

Small Business Management Toolbox

Coordinate implementation of customer service strategies

Assertive communication

Each of the following scenarios will give you more information about how to effectively communicate with your customers.

Scenario 1 - Assertive behaviour

The first scenario gives an example of assertive communication between the customer and the customer service representative.

Kylie (Customer service representative): Good morning, I'm Kylie. How may I help you today?

Customer: I certainly hope you can help me. I'm not at all happy with the poor quality of your product.

Kylie: Would you please explain what you mean so that I may help you? And may I have your name please?

Customer: I'm John Bush and I had expected this item to last longer than a week!

Kylie: We would most certainly expect it to last considerably longer than that, John. Do you have your receipt? I'll just look up your details on our computer system.

Customer: Here's the receipt but I'm very disappointed in such poor quality in an item that wasn't cheap, you know.

Kylie: This is a top quality product and fully guaranteed. Let's investigate what went wrong and give you a replacement, John.

Customer: How do I know that the next one won't be as bad?

Kylie: We'll thoroughly check out your new item before you receive it, John. It's highly unlikely to strike two faulty items in a row.

Customer: I don't know - it would just be my luck.

Kylie: We really want your business, John. We want you among our many satisfied customers.

Customer: Alright then. I'll give it a try.

Kylie: Thank you. I will phone you in the next day or two to see how you are getting along around what time would suit you best and what number can I phone you on?

Customer: The day after tomorrow would give me more chance to try it out, late morning and on my mobile.

Kylie: In the meantime, please don't hesitate to call me, Kylie, with any concerns.
Goodbye John.

Customer: Goodbye.

Scenario 2 - Poor communication skills

In the following scenario poor communication skills are evident. Think about when the communication is passive (ie no feedback) or when there is interference (eg aggression, little empathy) in the listening.

Customer: Hello. Is anybody there? Hello.

Customer service representative: I'll be with you in a minute (disappearing out of sight).

Customer: I'm busy too and haven't got time to wait.

Customer service representative: Now what's your problem?

Customer: I'm not at all happy with the poor quality of your product.

Customer service representative: Is that right? What have you done to it?

Customer: I haven't done anything to it. I've just used it normally and I've only had it for a week.

Customer service representative: We'll have to check it out thoroughly to see what you've done. That will take a week.

Customer: A week? You're joking. It wasn't cheap in the first place do I get a replacement?

Customer service representative: I don't know.

Customer: Don't bother with the replacement. I'll have a refund.

Customer service representative: We have to check this one first.

Customer: I have my receipt here. I want to see the manager.

Customer service representative: The manager's not here. You'll just have to wait.

Customer: I'll never do business with you again!

Customer service representative: Please yourself.