

How to Pi** Off Your Customers by John Tschohl

First let me clarify the value of quality service. I believe that great service retains the customers you already have, attracts more customers, and develops a reputation that encourages customers to do business with you in the future.

Are you guilty of the following customer service crimes?



1. **Telephone torture...** Too many firms worship at the alter of IVR ...Push 2 for English, 4 for Spanish, push 6 if you want etc and push 8 to go to HELL. For years I have been saying this is the most expensive piece of technology you will ever buy and you will never stop paying for it. I preach answering your telephone within 3 rings...sooner if possible with...a live person.

2. **Bad company software...** How many times have you placed a call and have been asked to repeat your name and account number to every single person they have transferred you to? Shouldn't you feed it into the system at the time and the next person that gets on the line says your name and asks what you can be helped with. Great companies do this, it's a no-brainer for great service.

3. **Passing the buck...** Studies show, that one of the things that frustrates customers most is being passed around. If you've ever had this done to you, you know how frustrating it is. Often, it's about *finding* the right answer to your customer's question. The best solution is to be honest and find the answer so that your customer doesn't have to. "I don't know, but I'll find out for you" is one of the most powerful phrases in customer service.

4. **Playing the blame game...** Most companies will at some point have to deal with complaints, negative feedback and more. Dealing with, or not dealing with, these issues can make or break a company's reputation. The **wrong** way is to do nothing. It's a great way to say "We really don't care about our customers". Engaging in placing blame only causes your customers to lose faith in your brand, damages your reputation and inevitably results in a decrease in sales. Be proactive, inform customers and take care of them on the spot.

5. **Weak team players...** Too often employees have no concept or understanding of their products and services. You can tell in a few seconds if the employee really knows what they are talking about. A long-term research project commissioned by Middlesex University for Work Based Learning found that from a 4,300 workers sample, 74% felt that they weren't achieving their full potential at work due to lack of development opportunities. Continuous training empowers employees, gives them confidence and keeps them up to date on new developments. This confidence pushes them to perform better and think of new ideas to excel.

6. **No speed zone**.... Today customers want everything now. Most employees have a slow mindset and most companies love rules and policies which slows everything down. Amazon and Apple both understand speed. Most customers prefer to shop at Amazon 24/7 with flawless execution of great service with every transaction for less money than most retailers. No lines and no looking for employees that are no where to be found.

7. **No service recovery**... This faux pas is always completely against the rules. In all organizations mistakes happen. Things go wrong. The last thing you want to tell your customer is you can't take care of their problem and simply apologize. An apology is not service recovery. Employees need to know they can bend the rules by making empowered decisions to save the customer. Every company has products or services that cost next to nothing and are of great value to compensate and lure customers back to you.

What's the secret? It's simple; be relentlessly focused on customer service. Great leaders know that awesome service is what the customer says it is so stay in touch with them and willingly spend the money to train your people regularly.

The best we can do is put ourselves in the customer's shoes: do things for a customer the way that the customer would do them for themselves. In other words...don't pi** them off!

"Be vigilant about creating over-happy customers." John Tschohl



John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service in the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.