

# Customer Service Solutions

## Common Sense Tips That Really Do Work

By Larry Williams

In sports, you will find athletes who mentally prepare themselves for competition. Politicians prep vigorously before big speeches, interviews and debates. The same is true for entertainers, news anchors, teachers, community leaders and others in business. Those who are committed to their craft take time to prepare so as to maximize the moment that is before them. Follow these tips so your efforts to excel are not in vain.

### **Prepare to meet customers**

Have a “game plan” to approach and meet customers. First impressions are very important. Spend time understanding their needs. Learn everything you can about them. Think of this the same way a football team studies film of an upcoming team or the way a boxer carefully examines the strengths and weaknesses of his opponent.

Visualize the first greeting and how it might take place. Have a “Plan B” in case any unexpected curve balls come your way. Work this scenario out thoroughly in your head. When the customer arrives, approach them confidently and offer assistance. Let the customer feel that your willingness to help them is genuine.

If you ever travel to Asia and visit one of their shopping malls, you will notice something consistently. There is always at least one person (usually a female) at the front of the store. Her role is to greet customers, answer any questions, and direct them to where they want to go. Customers immediately feel welcomed and their needs are addressed on the spot.

Like the stage performer doing vocal exercises before a performance or an athlete stretching before taking the field, prepare yourself to meet your customers. Be well informed and create a comfortable atmosphere that serves your customers. Preparing before you meet customers will help ensure your encounter is successful.

### **Be personable**

We all enjoy people who make us feel comfortable. When you are personable, you appear more approachable and a pleasure to talk to. Everyone wants to be around individuals who are genuine and sincere.

These qualities are encouraged by many customer service models around the world. Take special notice of companies like Disney, Southwest Airlines, and five-star resort hotels. Study the personalities of people in the hospitality industry. What makes them different? How are they able to establish such great customer service and do it so consistently? The answer is discipline, character, and, above all, a focused effort to be pleasant.

Truly care for your customers; see yourself as someone who can offer them assistance the way no one else can. Welcome them, and invite them to share in the face-to-face experience with you. Let your attitude and your demeanor reassure them that this experience is going to be pleasant and enjoyable.

Customers respond well to someone who is genuine. Be yourself, just as you are—appropriate, informative, and fun to be around. Work hard at being personable. When you firmly establish your personality, you will enjoy great conversations that benefit your career.

**Recap:** Develop a routine that finds you mentally preparing yourself for every encounter. Think of this as the vocal exercises a singer does or the practice swings a ball player takes. When you take the time to prepare, everyone will have a more enjoyable experience.

(Editor's Note: Larry Williams is the author of the book – *Customer Service A to Z*. He is a nationally-recognized seminar speaker and passionate about spreading a positive message of customer service standards. For more information, please visit the website <http://www.CustomerServiceAtoZ.com>.)