



## EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Did you know that 68% of people will quit doing business with companies that have poor standards of customer service? As customers we might first select a business based on its brand name and its reputation, but very soon we will start to make judgements based on the service we received from **individuals**.

Individuals have the power to make or break relationships. It is widely accepted that front line staff are the most important people in the organisation and that it is management's role to support them.

Recognising this in a previous job we created the culture of "catching people doing things right" and we even had "MAD" cards made; Making A Difference, as it was and is, important to recognise front liners who are "making a difference."

We now know that there is a mathematical equation that easily defines the secret of great service.

***Expectation minus 1 = failure! Expectation plus 1 = delight!***

The secret of great service is the ability to exceed the customer's expectation!

How many times have you been out to lunch or dinner in a restaurant and someone within the party has forgotten their reading glasses? Well if you were dining in Guellers restaurant in Leeds in the UK it wouldn't be a problem...because they keep a few pairs of standard prescription glasses.

On hearing about this we in EIQA went out and bought a few pairs of glasses as we had previously experienced delegates turning up for training sessions without their reading glasses making the day a rather long and tiring one (not the best situation for a great training experience) We are great believers in "sharing what works" and this was an immediate solution for an occasional problem!

As we had also been asked on many occasions if we had a phone charger available for specific phones, we purchased the power monkey which comes with a selection of charger points for the most popular mobile phones and a universal power supply for laptops. An investment of less than €200! We aim to provide the best possible standard of customer service

Great service is simply a combination of lots of little things. Jan Carlton former president of Scandinavian Airlines once said "You cannot improve one thing by 1000% but you can improve 1000 little things by 1%" how simple would it be to introduce that to your business model?

It is important that businesses get the balance right between attracting new customers and retaining existing ones, and it's extremely important that organisations recognise that great customer service begins with the way in which they treat its internal customers - the staff!



### What is excellent customer service?

We talk about excellent customer service every single day, but what does it really mean?

A few weeks ago, I was at a local college and the students asked me "How would you define excellent customer service?" I rambled off an answer, including some of the examples above, but on the drive home, I began to really formulate the "excellent" answer.

Here goes, excellent customer service is:

1. **Reliable.** This should be your hallmark and this is what differentiates you from your competitors. To maintain that glorious position, every single customer interaction must be the very best.
2. **Timely.** In an age of instant gratification, slow service is unacceptable. Your customers want and deserve service now. If not, they will simply go somewhere else! Saying "I will get back to you tomorrow" is no longer an option. Excellent customer service is now!
3. Excellent customer service is **personalised**. The door is open for better communication when staff smile, and remember a customer's name or a previous encounter. Personalised service differentiates libraries from the bank or the passport office!
4. **Memorable.** Simply ask yourself if you would recommend this service to your Mum. Memorable service keeps your customers returning, and the returning customer keeps us in business. It's that simple!

So why is excellent customer service important?

It's simple really, because without customers there would be no business!

Excellent customer service results in:

- Higher numbers and greater customer diversity
- Increased sales
- Increasing public image
- Survival in terms of competition
- Satisfied customers and greater job satisfaction for staff
- Repeat business and customer loyalty

Retention of customers is the lifeblood of all companies and recent research has revealed that an improvement of 5% in customer retention could lead to an increase of between 25% and 125% in bottom line profits

It is also acknowledged that staff take greater pride in being part of an organisation which delivers high levels of customer service. Job satisfaction is increased by positive feedback from customers, as it is more rewarding to be thanked than having to deal with an unhappy customer.

