

Key ingredient for franchising success - customer relations

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Franchising is becoming a bigger and better business option for many entrepreneurs as starting a franchise has fewer risks than starting up a business from scratch. However, this has also meant that there are more and more franchises out there offering the exact same product. Now, more than ever, a franchise needs to stand out from its competitors to attract the attention of customers. Improving customer relations is key to getting ahead.



Importance of customer relationships

Each customer that experiences a lack of service or even just an uninviting experience will take their business elsewhere, whereas satisfied customers have a direct impact on your bottom line, they will be back, they will tell their friends and family and they will form part of your cash flow. It is really simple - no person will support a business which offers a substandard customer experience and poor levels of service.

Customer relations - get it right and right from the beginning because if you do, customers will come flocking through your door; get it wrong, and see your customers run out the front door.

Communication, communication, communication!

Communication is the basis of all relationships, be it at home or at work. This is an essential tool and it needs to be constantly used to promote co-operation and harmony, to help people feel needed and appreciated, to inform or persuade, to motivate and increase morale and to maintain good public relations.

1. **Employ the right people.** We all know how off-putting it is to have to deal with a waitress who has a bad attitude or a manager who does not care. All of your employees are your brand ambassadors - from your cleaners to your higher management. When looking for new employees, take your time to source the right people for the job, find someone who is passionate, energetic, and courteous and someone who has a strong work ethic. You then need to ensure that you equip them with the right knowledge and tools to positively influence others.
2. **Train your brain!** When meeting a customer, always get their name and REMEMBER it. Nothing makes someone feel more important than having their name remembered. Each and every time you see or meet a customer, personalise it - they will appreciate the touch.
3. **Always be extra nice and extra caring,** feel compassion when communicating with customers, reflect their positive moods and deflect their negative moods - show that you are interested.
4. **Recognise communication barriers** - is there a language barrier? Is your customer misinterpreting your message? Are feelings getting in the way of effective communication? Is it too noisy to effectively listen?
5. **Who? What? When? Where? Why?** Always use your "Five W's" when communicating with a customer.

6. **Appreciate, accept and use all feedback** received as any tips, hints and advise can be useful to the future growth of your business.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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