

# The Excellerator

November 2007

Volume 2 Issue 9



## Customer Service!

### Improving Your Telephone Skills

Today, some Customer Service departments handle as many as 500,000 calls a year! Therefore, the people who answer those phone calls must also exhibit the three C's: Courtesy, Competence, and Complete professionalism.

Every time you answer a call, you have the opportunity to gain Customer loyalty, strengthen relationships with a present Customer, and make your own job rewarding by helping someone. Here are some telephone tips:



- ♦ **Answer on the second ring.** Use the first ring to compose yourself. Take a deep breath, think pleasant thoughts and smile.
- ♦ **Identify yourself with your name and department if appropriate.** Follow with a "How may I help you?"
- ♦ **Give your full attention to the caller.** Write down the Customer's name, phone number and other data as he or she speaks. Use the Customer's name throughout the call.
- ♦ **Ask questions to get all the information you need in that first conversation.** Be thorough and polite.

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## Trying To Change?

### List Your Values

Like Many People, You May Feel Frustrated Trying To Change A Bad Habit.

Sometimes people fail because they focus on the wrong reasons for changing.

Perhaps you've tried to get regular exercise but can never stick with it. It may be that your motivation to exercise is what's tripping you up. Maybe it's time to step back and reconsider your reasons for wanting to change.



Perhaps you are focused on exercising mainly as a way to lose weight. While this isn't a bad reason for changing, it may not be motivating enough to help you stick with it.

Instead, think about how getting regular exercise ties in with what you value most in life. Write down your list of values. It might include your family, your health and longevity and your self-esteem. Now focus on how exercise will help support those values. Exercise can help you live a longer life by lowering your risk for certain diseases. This means you'll be more likely to be around for your family for years to come.

Thinking about exercise – or any new healthy habit – in relation to your values may give you the motivation to stick with it. (To help you stay on track, post your list of values where you'll see it every day. There may not be a better motivator.)

— Author Unknown

*Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values.*

— Ayn Rand

*It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.*

— Roy Disney



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

## Reboot, Reboot, Reboot

If you like to leave your computer on at all times, remember to reboot it at least every two days. Even the most popular operating system develops problems after being on that long.



## Customer Follow Up

Avoid following up with a customer by sending a "canned" impersonal letter. Phrased such as "per our conversation" can come across as cold. When sending a follow up letter try to use phrases that emulate your conversation.



**Cut excess** from your writing with a word search for "and." If "and" links two nouns, verbs or modifiers, question if you really need both. *Examples:* "background and experience," "grow and expand," "each and every."

*"If at first you don't succeed, before you try again, stop to figure out what you did wrong."*

— Leo Rosten



**Dave Vogelpohl and Bill Spreitzer**, partners of **Excellerate Solutions**, provide Coaching and Consulting Services to companies and individuals nationwide at all levels of the organization, from executives to front line staff. "We are dedicated to profoundly impacting the lives of our clients, both personally and professionally."

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- ♦ **Use the hold button sparingly.** If it will take some time to get the requested information, offer to call the Customer back at a mutually convenient time.
- ♦ **Restate and verify all information**, particularly names, numbers, and addresses.
- ♦ **Always thank the person for calling.** Do not hang up the receiver until after the caller does. The idea is to close the conversation with a good impression.

When the caller is dissatisfied and wants to complain, remain calm and pleasant. Practice your active listening skills. Remember that the anger is not personally directed toward you; therefore you need not answer defensively. Rather, listen carefully to identify the problem. Ask questions that help the Customer explain the problem and diffuse the anger. Asking questions and encouraging the Customer to talk can accomplish much. Do not assume you already know what is wrong. Once you have gotten the complete story, acknowledge the Customer's dissatisfaction and reassure him or her that appropriate action will be taken. For example, "Yes, Mrs. Wilson, let me see if I have this correct. You are unhappy because..... To remedy this situation we can..."

Wrap up the conversation by ensuring that this meets the Customer's needs, and by reminding the caller you will be available to help him or her any time there is a question or problem. Then thank him or her for their business. If you set up another time for a follow up, confirm with the Customer and thank them again.

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## *Something Is Holding Me Back Professionally. How Can A Coach Help?*

The best coaching "answer" is a question. A good coach asks questions to help you do, be and give your best with the right intention. Consider the following "self-coaching" questions. Maybe it's time to hire a coach.

How are you driven by what might be possible? What do you really want? What risks are you avoiding? How much of your life is compared to what others expect? What truth lies in others' perceptions? How do you know? What are you willing to learn or unlearn? If money was not an issue, to what one thing would you dedicate yourself? How would your life be different if you pursued just one important "dream deferred?" What's stopping you? What if you don't pursue your dreams? What is important?



Four potential 'beings' exist in all of us. We can be **Explorers**, searching who we are for who we can become. We can be **Sophisticates**, fooling ourselves into believing we have all the answers. We can be **Prisoners**, living to the expectations of others and not our own. We can be **Vacationers** – anything we're doing beats taking a risk. Listen to the questions you may be asking yourself. What could you explore today that might take you to the edge of your potential?

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