

Customer Service

As a merchandiser, you are responsible for interacting with clients and providing reliable, high quality execution merchandising. Did you know that:

- 10 - The number of customers companies lose for every one that complains of poor service.
- 7 - It costs seven times more to get a new client than to keep an existing one.
- 13% - Of people will tell more than 20 people about their bad experience.
- 90% - Of Unhappy clients will not do business with a company again.
- 95% - Of customers WILL return if an issue is resolved quickly and efficiently.

Who is your "client" or "customer"?

Your client/customer can be any or all of the following:

- The merchandising company that hired you or asked you to contract with them
- The retail store that you are performing the work in
- The manufacturer or third-party who is paying to have you do the work
- The customer in the store who will be buying the product
- Your fellow merchandisers who are part of your "team"

While all the "clients" listed above are equally important and each have different expectations of you, they all share the same purpose. That purpose is to provide your clients/customers the most memorable service experience and in the process achieve a significant and powerful differentiation from your competitors!

Merchandisers are encouraged to go the extra mile and build strong relationships with valued business partners and to understand the client's business and competitors. Nothing ensures loyalty like great service.

To the best merchandisers, clients are important people; you care about them and want to meet and exceed their expectations. Below is a list of what ALL merchandising companies expect when dealing with the client:

Ethical Behavior/Work Quality:

- Clients trust merchandisers with their promotional products (coupons, rebates, tools, etc.) and you, as a merchandiser, cannot abuse this trust.
- Always remember that your actions reflect on client and store images. Within the stores, and in all your contact with store personnel, you must conduct yourself in an exemplary way. This includes appropriate and professional dress, language and treatment of people, including team members, customers and store employees.
- Always perform the work fully and accurately and report your work in a timely manner.
- Work your scheduled hours; show up on time, take scheduled breaks and finish up in the allotted time.

Remember, you have chosen a career in the Service Business. The only product you have is what you can do for your customers.

Merchandisers who go the "extra mile":

- Pay attention to the small details that are important to their customers (internal and external) like "accurately completing assigned paperwork" and "reporting information on time".
- Are trained to do things that are important (trained on the fine points of handling customer problems)
- Are encouraged to go above and beyond on customer service

Service Recovery:

What happens when you don't meet the needs of the client? It is not enough to "just apologize" for failing to meet the clients expectations of your work.

Service Recovery is defined as the ability to make things right when foul-ups occur.

Service Recovery deals with the handling of customer dissatisfaction, customer complaints and any customer problems or difficulties with your service. It's when a merchandiser actually turns disappointment into satisfaction — sometimes even into customer delight!

Assume a client/customer is fully satisfied with your merchandising work. Everything looked great and you met their expectation. How many people will hear about your great work? Depending on the circumstance, your client may tell 2-3 people and you might get some additional work orders for your employer.

Now, what happens when a client/customer has a negative experience with your work and ALL negative experiences are memorable! You didn't follow the plans; you were rude; the re-orders weren't placed. How many people will he/she tell now? Satisfied customers tell 2-3 people; dissatisfied customers tell 20 others!

When it comes to Service Recovery, there are three rules to keep in mind:

- Do it right the first time
- Fix it properly if it ever fails and
- Remember, there is no third choice

Remember, your customers can't return "bad service". It is up to you, as a professional merchandiser, to delight your customers above and beyond their expectations.

Service needs to be consistent... good quality service today and everyday.