

CUSTOMER SERVICE



As technology and automation reshape the way we interact with each other, one thing remains wonderfully constant - **the human element**. Algorithms can process requests in seconds, but they can't make a person feel truly welcome, valued, or seen. And nowhere is this more evident than in the everyday customer service interactions that we experience in our lives.

It's easy to dismiss customer service as one of those abstract terms. We don't always know what good customer service looks like, but we definitely *feel* bad customer service when we experience it. If you've ever left an interaction feeling smaller than when you walked in, you know what we're talking about. Whether you are answering the phones at a hotel reception or a call center, or you are a frontline manager, this worksheet is for anyone who interacts with customers.

Customer Service vs Customer Experience (CX)

Even though the terms are used interchangeably, they are very different concepts. Customer service is the direct support a company provides when a customer needs help. It's all the individual interactions that an employee has with the customer. It's tactical, with specific goals - provide information, build a rapport, resolve a problem. Countless little touch points with every customer that present an opportunity to create a good impression.

Customer experience on the other hand is the whole impression a customer forms about your brand and your organization. It's strategic, involves the entire customer journey, and starts much before the customer ever interacts with a single employee. Customer service is just one piece of the whole CX puzzle. For example, a return policy - how fair it is, how well it is communicated, how consistently it is implemented - is part of the customer experience. However, the employee who actually makes the return and explains all the steps is part of customer service.

Good customer service can salvage a bad experience. But no matter how good the service, it cannot solve for a badly designed customer experience. It's important to make this distinction because so often frontline employees are frustrated in their efforts to provide good service by unrealistic policies and processes.

Good companies are responsive to their customer service teams and use their knowledge to improve their customer experiences. Intelligent companies make customer service an integral part of their CX design in a continuous, sustainable feedback loop.

So, what does good customer service look like? The simple answer is, it depends. We are all familiar with the idiom that the customer is always right. But every customer is different, their needs unique, their expectations sometimes compete and conflict with the company or the product. We can't all be right.

How do we then deliver a standard of service that's constant, consistent, and sustainable? We built a practical list, one that applies to any customer interaction regardless of industry. The **10 Tenets of Customer Service** are ten principles that guide and inform how you show up for the person in front of you.

A word of caution though. These tenets are not rules. Rather they are a way of thinking about every customer interaction, no matter how big or small.

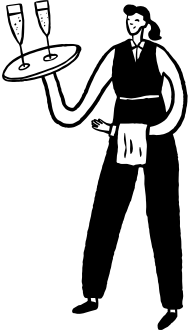


THE 10 TENETS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



1. WELCOME & FAREWELL

How you greet someone and how you send them off, those are the two moments people actually hold onto. Everything in the middle can be a little bit messy and they will still forgive you if the start and the end felt right.



2. PRESENCE

This can be summed up in "Just be there." Not glancing at your phone or half-listening while you think about the next thing on your list. People can tell within a few seconds whether you are actually with them or just waiting for your turn to talk.



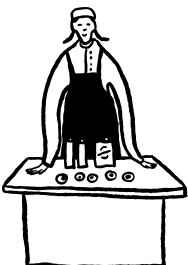
3. CLARITY

Don't dress things up. If something's complicated, break it down instead of throwing jargon at someone and hoping they nod along. Half the frustration people feel in any interaction isn't even about the problem, it is that nobody explained it to them properly.



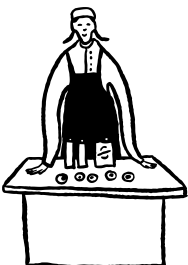
4. READ THE ROOM

Some days people want to chat, some days they just want you to solve the thing and let them go. Pay attention to which one you are dealing with. It's a small thing but it changes everything about how the interaction feels.



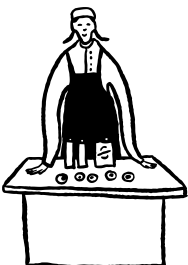
5. BUILD TRUST

Say what you mean and then actually do it. That's really what Trust is. Trust doesn't come from one big gesture, it comes from doing the boring, consistent thing over and over until someone stops expecting you to let them down.



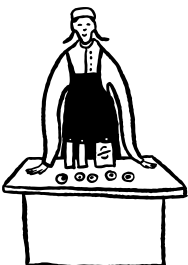
6. TAKE OWNERSHIP

"That's not really my job" might be true, but it is still a terrible thing to say to someone who is already frustrated. Just take it on even if you have to loop in someone else eventually, you stay the person who is handling it.



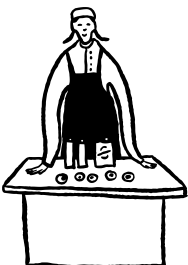
7. ANTICIPATE

Try to catch what the customer wants before the person even has to bring it up. That is the difference between someone feeling looked after and someone feeling like they had to fight for basic help.



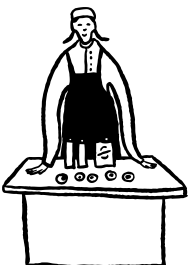
8. ADD VALUE

Throw in a little extra like a heads-up, something they didn't ask for but ends up being useful. It costs you almost nothing and it's usually the thing people remember days later.



9. RECOVER, REPAIR, REBUILD

Everyone messes up sometimes, that's not the issue. What matters is what happens right after. Own it quickly, fix it properly, and don't make the person chase you for it.



10. FOLLOW THROUGH

Do the thing you said you would do. Then check it actually got done and tell them it's done. Skipping that last part is how people end up feeling forgotten even when you technically finished the job.

