

DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS TIPS

AUGUST, 2011

SELL YOURSELF AND INCREASE YOUR CLIENT BASE

By Linda Steiger | From allBusiness.com

In today's technological world, with iPhone apps and the Internet at a customer's fingertips, successful selling boils down to believing in your product and selling yourself first.

As a sales rep, you are your toughest customer. You know everything there is to know about your product or service. If you aren't excited about it, if you can live without it, if you wouldn't invest in it, why should your potential client?

As any veteran sales rep will tell you, sales is a challenging and rewarding business. It takes dedication, persistence, and the ability to accept a lot of refusals without losing your drive or optimism. What many reps don't know is that it takes an honest belief that their products or services are the best on the market; and the ability to prove it will make your potential customer's work or life easier, and more profitable in the long run.

How do you do that?

Whether you are selling a half-million-dollar machine-tooling system or a simple weekly household service that frees up your customer's overall time, following these key steps will increase your client base and your ability to close the deal every time:

- **Believe in your product or service:** A customer can tell when you are reciting a "set" sales pitch. But if you honestly believe in your offering, your sincerity will come across to your potential clients and pique their curiosity. **Be enthusiastic:** If you are not excited about what you are selling, your customer won't be either. Relax, smile, and have fun. Know what you offer will aid your customers in a crucial way and will make their life/work easier and more profitable in the long run.
- **Build relationships:** More sales are made with friendship than through simple salesmanship. Immediately make a connection with your customers. Do they have pictures or plaques on their desks or shelves? Anything you can identify with or have a familiarity with? Do they wear an association/alumni ring or insignia? Are they into sports? Do they have children? The sooner you can build a common ground, the quicker they will relax and listen to and consider your proposal.
- **Listen:** One of the most important steps in building a relationship with a po-

tential new client is to listen. Ask "past," "present," and "future" questions and stop to honestly listen to the answers. Here is where you learn how to customize your offering to meet their specific needs. How was their previous solution utilized in the past? How are they using it today? What is their ultimate goal?

- **Watch your body language:** Shifting in your chair, checking your watch, glancing out the window, or losing eye contact are all signs you are not listening and don't care what your customer is saying. They are also instrumental in losing the sale.
- **Focus:** Focus on what your customers are communicating. What are their needs? How can your product or service aid them? Each customer is different and has unique needs. Don't interrupt, ramble on with a set sales pitch, or ignore their responses.
- **Be honest:** Integrity and honesty are the stepping stones to loyalty and trust, which in turn are the steps to building a long-term repeat customer who will recommend you to others.
- **Use humor:** Smiles and laughter go a long way in building relationships and making friends. If you can get your customer to laugh, you can get him to buy.
- **Make repeat customers:** Above all else, focus on the value you bring to your customer rather than on your monthly quota. You are not only selling a product or service, you are building a new relationship, a long-term relationship that will last for years to come. After all, you believe in your product, you know it is the best on the market, and, now, so does your new customer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[First Friday Night Concert Series](#)

September 2
Remember When Band
6:30 PM,
Hancock Park
Every First Friday
May - October

[Dahlonega Farmers & Artists Market!](#)

Tuesday & Saturdays
May 7 - October 29,
7 am-3pm,
Hancock Park

[Appalachian Jam](#)

Every Saturday
April 23 - October 8,
2-5 PM,
Gold Museum Lawn

THE SECRET OF GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Now more than ever, businesses must do anything possible to attract and retain customers. As contributor to the DDA Newsletter, the [Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce](#) Programs & Communications Coordinator, Beth Ingram will provide a series of articles specifically related to this important topic.

How good is your customer service? Once you make the sale, are you as intense to keep the customer as you were to get the customer? Statistics show a disgruntled customer tells 20 times more people than a satisfied one. In his seminar, *The Spirit of Customer Service*, Ty Boyd provides a series of lessons, rules and examples about what to do and what NOT to do in the never-ending quest to serve (and preserve) the customer.

How do we lose customers? The Seven Deadly Sins of Service:

1. Putting money or profits ahead of service.
2. Complacency brought about by success (getting fat).
3. Organizational layering without creating teamwork (people blaming others or whining "It's not my job).
4. Lack of proper employee training, recognition, or retention.

5. Not listening – Anticipating the answer before hearing the situation.
6. Isolationism – Not paying attention to the customer or the competition.
7. Lip service, or worse, lying.

We have all been victims of every one of these sins at one time or another. Customer service is a complex issue critical to the ongoing success of any business. It's easy to go astray without guidelines and standards.

Ty Boyd's wisdom about customer service includes:

- Satisfactory customer service is no longer acceptable.
- Customer service begins at 100%.
- The customer's perception is reality.
- A mistake is a chance to improve the company.
- Problems can create beneficial rearrangements.
- Make the customer feel important.
- Learn and learn how to ask questions.
- The most important art – the art of listening.

Refining the skill of listening is a vital key in the customer service process. As salespeople, we are prone to talk way too much. Sometimes we lose sales and

customers because we fail to hear their true needs and desires. Maximize your listening skills and increase customer satisfaction with this list of the following rules:

1. Don't interrupt. ("But...but...but").
2. Ask questions, and then be quiet. Concentrate on really listening.
3. Prejudice will distort what you hear. Listen without prejudging.
4. Don't jump to answer before you hear the ENTIRE situation.
5. Listen for purpose, details, and conclusions.
6. Active listening involves interpreting.
7. Listen to what is not said. What is implied is often more important than what is spoken.
8. Think between sentences.
9. Digest what is said (and not said) before engaging your mouth.
10. Demonstrate you are listening by taking action.

Sounds simple? Well, it is! Just focus on it.

The Sales Bible. The Ultimate Sales Resource. Revised Edition / Jeffrey Gitomer. 2003. John Wiley & sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey. Pg. 228.

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"DAHLONEGA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MAIN STREET)"

Go Green and Make Some Green

GREENING MAIN STREET BUSINESSES

By [Kennedy Smith](#) | From *Main Street News* | April 2009 | 260

Many of the environmentally friendly improvements businesses can make in their operations are specific to the type of business. Grocery stores, for example, might switch to more energy-efficient refrigerators and freezers; laundries might use equipment that filters and reuses water rather than discarding it, and restaurants could buy local produce, instead of shipping it in from greater distances. But there are also a number of things that almost all businesses can do to operate in a more environmentally sustainable way. Here are 40 easy ideas:

- 1 Put storefront window display lights on timers to provide lighting until 10:00 pm or so instead of leaving lights on all night.
- 2 Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent or LED bulbs.
- 3 Reduce the amount of packaging used for customers' purchases.
- 4 Recycle the boxes and packing material in which merchandise is shipped to the store.
- 5 Offer a small discount to customers who bring and use their own bags.
- 6 Ask product manufacturers and wholesalers from whom you buy merchandise to reduce the amount of packaging they use for their products.
- 7 Offer in-store recycling for products you sell.
- 8 Offer in-store workshops on sustainability related to your business. For example, a clothing store might offer a workshop on making messenger bags out of discarded clothing.
- 9 Use a programmable thermostat.
- 10 Buy as much of your merchandise and as many supplies and services locally as possible.
- 11 Install LED exit signs.
- 12 Use occupancy sensors to activate light fixtures in storage rooms, bathrooms, and other rooms and spaces that are vacant for long periods of time.
- 13 Use motion sensors to activate interior and exterior security lights.
- 14 Recycle any byproducts your business produces.
- 15 Install high-efficiency toilets.
- 16 Develop a written environmental vision statement and make it available to your customers.
- 17 Develop a written sustainability policy and require your employees to become familiar with it.
- 18 Ask your suppliers and service providers to share their sustainability policies with you. If they don't have one, ask that they develop one.
- 19 Provide incentives to encourage employees to commute to work by public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking.
- 20 Provide a secure space where employees can store their bicycles during

the workday.

- 21 Provide showers and lockers for employees who bike, run, or walk to work.
- 22 Use recycled paper.
- 23 Offer deliveries on foot or by bicycle within the Main Street district.
- 24 If your community has a "Buy Local First" program, participate in it. If it doesn't have one, help start one.
- 25 Buy renewable energy through utility companies. If your utility company does not offer renewable energy, buy energy offset credits.
- 26 Use power strips with on-off switches and turn the entire power strip off when the items plugged into it aren't being used.
- 27 Use Energy Star-rated equipment.
- 28 Use non-toxic cleaning supplies.
- 29 Use double-sided copying to conserve paper.
- 30 Recycle toner and inkjet cartridges from computer printers, fax machines, and copy machines.
- 31 Donate unused, nonreturnable items to local nonprofit organizations rather than throwing them away.
- 32 If your business uses cars or trucks, switch to hybrid, electric, or other vehicles that minimize use of fossil fuels.
- 33 If your business has more than one location, use conference calls or web-based video calls to minimize the need to drive to meetings.
- 34 Use low-Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) paints, coatings, adhesives, and sealants.
- 35 When you have items printed, specify that your printer use low-VOC inks.
- 36 Sell products made from recycled and/or re-sourced materials.
- 37 Use electronic media – e-mail, phone calls, websites – instead of printed flyers or letters to reach your customers and promote your business.
- 38 Use your storefront window display to promote sustainability and sustainable uses of your business's products and services.
- 39 Help customers reduce the amount of time they spend driving by learning about products and services offered by other businesses in your commercial district. When a customer asks if you know where they can find an item your business doesn't offer, refer them to another store in the district.
- 40 Replace paper towels in employee restrooms with reusable cloth towels.

Kennedy Smith is a principal with the Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group and a former director of the National Trust Main Street Center. She can be reached at kennedy@cluegroup.com.

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“DAHLONEGA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MAIN STREET)”

WELCOME NEW STUDENTS!

NGCSU

BLOCK PARTY!

Thursday

August 25

6:00-7:30 PM

SHOPPING DINING ENTERTAINMENT

Estimated 500+ Students

Door Prizes

Goody Bags

Information Tables

Food Tastings

EVENT DETAILS: Beth Ingram, Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce, 706-864-3711, beth@dahlongega.org

The “Downtown Business Tips” newsletter is intended to provide merchants with monthly information about improving their business’s position in the market! Please send your comments & suggestions to Rebecca Shirley.

Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority
“A Georgia Main Street Community”

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Use our website www.dahlongegadda.org for business resources.

The Business Tips Newsletter is brought to you in partnership by the Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority & the Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce.

