

## Customer Service!

### *Improving Your Telephone Skills*

Today, some Customer Service departments handle as many as 500,000 calls a year! Therefore, the people who answer those phone calls must exhibit the three C's: Courtesy, Competence, and Complete professionalism.

Every time you answer a call, you have the opportunity to gain Customer loyalty, strengthen relationships with a present Customer, and make your own job rewarding by helping someone. Here are some telephone tips:

- ◆ **Answer on the second ring.** Use the first ring to compose yourself. Take a deep breath, think pleasant thoughts and smile.
- ◆ **Identify yourself with your name and department if appropriate.** Follow with a "How may I help you?"

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Are You Courteous, Competent and Professional?

## *Trying To Change? List Your Values*

Like many people, you may feel frustrated trying to change a bad habit. Sometimes people fail because they focus on the wrong reasons for changing.

Perhaps you've tried to get regular exercise but can never stick with it.

It may be that your motivation to exercise is what's tripping you up. Maybe it's time to step back and reconsider your reasons for wanting to change.

Perhaps you are focused on exercising mainly as a way to lose weight. While this isn't a bad reason for changing, it may not be motivating enough to help you stick with it.

Instead, think about how getting regular exercise ties in with what you value most in life. Write down your list of values. It might include your family, your health and longevity and your self-esteem. Now focus on how exercise will help support those values. Exercise can help you live a longer life by lowering your risk for certain diseases. This means you'll be more likely to be around for your family for years to come.

Thinking about exercise - or any new healthy habit - in relation to your values may give you the motivation to stick with it.

**[To help you stay on track, post your list of values where you'll see it every day. There may not be a better motivator.]**

— Author Unknown

*"It's not that some people have willpower and some don't. It's that some people are ready to change and others are not."* — James Gordon, M.D.

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- ◆ **Give your full attention to the caller.** Write down the Customer's name, phone number and other data as he or she speaks. Use the Customer's name throughout the call.
- ◆ **Ask questions to get all the information you need in that first conversation.** Be thorough and polite.
- ◆ **Use the hold button sparingly.** If it will take some time to get the requested information, offer to call the Customer back at a mutually convenient time.
- ◆ **Restate and verify all information,** particularly names, numbers, and addresses.
- ◆ **Always thank the person for calling.** Do not hang up the receiver until after the caller does. The idea is to close the conversation with a good impression.

When the caller is dissatisfied and wants to complain, remain calm and pleasant. Practice your active listening skills. Remember that the anger is not personally directed toward you; therefore you need not answer defensively. Rather, listen carefully to identify the problem. Ask questions that help the Customer explain the problem and diffuse the anger. Much can be accomplished by asking questions and encouraging the Customer to talk. Do not assume you already know what is wrong. Once you have gotten the complete story, acknowledge the Customer's dissatisfaction and reassure him or her that appropriate action will be taken. For example, *"Yes, Mrs. Wilson, let me see if I have this correct. You are unhappy because..... To remedy this situation we can..."*

Wrap up the conversation by ensuring that this meets the Customer's needs, and by reminding the caller you will be available to help him or her any time there is a question or problem. Then thank him or her for their business. If you set up another time for a follow up, confirm with the Customer and thank them again.

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## ***Influence of the Responsive Manager***

The responsive manager tends to succeed by building bonds of respect and trust with those around him/her. Staff respond positively to responsive managers; they work more diligently, work to help the manager and the organization succeed, and will go the extra mile when necessary. That is because responsive managers act consistent with the principle that their jobs are to help their staff do their jobs. So, a basic interdependence emerges based on behaviors that show concern, respect and trust.

Responsive managers also influence those above them in the hierarchy. Because responsive managers have the ability to read and act upon the needs of their "bosses", they are perceived as helpful and reliable, or in a simple way, very useful. This allows them to get the "ear" of people above them in the system, and further helps get things done when needed.



Contrast this with the limited influence of the Unresponsive manager. The unresponsive manager is restricted in influence because those around him/her do not respect or trust them to look out for their welfare. Influence is more limited to the use of power coming from the formal position, and fear, a motivational component that is hard to sustain over time. Unresponsive managers tend to be perceived as self-interested, or at best uninterested in the needs of those around them. They also tend to be perceived by those above them as less reliable and less useful due to their focus on empire building, organization protection, and self-interest, rather than getting done what needs to be done.

- ***How can you become a responsive manager?***
- ***What must you do differently?***
- ***How will you sustain being a responsive manager?***

— Original author unknown. Adapted by Sorrell Associates.

## Reduce Turnover Using Your Daily Planner

Studies show that employees that are appreciated stay with a company longer. Most employers think employees leave because they want more money. Simply not the case according to employee surveys.

Consistently showing appreciation to your employees takes a lot of work and planning. Here is a simple method to keep you on track and to show your employees that you care.

- ✓ **Take out your daily planner.** If using an electronic calendar set the alarm as a reminder.
- ✓ **Schedule a weekly meeting** with a different employee for the next 12 months.
- ✓ **Review the employee's progress** on a project, attendance, teamwork, running their department, etc... Do this prior to your meeting.
- ✓ **Meet with the employee** and review performance with them. Let them know how much you appreciate their efforts.
- ✓ **Be sincere.**
- ✓ **Don't make something up.** If you can't catch them doing something 'right' then find out how you can help them get on the right track.
- ✓ **Keep copious notes.** Review your notes the next time you praise that employee. (This is also good for their annual performance review)
- ✓ **Send a thank you card.** This is a nice little extra step that really helps take your appreciation to another level.



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*"In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia."*

— Unknown

# Web Site Of The Month!

Personality Quiz.net  
The fun personality test site!

Gain insight into your personality the fun way! A variety of short personality tests that attempt to analyze your personality by interpreting your reactions to various events. You will be amazed by the accuracy of the results!

Check it out at: [www.PersonalityQuiz.net](http://www.PersonalityQuiz.net)



## ONE MINUTE IDEAS

### Reboot, Reboot, Reboot

If you like to leave your computer on at all times, remember to reboot it at least every two days. Even the most popular operating system develops problems after being on for extended periods.



### Customer Follow Up

Avoid following up with a customer by sending a "canned" impersonal letter. Phrases such as "per our conversation" can come across as cold. When sending a follow up letter try to use phrases that emulate your conversation.

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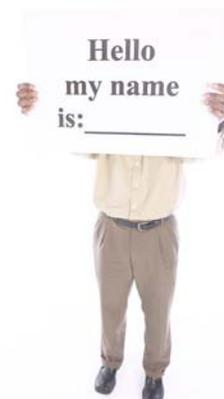
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## How to Remember a Name

So you have trouble remembering names after you meet people? If you do, you might want to try the following techniques to aid your memory.

1. **Focus.** You want to send a positive message to the person you're meeting. Pay attention to your pose. Are you leaning in, letting the person know that this moment is important to you and that he or she has your undivided attention?
2. **Ask.** Repeat the name back to the person you're meeting. Ask if you've got it right. This makes you an active participant in the meeting and shows that you are paying attention.
3. **Make sure you know how the person's name is spelled.** It will help cement it in your mind. And once you have repeated the name and the spelling in your mind, cross reference it with something else – possibly a celebrity's name that you are already familiar with.
4. **Employ.** Once you have everything clarified, it is very helpful to introduce your new acquaintance to someone else. This makes you say the name out loud and fixes it in your memory.



— Adapted from *Remember Every Name Every Time* by Benjamin Levy

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## Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are offered by Harmony Coaching & Consulting in a public forum. Follow the links to register or find out more information.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time
Human Resource Essentials <a href="http://www.protraining.memphis.edu">www.protraining.memphis.edu</a>	October 6 & 7	9:00am – 4:30pm
Coaching & Counseling Skills <a href="http://www.protraining.memphis.edu">www.protraining.memphis.edu</a>	October 14 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am - 5:00pm

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