



Answering the call

Are you using opportunities to engage callers to their fullest advantage? For people who call your business who are not yet customers, the way they are treated on the phone when they call will make a big impression about the type of customer service they can expect to receive from your company. For callers who are already customers, the way they are treated on the phone gives them a perspective on how much they are valued by you and how loyal they should feel to you.



Want happy customers? It's your call.

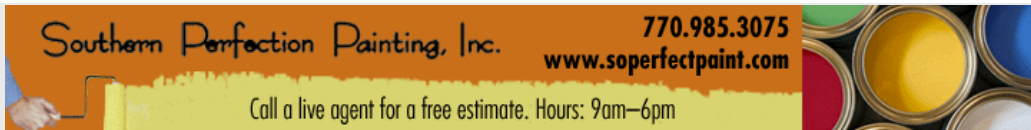
Using customer service on the phone to make a good impression

What can you do as a business to make a good first impression on the phone when potential customers call for information? Well, first of all, be pleasant and welcoming. Don't force your callers through one of those automated voice response systems. Keep it personal. Address callers by name. For customers that have used your service before, make notes in their files that will help jog your memory so you can refer quickly to any pertinent details of their accounts.

Take the time to solve problems, or offer to find out who can, and give a time frame when you will get back to the caller. Underscore your advertising message with a demonstration of your commitment to being the best in your industry, or the fastest, or the friendliest. Cross-sell your services; for instance, if a caller asks for an appointment to have her dog groomed, ask if she would like to take advantage of a teeth-cleaning special as well.

What happens when a customer calls your company after hours? Do they get a curt message telling them to call back during business hours? A better way to win customers and influence positive reviews is to direct callers to your website or Kudzu profile for information that is available 24/7. Give an emergency number, say when you will return calls, and be sure to do so within that time frame. Use a friendly voice with an inviting message so that callers will leave with a positive impression of your company, no matter when they call.

Don't forget the value of follow-up calls! Many businesses don't do this, but the ones that do are remembered for it. Check to see how a patient feels two days after a root canal. Find out if that customer is happy with the new fence. See how the car performed on a customer's trip after having all those repairs. You will stand out - and stand a greater chance of having a happy customer (and getting a positive Kudzu review!). And remember, even though happy customers tell their friends and neighbors about their positive service experiences, unhappy customers tell even more people. Happy or unhappy customers? It's your call!



Make things easy

By Pattie Baker

One of my children woke up with the dreaded pink eye this morning. I had to wait until the doctor's office opened to call, and then go through the lengthy menu options and be put on hold before finally making an appointment. After seeing the doctor, I had to drive to the pharmacy, and then my sick child and I had to wait for the prescription for 45 minutes. Not a big deal, I guess, and no different than what we've done a hundred other times for a hundred other reasons over the years. But as I was driving home, I thought to myself- isn't there a more customer-friendly way of doing this? Couldn't I have made the appointment over the computer in the middle of the night when it first became clear that I would have a sick child home today, and then couldn't the prescription have been sent electronically to the pharmacy (or called in) so by the time I got there, it would have been ready? That would have made things easier for me today.

This got me thinking. What are some seemingly-little ways that more businesses owners can (and do!) make things easier for their customers?

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Consumer review spotlight

Review of [Mountain Valley Plumbing](#) from user *lamdalamda*

Exceptional personal service

We were treated with exceptional service. Beginning with the initial phone call, next day appointment, follow up service call for customer satisfaction, and a wonderful hand written thank you note. It is hard to find service and quality like this in the Valley. We were very satisfied with Mountain Valley Plumbing, and would recommend them to our friends and family.

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