



Customer Service 101: Providing Top-Notch Service to SLCC Customers

General Customer Service Tips

- Speak to customers in a mature, professional manner.
- Put yourself in the customer's position.
- Have commonly used resources such as phone numbers readily available
- Be accountable to the customers you assist. For example, if you tell a customer that you will call them back, be sure to follow through in a timely manner.
- If you are assisting a customer in person, be aware of body language and "non-verbal communication." Make eye contact and act interested in the customer.
- If you don't understand the customer's question, ask them to clarify your understanding. Don't make assumptions about what they are asking.
- If you cannot answer the customer's question, refer him/her to a staff member who is able to help. Try to explain the situation as best you can to the person you are referring the customer to, so the customer does not have to reiterate what they have already told you.

Providing Customer Service on the Phone

- Ask your supervisor if there is a specific protocol for answering phones in your department, and if so, use it. Otherwise answer the phone in a professional manner, identifying the name of the department as well as your name.
- Find out the procedure for transferring calls to other staff members or to voicemail.
- Speak clearly and at a normal volume and pace. Keep in mind if a customer is a non-native English speaker, you may need to speak more slowly (but not more loudly).
- Use conversation cues such as – "yes", "okay", "uh-huh", etc. to let the customer know you're paying attention to what they are saying.

- If it's going to take a while to resolve the customer's issue/question, ask the customer whether he/she would prefer to hold or have you call him/her back with an answer. If the customer is holding, do not keep them on hold for more than a minute or two. If you are calling customer back, try to give him/her an approximate time frame in which to expect a response.

Dealing with Difficult Customer Service Situations

- Listen patiently to the customer and allow him/her to vent. Angry or frustrated customers typically will not listen to or accept your response until they have had the opportunity to voice their concerns and frustrations.
- Express empathy/regret
- Don't get defensive and don't blame the customer. The problem may be a result of something the customer did incorrectly, but blaming the customer will only exacerbate the situation.
- Don't argue with the customer. If you have tried to resolve the situation and are not getting anywhere, refer the customer to your supervisor.
- Don't make promises to customers unless you are absolutely certain you can deliver what's been promised.
- Don't take it personally if the customer asks to speak with your supervisor. It's natural for customers to want to confirm information with a manager. When this happens, simply ask your supervisor if they are available to speak with the customer. If so, refer the customer to him/her. If not, politely ask the customer if he/she would like to speak to another staff member or leave his/her phone number for the supervisor to contact him/her later.