

# CRM: It pays to go the extra mile



By [John Boe](#)

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The most successful companies and the highest paid salespeople place great value on developing lifetime relationships with their customers and actively look for opportunities to render service above and beyond their customers' expectations.

In today's competitive marketplace, your customers are prospected aggressively and their loyalty cannot be taken for granted. Customer-focused companies and individuals recognise that relationship building and follow-on service are critical components for promoting both customer retention and long-term revenue growth.

When it comes to rendering superior customer service, a "one size fits all" approach simply doesn't cut it. Research in the field of human psychology indicates people are born into one of four primary temperament styles; aggressive, expressive, passive, or analytical. Each of these four temperament styles tends to define "superior customer service" from a slightly different point of view.

Once you learn how to identify each of the four primary temperament styles, you'll be able to truly customise your service to fit your customers' expectations. For example, if you're providing customer service to the impatient, aggressive style, they expect a quick fix and a bottom line solution. While at the other extreme, the analytical style requires a great deal of information and is interested in every detail.

## Learn to 'listen with your eyes'

In addition to understanding temperament styles, you must recognise the importance of non-verbal communication and learn to "listen with your eyes." It might surprise you to know that research indicates 70% of our face-to-face interactions with other people are perceived non-verbally. In fact, studies show that body language not only has a much greater communication impact, but it's also far more reliable than the spoken word. If your customer's words are inconsistent with his or her body language gestures, you would be wise to go with the body language gestures as a more accurate level of feedback.

What type of first impression do you make when meeting your customers for the first time? Research shows that people typically decide in the first few moments whether they like and trust a stranger or not. Yes, we also judge a book by its cover too. There's absolutely no substitute for making a positive first impression. You can actually create a favourable first impression and build rapport quickly by using open body language gestures, smiling, and making direct eye contact.

## Showing them you're paying attention

Superior customer service has much more to do with your ability to listen actively than it does with your gift for gab. To uncover your customer's hidden expectations and encourage conversation, use open-ended questions to probe the meaning behind his or her statements. Open-ended questions require more than a simple yes or no response. It's also a good idea to repeat your customer's words back to them verbatim occasionally so they know you are paying attention. By restating your customer's key words or phrases you not only clarify communication, but you also build rapport. Keep your attention focused on what your customer is saying and avoid the temptation to interrupt, argue, or dominate the conversation. Interrupting your customer when he or she is talking will destroy any rapport you may have established up to that point. If you do happen to slip up and interrupt your customer, apologise quickly to limit the damage.

Rendering quality customer service is both a responsibility and an opportunity. Often salespeople view customer service as an administrative burden that takes them away from making a sale. The truth is that rendering customer service provides a golden opportunity for cross-selling, up-selling, and generating quality referrals.

Customers describe quality customer service in terms of attention to detail and responsiveness. Customer satisfaction surveys consistently point to the fact that the little things make a big difference. Not surprisingly, the top two customer complaints with regards to customer service are unreturned phone calls and a failure to keep promises and commitments. Make an effort to see yourself through your customers' eyes.

## **Five powerful customer service tips to help you go the extra mile**

- 1. Pay attention to the small things:* Get in the habit of returning phone calls, e-mails and other correspondence quickly. Follow up, follow up, and follow-up.
- 2. Stay in contact and keep good records:* Take the time to jot down notes from meetings and phone calls making certain to record all relevant information. Maintain a written record of service. This is especially helpful when clients are reassigned to new agents. Setup a suspense system to track important contact dates such as client review calls and birthdays. Consider sending a personal note or an article of interest every six months.
- 3. Give your customers a promotional gift:* Consider sending them a letter opener, coffee mug, or a mouse pad with your contact information.
- 4. Establish a feedback system to monitor how your customers perceive the quality and quantity of the service you provide:* Service is not defined by what you think it is, but rather how your customers perceive its value. When it comes to customer service, perception is reality.
- 5. Under-promise and over-deliver:* Develop a reputation for reliability; never make a promise that you can't keep. Your word is your bond.

Progressive companies emphasise commitment to customer service excellence from the CEO down to the newest employee in the mailroom. Salespeople who fail to promote superior customer service actually do a disservice to their customers and unknowingly, leave the backdoor open to their competitors. If you do it right, sales and service blend seamlessly and you'll exceed your customers' expectations.

Successful salespeople develop the habit of always "going the Extra Mile" when providing service. The key to building your sales career is in direct proportion to the quality and quantity of service you render on a daily basis. Want to close more sales and get tons of quality referrals? Start today to improve your customer service by developing the habit of always going the Extra Mile!

*"There are no traffic jams along the Extra Mile!" - Roger Staubach.*

ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognised sales trainer and business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to [www.johnboe.com](http://www.johnboe.com). Free newsletter available on website.

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