



10 top tips for outstanding customer service

Your expertise is not enough, service is what wows.

What's this about?

No matter what role you play in an organisation, your capability will be measured on how responsive and proactive you are and this is just as true for you in a learning role.

In this report you will find 10 tips to help you focus on how you can deliver, more with less and ensure that learning within your organisation, is really something to shout about.

Why it's important to you

Whilst undoubtedly an expert in your field, unless you can demonstrate this expertise by connecting with your customers, on their terms this expertise will get lost in the busyness of the day to day operation.

Ideas for Action

- 1** Get juiced – enthusiasm rubs off
- 2** EmbraceThe wonderful paradox of customer service – focusing on others is the answer
- 3** Take pride in what you do
- 4** Get a cheerleader
- 5** Focus on the outcome
- 6** Stretch out of your comfort zone
- 7** Develop the power of imagination
- 8** Plan for success
- 9** Deliver plus 1
- 10** Learn from the future

1. Get Juiced

Why is it some people put their heart and soul into some of the most mundane, routine jobs whilst others tick along, doing the minimum possible to get by?

These passionate people have the juice! They get their kicks out of making a difference. They know they can influence the outcome of any conversation or action. It's the same as a mum or dad who puts little notes of love into their children's sandwich box each day. We have a choice. We can just do the job or we can do the job with our signature, our own flourish – leaving a little bit of us with that customer.

So to offer distinctive service you must be passionate and committed to making a difference to every person you touch through your role. To develop this attitude you must 'Be On Purpose'... which means you need to understand the purpose (value) of your role and the difference you make. By doing this you will build pride in your service and the organisation will be more committed to work with you. In doing so, your customers will return the favour – they love you, they want to talk about you, they will recommend you.

Action idea

Why not... In your next team meeting, break your team into small groups, 2's, 3's or 4's and challenge them to create your team purpose by answering the following questions:

- What difference do I make to my organisation and the people within it?
- Why bother turning up everyday? What would happen if I wasn't here?

Once small groups have created the purpose of their role, ask each individual to think of one thing they will do everyday to ensure they are always 'On Purpose'.

2. Embrace the wonderful paradox of customer service

“I have more fun and enjoy more financial success when I stop trying to get what I want and start helping other people get what they want”

Spencer Johnson

This quote really sums up what service should be about – helping others get what they want to better their situation! But... how many of your team actually have this mindset?

At Genius Learning we have a saying “it’s not about you!” so when we hear colleagues talking about themselves we quickly help them switch their mindset so that everything we do is about you, our customers, and helping you be the very best you can be – enjoy!

Action idea

Why not... have ‘The Wonderful Paradox’ as your team commitment towards serving others. You will notice that by focusing on helping others get what they want, instead of focusing on what you want, what you want will actually follow as...

- Your customers are more likely to recommend you
- Interactions will be more effective as you are finding out exactly what your customers want and bettering their situation.

Imagine you are a customer and you receive service based on the wonderful paradox... would you want anyone else to help you? No of course you wouldn’t!

3. Take pride in what you do

What do you as a team stand for – really stand for? Are you proud of that? Do you think your team is?

In any organisation you need to make sure you are the best at something and that is often a great hook for pride.

- Do you have the most innovative ideas and solutions?
- How about the fastest and most accurate system?
- Are you the responsive to the changing demands of the customers?
- Do you offer the absolute best service?

On a scale of 1-10... how proud do you think each member of your team is about the service they offer? Go on I dare you – ask them!

To deliver great experiences people must feel proud of not only their role, but the role their department has in the lives of those it serves. It is only through demonstrating this pride in the department that staff can build trusting relationships with their customers, an absolute skill needed to create great customer service experiences.

Action idea

Why not... set your team the challenge to create an advertising campaign that demonstrates the incredible difference the department makes to the organisation.

4. Get a cheerleader

When you have been a fan or a cheerleader for someone or a team how does it make you feel when you are really willing someone to succeed? As a fan, what do you do when your team is starting to feel the pain? You raise your voices louder, you will them with your spirit to keep going and make that difference.

One of our favourite ways to develop a culture of delivering great customer experiences is to create a support community within staff. Through staff encouraging and challenging each other to improve performance and then rewarding and celebrating achievements with each other, a community of support, pride, and communication is born with the ultimate aim of delivering a great customer experience.

Action idea

Why not... Ask your team members to find a buddy/coach within the organisation and allocate time slots per month or per week (if you can spare it) for buddies to spend time together to analyse their performance. 15 minutes is all it takes and often the straight forward talking and ideas of a colleague who cares can have significantly more impact than a performance conversation with a manager.

Encourage them to ask each other:

- On a scale of 1 – 10 how positively did I serve the organisation this week?
- What actions did I take to create a great experience for my customers and stakeholders? (i.e. what contribute to making it this number?)
- What can I do to improve my score by 1
- What could I do to improve my score to make it a 10 out of 10? (this might mean being an advocate for changing a system so be ready, willing and able to help them speak up for improvement ideas)

Make sure the buddy sessions are wrapped up with at least three action points from each person as to how they will improve their performance for the next session to be share with their manager for support and encouragement.

5. Focus on the outcome

In our experience, the introduction of technology, our focus on compliance and our approach to setting targets has turned people into processors, people who simply do the job. What you focus on is what you get so if your targets are about quantity then that's what you'll get.

However, if you target your staff on quality then you will secure innovative ideas and continuous improvement and staff will go the extra mile to secure a customer for life.

Action idea

Why not... ask your team to think about what a typical focus would be like for someone who is passionate about getting a great outcome compared to someone who focuses just on delivering the numbers. Consider what that experience would look/sound/feel like. Then ask each member of your team to rate which characteristic they think they are most like and then develop with you three actions they can take to become a dynamic customer service champion.

6. Stretch your comfort zone

Comfort is a wonderful thing isn't it?

It is if you want to be safe and mediocre!! But that's not what marks out success is it? Oh no!

If you were to look at your team, how would you describe them?

A: Buzzing with energy, eager to make a difference to their customers, smiling, enjoying what they do... OR

B: Slouched in their chairs, strolling around the shop floor, lacking in energy, flat and waiting for the end of their day?

If your answer is A, congratulations... you have a wonderful team of people, empowered and challenged to do better!

If your answer is B, you have a comfortable workforce, one that is going through the motions – and in turn not delivering a great experience for their customers!

The issue for team B is that there is no challenge, and when we become comfortable with what we are doing, we can become complacent, and sometimes bored... so we must energise our teams with challenge and encouragement to step out of their comfort zone so they can enjoy delivering a great experience to customers.

Action idea

Why not...

Explore with your team how it feels to be in your comfort zone (comfortable/ boring/ safe) compared to the learning zone (curious/ interested/ focused) and challenge them to come up with 10 ideas that will improve performance (e.g. productivity/ service/ reduce costs/ increase profit) and review these ideas weekly or monthly in a team meeting to maintain momentum. And remember to celebrate the differences the team are making.

7. Harness the power of imagination

In many organisations part of the customer experience involves the customer buying into something. No matter what industry you are in, if you want your organisation to buy into it then you need to make the process simple and enjoyable, not something filled with dread!

Think about when you last made the decision to buy something? Maybe a car, new outfit, something for the home, a gift?

Either way, when we make the decision to buy something it is because we imagine the feelings we will get once we have bought it.

I know when I bought a birthday present for my niece this weekend, it wasn't because of the packaging, the price, the doll, - they all contributed, but the main thing that made the decision for me to buy, was imagining the excitement and happiness I would see in my niece as she opened the present on her day, and how this would make me feel, - that's what sold it for me!

So when creating a great service experience we must help staff imagine how they will make people feel. It is this emotional connection that is the biggest thing missing in much of the service we experience.

Action idea

Why not... hold a team brainstorming session to generate a list of ideas to help staff imagine the feelings they will get when offer exceptional service.

8. Plan for success

Many Service Departments have processes the need to adhere to. This is great for the processors. However creating a great customer experience isn't just about the processes... it's also about the attitude each person puts into the learning, and the expertise they bring to their job.

Action idea

Why not... Ask team members to create a plan for success, which they can use daily, that details what they will do before, during and after each service experience, for focus and to ensure they have the most positive attitude, most effective service and happiest customers.

9. Deliver plus one

At Genius Learning one of our favourite service books is 'Raving Fans' by Ken Blanchard, which gives three tips to creating a service that customers go out and shout about:

1. Decide what you want to become for your customer (your vision)
2. Discover what the customer wants – listen to what they say.... And what they don't say!
3. Deliver plus one – a little bit more than expected

The first two steps are crucial to satisfy your stakeholders - understand what the organisation is trying to achieve, have the right attitude towards achieving this and then find out what they need from you/your team in order to help them achieve their goals.

It is step three that takes your service from being satisfactory to something that wows them, and makes them want to go and tell people about it. Step three is what keeps stakeholders keen and turn them into your promoter:

Delivering Plus One – deliver what your stakeholders wants and go over and above, give something extra, make the experience great!

Action idea

Why not... work out with your team what the three steps means for your organisation and set up a post box in the office where the team can post ideas for how to deliver plus one service, then reward the best ideas with a prize!

10. Learn from the future

Visualisation is a wonderful tool.

It allows us to leap forward into the future and explore what it looks, sounds and feels like for us, the organisation and our individual stakeholders. It is this focus that helps people cross chasms, scale mountains and navigate treacherous waters. It can help your team dramatically elevate your approach to delighting your customers.

Once we have explored the future and can see the benefits, we can start working backwards to work out the improvements we need to make and implement them in manageable chunks to achieve the future we want!

Sounds simple? It really is!

Action idea

Why not... leap forward twelve months ahead from now and ask yourself:

1. If I have a team completely committed and excited about creating a great experience for each customer what does that look, sound and feel like?
2. What are the benefits of this focus to me, my team, the organisation and our customers?
3. What actions need to be made 3, 6 and 12 months from now to ensure my dream of the future becomes reality?
4. And finally, what 3 things can I do relentlessly every single day to help us make progress?

Handy hint – when creating actions for your team to make, ask them to visualize the future for themselves, and create their own actions with your guidance, this way they will be making their own decisions and commitments to making the future happen... much stronger than you just telling them!

About Genius Learning

For over 25 years we have been providing innovative learning solutions to help staff contribute with confidence and strengthen their relationships. Our approach is brimming with energy, colour and challenge. Our mission is to provide clarity in a world of contradictions.

Email us on info@inspireyourgenius.com for more information.

Call Caroline Esterson on +44 (0)7976 628 705

www.inspireyourgenius.com