

BYU Manager's Toolbox



Customer Service

A service ethic should permeate every part of BYU's activities—from the admissions process through the curriculum and extracurricular experiences to the moment of graduation. This ethic should also permeate each student's heart, leading him or her to the ultimate wellspring of charity—the love for others that Christ bestows on his followers.

– BYU Mission & Aims

Who are your customers?

We all have customers. It's easy to identify your customers if you work in the bookstore or in a restaurant. If you lead a department or manage budgets, identifying your customers may be more difficult—but they're there.

Your customers are the people you serve—the people who benefit from or use your work. Your customer can be the person who buys your product, a co-worker, or even your supervisor. When you think about it that way, you will probably realize that you have more customers than you initially thought.

What Your Customers Want

People, and especially customers, want to be treated well. A Forum Corporation study indicates that 69% of customers will stop doing business with a business or organization, not because of product quality or cost, but because they feel

they were poorly treated.

Generally, we feel like we're being treated well when there is a sense of equity in a relationship. Customers give you their time and money and expect something of equal value in return. When they don't get the value they're looking for, it causes them to withdraw from the relationship.

On the other hand, when there is inequity in a relationship in the customer's favor, it tends to increase loyalty. A local bakery gives everyone

Why do customers leave?

15%	Found better quality product
15%	Found a cheaper product
20%	Lack of contact or individual attention
49%	Dissatisfied with contact from company personnel

–Forum Corporation Study

Exceed Expectations

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who comes in the store a free slice of bread with butter. It is delicious and it is offered to you regardless of how much you purchase. As a customer, you feel like you win the lottery every time you go in the store, and you keep going back.

How can you give your customers a slice of buttered bread?

A customer's perception of value does not only come from the product or service you offer, but also in the way it is offered. According to a PDI study on what customers value, the top six service features that customers value are:

1. Attention
2. Respect
3. Speed
4. Quality
5. Innovation
6. Reliability

Regardless of your role or the service you provide, you should attempt to incorporate these six features in the service you deliver.

Customer Service at BYU

Customer Service in a university environment is unique. Students, faculty, and staff often have no choice but to use the services provided on campus. This is particularly true in the academic services. If you are not worried about losing your customers, why is customer service important?

Delivering good customer service will increase your job satisfaction and will increase others' perception of you as a competent, capable individual.

You will be fulfilling your job responsibilities, contributing to the mission of the university, and will be a good representative for BYU and the Church.

Create a Positive Environment

BYU has its own acronym to help remind people in service positions, and non-service positions, how they can create a positive environment for their customers. It is called I AM BYU.

Immediately acknowledge the customer.

- Smile and greet customers within ten seconds of their entering your area.
- If you can't immediately serve them, tell them you will be with them soon.

Anticipate their needs and have resources ready and user-friendly.

- Think like your customers: have the most needed items handy and user-friendly.
- Know ready answers to their Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Meeet and exceed their expectations.

- Go the extra mile. If you can't serve their needs, connect them with whoever can.
- Delight them by going beyond what they would expect you to do.

Be friendly. Smile and use their name.

- Be warm and friendly. Smile, make eye contact, and have positive body language.
- Try to use their name at least twice.

Find a way to say "Yes."

- Ask them what would make them happy.
- Give them options and things you can say "yes" to and let them choose.

Always say, "Thank U."

- Always say "thank you" and invite them to return. Reinforce their positive perception.

PDI
Creative

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Handling Difficult Customers

Occasionally, you will encounter a “difficult customer.” You may or may not have upset the person, but you are still the one who needs to manage the situation. Keep two things in mind. First, the customer is most likely upset with the situation, not with you personally. Second, put yourself in the customer’s shoes. Would you be upset if you were in the same position?

The following acronym LAST will help you through some challenging situations and hopefully help you turn a difficult customer into a loyal customer.

Listen	Sometimes upset customers just want to be understood. By actively listening to the customer’s concern you will not only gather information on how to help the person, but you may also diffuse the customer’s frustration.
Apologize	Apologize if your organization made a mistake. If you didn’t, find a way to recognize the customer’s frustrations by saying, “You must be upset” or “I can see how you would be frustrated.” Do not claim responsibility for the problem unless it really is your problem. And whatever you do, never say uncomplimentary things about your organization or argue with the customer.
Solve	Present options for making the situation right and let the customer choose the solution that best meets his or her needs. When the problem is solved, ask the customer if he or she is satisfied with the solution.
Thank	Thank the customer for their time, patience, understanding, or even for simply raising an important issue. Then, encourage the customer to come back.

Handling Problems and Complaints

No matter how well you run your operation, you will encounter customers with unique requests, problems, and complaints. The best way for handling these instances is by building a portfolio of customer service solutions that can be used by anyone on your team in whatever circumstance that arises.

Empower your people to use their judgment of the situation so they are able to promptly and effectively solve customer problems. For example, in a food service environment you may empower your people to give full refunds, gift certificates, rain checks, etc., in the event they need to remedy a customer service mishap.

See customer service problems as opportunities. Studies by Len Schlesinger of Harvard University show that if a problem is resolved successfully, the customer will be even more loyal than if the problem never occurred.

Things to Do

- Identify your customers and what they want from you.
- Create a positive customer service environment. Ask your customers what they like and what you can improve, then do it.
- Empower your people with the tools to solve problems and to manage difficult customers. Anticipate the problems your team might encounter, provide them with appropriate tools, then give them the freedom to make on-the-spot decisions to resolve problems or handle complaints.

Bottom Line

You, your customers, and your organization will benefit from an increased focus on providing exceptional customer service.