



CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS

Phone Skills for Outstanding Service

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Everyone who answers the phone, from the front office to the C-suite, is a customer service representative. To many, good service is as easy as “just using common sense.” But if that’s the case, why do so many businesses struggle to get it right?

Follow along in this guide as you watch the Customer Connections video to learn how to make a more memorable experience for your customers, vendors, colleagues, and anyone else who calls your company each day. Additionally, each section contains discussion questions to help drive conversations about some of your own experiences and insight to making a positive impression on the phone.

To access the Customer Connections video, visit ExpressPros.com/CustomerConnections.

5 Key Areas for Great Customer Connections



1. Answering calls politely.

Make a good impression right away by answering calls quickly and politely. Best practices to remember:

- Keep your greeting _____. Use a short greeting, your company and your name.
- Smile! Callers can hear the smile in your _____.
- Ask the caller's _____.
- Listen and empathize to _____.

Discuss: What are some other ways you can make a memorable first impression when you answer the phone?

Discuss: Describe a bad experience you've had when calling a company for the first time.



Did you know about 66% of all customer communication still comes from phone calls?

Even though 80% of companies say they deliver “superior” service ... only 8% of people actually *agree* these same companies *deliver* “superior” service.



2. Transferring calls correctly.

You may not always be able to help the caller yourself, but the way you handle the caller *and* the transfer makes all the difference.

- _____ to put a caller on hold, then wait for a response.
- Don't say "_____" to the caller. Say you'll "_____" them to the right person.
- When transferring, speak briefly to the person _____ the call to introduce the situation.
- Be sure the transferred call is _____ up quickly.

Discuss: What are some other ways you can ensure calls are always transferred correctly?

Discuss: What are your biggest pet peeves about being transferred when you call a business?



Just one bad experience can have a long-term, negative impact on your business. In fact, an unhappy caller, on average, tells 16 people about their bad experience.



3. Taking messages correctly.

Taking an effective message helps the caller get the assistance they need and helps the person returning the call understand the message, and deliver a quick response.

- Be _____ about when the person who is out will return, without divulging _____.
- Be prepared to take messages with _____ and _____ or on your computer.
- Record the caller's name, time, date, _____, and phone number or _____ contact method.
- Ask for _____ or additional details if necessary.
- Assure the caller that you'll deliver the message _____.
- _____ back to the caller to confirm understanding.

Discuss: What are some other ways you can ensure the person being called receives the message?

Discuss: When you leave a message with a company, when do you expect your call to be returned?



4. Handling angry callers.

It's your job to stay calm, let the caller vent, and look for a way to resolve the problem. A calm demeanor and a genuine desire to resolve the issue are key in defusing a volatile situation.

- Don't take the complaint _____.
- Listen and let the caller vent without _____.
- _____ the caller's emotions.
- Remain _____.
- Look for an immediate _____.
- And take _____ of the problem.

Discuss: What are some other methods to help defuse a difficult conversation with an angry caller?

Discuss: Describe a positive experience you've had when calling on a business under frustrating circumstances.



5. Handling callers and walk-ins at the same time.

The key to handling a hectic office when customers are calling and coming in at the same time is prioritizing and keeping cool.

- Give priority to _____ customers.
- If the hold-time becomes too long, ask the _____ if you may call them back and give them an idea of when to _____.
- Stay calm, smile, and be _____.

Discuss: What are some other ways of acknowledging walk-in customers when you are on the phone?

Discuss: What are some actions that would create a poor experience for the walk in customer or the caller?

78% of consumers have abandoned a transaction or not made an intended purchase because of a poor service experience.



Your Customers Are Your Day

Providing great service over the telephone begins with a simple commitment to helping people. And when you keep in mind that customers are *not* an interruption to your day, they are your day, you'll be well on your way to building stronger connections.

Sources:

- https://resources.interactions.com/value-customer-service-experience/?utm_source=CCH
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/228129#ixzz2dtg5wBrf>
- <https://www.groovehq.com/support/customer-support-statistics>
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