



Basic Customer Service Etiquette

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Show employees six ways they can provide a good customer experience to every person who walks in the store.

HOW TO USE: Review the PDF. This is a piece you can print and post in the breakroom as a continual reminder for providing good customer service.

LENGTH: Approximately 5 minutes to review the PDF. Use the Additional Discussion section to spend more time on this topic.

DISCUSSION GUIDE: The front-line staff members in our store are usually the first employees our customers see when they walk in the door. Some days, the store might be hectic or stressful. Other times, you might have to deal with a grumpy customer. Whatever the situation, it's important to always remember that we're here to serve our customers. Every interaction with them needs to be positive.

Today, we'll review six principles of good customer service etiquette. When you make these principles part of every customer interaction, you make the customer feel comfortable and it's more likely that you'll be able to help them more effectively.

1. Smile

Good customer service etiquette starts with good manners. Customers won't forget their first impression when they come in the store. Smile, make direct eye contact with the customer and make sure your appearance is neat and clean.

2. Listen

Be an active listener. Ask something such as "What can I help you with today?" and let the customer talk. Let the customer ask you their entire question before jumping in with your own comments. Make sure you understand all of their concerns and needs so you address each one.

3. Know Your Limits

At some point, you're bound to get a question that's out of your realm of expertise. There's no shame in asking another staff member for help if you don't know the answer to a customer's question. That's better than giving the wrong advice.

4. Show Empathy

Be genuine and treat customers as you would like to be treated. If they come in the store with a problem to solve, try to see the situation through the eyes of the customer. When possible, relate their experience to your own. This will help build rapport with the customer and make them feel comfortable asking you for help.

5. Stay Positive

Even if a customer isn't in a good mood, it's important you stay positive. Leave your personal problems at the door when you come to work. Customers will quickly pick up on a negative attitude and will assume you don't really want to help them.

6. Say Thank You

Say "please" and "thank you" with sincerity. These words are courteous and show you respect your customer. Always show your appreciation for each customer's business. Thank them for their business and tell them you look forward to serving them again.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION: Are there any other principles of customer service etiquette you think are important to provide to this discussion?

FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING: To get a broader view of providing good customer service, take the Basic Training in Selling Skills course, available to NHPA Training Members.