

My Top 19 Customer Service Tips

by Future Executive Senior Sales Director Laura A. Schmidt - January 2003

1. Getting the products to the customers:
 - Have padded mailing envelopes ready at all times. The least expensive place to purchase these is on the Mary Kay Order Form - Section 2.
 - You can also get FREE Priority Mail boxes from the U.S. Post Office. They will give you a few, and then you can ask them for a form to order more. They are delivered to you FREE.
 - Save packing peanuts that you get in your product orders in gallon-sized ziplock bags. They're easy to toss in a closet for storage, and a manageable size. You can use these to pack the Priority Mail boxes.
 - Create mailing labels with your name and address, and put them on standard-sized 'security' envelopes. Put them in your product orders that you mail or drop off. It's a reminder for your customers to send a check.
 - Get the penny out of the eye to see the \$. Yes, mailing it costs money. But, your time is valuable! Consider that your time is worth at least \$50 per hour. One delivery that's not-too-far-away costs so much more than mailing an expensive package. Only deliver if there is a chance to sell more products (up-sell), or layer for booking or recruiting. If she's not going to be home, there is NO value in you being the one to drive there. Hire someone to do close deliveries, or mail it.
 - Use a spiral notebook to log the names of the people you mail products to, and the date they were mailed. That way, you'll be able to go back and verify what was mailed, if someone doesn't receive their order.
 - Have a 'drop box' in front of your house.
 - a. Your family deserves the privacy
 - b. Customers don't always have the 'chat' time that stopping by would take
 - c. You can't afford to be interrupted when you're on a booking or recruiting phone call.
2. Keeping up with the product part of the business:
 - After your first order or two, you should hire someone else to unpack your product orders from the company, put the reorder stickers on them, etc. (This can be a teenager...or a responsible pre-teen.)
 - Someone else can mail the products.
3. The formula for follow-up is 2+2+2. Follow up 2 days after the appointment, 2 week after the appointment, and 2 months after the appointment.

- a. 2 days after the appointment, call her to see how her skin care products are working.
 - b. 2 weeks later, she'll hopefully be having a follow-up skin care class or being a guest at your meeting.
 - c. 2 months later, she'll be running out of product.
4. Concerning booking/recruiting:
- Meet the customers where they are. Not everyone is going to book a class. Classes are still the best way to work full-circle, but don't get discouraged if not everyone books. Thinking about their personality type, offer them several choices in order of your preference (1. class with friends, 2. come to meeting as a model, 3. individual facial, 4. on-the-go, 5. send her samples in the mail, 6. send her a catalog, etc.). My rule...if they'll do the 'next step' concerning selling in the next week or so...I go for that. If they say they will do that (ex: hold a class) more than 2 weeks out, and if they're a prospect...I go straight for the interview. If they don't want to do any more product-related things...I go straight for the interview (if they're a qualified prospect).
 - Make it worth your hostess' time to have a class! (Think about all the free stuff you get when you order \$400/\$600 wholesale).
 - Decide your hostess 'options'.
 - a. Guaranteed Credit (If they get friends together, they'll get \$25 in FREE products for sure. If the class goes well, they'll get more.)
 - b. Company Hostess Credit (10% of class sales in FREE products, or 15%/1 booking, or 20%/2 bookings)
 - c. 75/25 (not for 1st booking from a class)
5. Offering Sales - my philosophy
- I offer a 'sale' about 2x per year. Since it's 'special'...they're not use to a discount...they really stock up. Yes, my profit for that 'sale' is not as high as it would have been if they paid full-price, but I'm selling more volume than I would have...so my overall income is higher than it would have been without the 'sale'. Also...they buy things they wouldn't have tried for full-price. So, they'll re-order those products in the future. Also...I consider it a 'gift' to them.
6. Preferred Customer Program - and the gift-with-purchase
- I could never keep up with 250 Preferred Customers (500 + total) without it.
 - Enhancements coming in the future too.

7. Calling your customers

- I don't call to say "what do you need". I call for the booking reasons. Customers will call you when they need something, if you're easy to reach.

8. Using technology to provide excellent customer service

- You must have voicemail (Callnotes, etc.). A busy signal is unacceptable. That's what happens when you only have an answering machine. Call-waiting is NOT the solution. It's rude to call a customer, and then put them on hold. I choose to have call-waiting caller-id, but if I don't answer it, it goes to Callnotes. That way, I'm not nervous to have a lengthy call with someone (like another director, a consultant, etc.) if I'm hoping a hot prospect will call...which is every day! I do NOT answer the call if I'm talking with anyone but a very close acquaintance who I have an understanding with...and only in an emergency. (This might apply to you if you only have one line, and your children might need you also.)
- Email - people are busy. They sometimes can only think of things like makeup at midnight. I love to order books online...I never have the time during the day. If I thought I had to talk to a live person every time I wanted to buy a new book, I wouldn't like that as well. Sometimes it's nice to be able to just order online. Also...if they think when they call you, they're going to have to leave a message with one of your children, and they can't leave a lot of detail...that might discourage them from going thru you. Also...if you're too chatty...they won't think they have the time to call you. They'll just get some Clinique at the mall.
- Having a MK Web Page - why wouldn't you?

9. Where to hold your appointments:

- Have a room or area in your home that is set-up to do facials/classes. It will motivate you to schedule them.
- When you're booking, lean towards what's easiest for you. If you'd rather do the appointments in your home...offer that first. If you'd rather do your appointments in their home or at your weekly meeting, offer those options first.

10. Get software to run your customer files. (ex: www.steinhoff.com offers 'The Consultant's Assistant' or call 1.800.500.2505)

- It stores the customer profile information
- You can print invoices
- When you create an invoice, it takes the product out of your inventory counts

- When it's time to do a product order, you just create an order in the program, and tell it to 'bring the inventory up to par'.
- You can enter your expenses in the program
- You can enter all the notes from your conversations with the person.
- You can schedule 'callbacks' for you to make...like a tickler file.
- You can create mailing labels for your customers/prospects for sales, guest events, etc.
- Look-up of what shades, etc. the customer uses is easy.
- You can tell who your best customers are, etc.

11. Getting really fancy

- Get a palm pilot...it's your friend away from home.
 - a. Syncs with the Consultant's Assistant (Check with the company that makes the software you have or you purchase if it's a different one to make sure it syncs with a Palm)
 - b. So...you have all the phone numbers, directions, product history, notes, etc.
 - c. You can even create invoices on the palm, and print them later, if necessary.
 - d. When you come home, you 'sync' it with the computer, so the data is updated in the computer.

12. Rule # 1 - The customer is always right.

- Rule #2 - If in doubt, give the customer the benefit of the doubt
- Rule #3 - Refer to rule #1

13. If someone has not paid you...how to handle it.

- Call or email and say "could you check your records, I may not be totally caught-up on my paperwork, but I don't show that I've received a payment from you for your (date) order. As I said, it could be my mistake, but could you check, and let me know? Thanks so much! (I have made mistakes on this before).

14. Keep credit card numbers on file. They buy more if they use a credit card. It's one less thing for them to remember to do. You get your money quicker than if it takes them a week to sit down to write their checks.

15. If you totally trust them, and they want to get something, but they don't have the money yet, tell them that it's ok if they pay you in a week (or whatever you're comfortable with). Sometimes it's a time management issue...it's easier to send 2 things now, than 1 now and 1 in a week.

16. Write "Thanks, (Name)," and then sign it (your name) in your handwriting with a smiley face on every invoice.

17. In your correspondence with them, email, notes, voicemail, etc. use the phrase "thanks so much for your business" a lot!
18. How we want our customers to feel when they think about us:
 - KEY...work to NOT make them feel uneasy. Life is uneasy...their dealings with us should not be. We want to have healthy, fun, empowering dealings with our customers.
19. The 'benefits' of investing in good customer service...
 - 50% profit is good money
 - You'll have customers for a lifetime
 - Court of Sales each year on reorders (which you can delegate a good part of...I don't delegate the 'talking' with the customers that want to talk...they're still potential recruits or sources of recruits)
 - As a director, your 13% check includes your own orders...which increases your income...and the bonus level you're at, because it's based on your total unit production, which includes your own.
 - Your customers see you as a professional because of the way you treat your business, and them. They'll refer others to you.
 - Your customers deserve 'Nordstrom' service.
 - You'll feel good about yourself! 😊