

Let's talk about customer service, and more specifically, knowing your customer. What does it really mean to the success of your business? Just about everything.

Ask yourself this basic question: What do you know about your customer? The answer to that question in today's technology-based world should be, everything that I can.



How Well Do You Know Your Customers?

*"If I want to know about my customer, I can simply type the customer's name on my computer and have access to everything and anything about the customer."
How many of you out there today can say this?*

CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software, a tool that can provide that information about your customer, has been around for many years. But the concept of CRM has actually been around for thousands of years.

Automated systems have only been commercially affordable for the last 20 years. But automation doesn't make a CRM system. It just powers it. What makes it work is process, system and discipline that you provide. No matter what you have heard, no matter what you think, computers do not, I repeat, do not, create CRM.

How many of you have the process, system and discipline? I don't care if you are using Excel, Word, Access or any other tool you like. The tool is irrelevant. The question is, do you have all the information you need about your customer, from the simplistic (name/address/phone) to the more complex (CEO's wife's name, number of children, favorite holiday/color, charity)?

Oh, is that important? Well, if someone knows that about you, how does that make you feel?

When was the last time you talked with the customer? What did you talk about? Were there any open-ended items, or any follow up on problems you discussed? If there was a problem, do you know what the resolution was? Do you know the reaction of the customer to the resolution and do you know what effect it will have on your future relationship?

On a more practical note, do you know how much money you made from this client last year, this year, and how does it compare to figures from last year to date? Can you see all this information very simply when the customer calls? Does anyone talking to the customer have immediate access to this information?

Also consider:

- *Are there open issues still? Problems?*
- *Are there people who are better and easier to deal with?*

- *Are there people there you should not be working with?*

This data is so easy to keep today with computers.

In days past when you would walk into the general store, the guy behind the counter would ask, "How are you today, Manny? How is Cheryl? What is your son Christopher up to? How are those two grandchildren, Andrew and Natalie?" He would know all that, plus, "How was the steak you bought last week? Do you still have enough eggs?"

Now, technology wasn't there. But let me tell you – what those guys did in those days is what you need to do today. The only difference is today it is so easy – you don't have to remember, because it's all there on your computer screen. Just enter it into the customer's electronic file. You can even access it on the road with your BlackBerry –that's how important it is to always know what is going on with your customers.

Yet most of us are not doing it. Why not? How many of you don't have CRM? I don't care if it 's electronic or not – are you collecting the data you need to serve and retain your customer?

If I am your customer – what do you know about me?

You are my customer – I know a lot about you, but there's still a lot more to learn, and it takes time and effort.

But the payback is great.

You need to be just like the general store guy. When you pick up the phone to talk with me, you should remember that the last time we talked, my brother was in the hospital. A simple "How is your brother doing?" would make a great impression on that customer.

We have been preaching this for years. The great sales guys and gals out there know a lot about you. They may not even be that strong on their knowledge of the product, but they know you --the customer. Personalized service is why you continually buy from them.

So let's get it together! As Dale Carnegie, the human relations expert, once said: "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

Substitute the word "customers" for "friends" and you'll have the essence of true customer service.

Additional Information Manny's Speaking Engagements

National Women in Computer Technology (NWCT)- Philadelphia,PA March 17,2007

RLF-MAC Re-Union Philadelphia, PA April 20,2007

Launch of New Website

www.TheEntrepreneurToolBox.com

*Finally a place where you can find all the information to better run your company, your career and your life.
The tools, processes and systems that will help you in 32 key areas of your business.
The site is just getting started, but already has great tools available.*

Check it out

Book Recommendations:

*How to Become a Marketing Superstar Unexpected Rules That Ring the Cash Register
by Jeffrey J. Fox.*

*Jeffrey is back again with what may be one of his most powerful books yet. This is a must read for sales and business leaders.
If you want to take your business to the next level, then here it is.*

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