ask a question rather than making an accusation.

Number 6

Talk to a supervisor or manager if you're not getting what you
requested

Most cashiers or servers are simply performing a function and are not decision makers. If they are not inclined to resolve your complaint, ask for the supervisor who should be able to at least consider your complaint fairly.

Number 7

Don't hesitate to change service providers to get a better value

If you have a service provider that is providing you a service at a non-competitive price switch to another service provider and let your current service provider know about it. You might get a reduced price from your current provider without having to switch – which is likely to cost you something.

Number 8

Don't make meaningless threats or threats you can't keep.

Threatening to report a business to the better bureau is meaningless to most companies these days – don't waste your breath. Also, don't threaten litigation over a \$5.00 mistake or if you know you don't have the means to actually take this action – which could be very costly.

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