

Ernst Enterprises Newsletter



Ten Commandments of Customer Service

Paying attention to the basics can pay big dividends.

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A colleague recently sent me the "Ten Commandments of Customer Service". When I read them I decided to include them in my newsletter; we can always use a reminder of the basics.

Breaking a commandment has serious consequences

There is nothing new in this list, but it reminds us how inadvertent action, forgetfulness, or poor attention to details can communicate that you don't care, or worse yet, that you are lying to the customer.

As you read this I urge you to think about these commandments in two ways: first, from the perspective of a provider of products and services and how you feel and react when a customer says you broke a commandment; and second, from the perspective of being a customer or client and how you feel when one of these commandments is broken.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Don't expect your customers to tolerate customer service mistakes.
2. Always do what you say you will do when you say you will do it.
3. Never, ever make a promise that you are not sure you can keep because promise-breaking is the same as lying.
4. Never try to remember your promises; put them on a task list.

5. Remember that unacknowledged communication is the most profound form of disrespect.
6. Respond to every inbound phone call or email in half the time your customers expect it.
7. Review your task list before the end of the day to make sure you have not broken any promises.
8. If it appears that you won't be able to keep a promise, always renegotiate before the deadline.
9. Use auto-responders, voice mail greetings or some other means, if necessary to communicate your absence so you don't appear non-responsive.
10. Communication technology problems are never acceptable excuses for breaking promises so make sure your technology is working.

The challenge is to consistently deliver customer service. Note the themes: keep commitments, don't promise more than you can deliver, quickly apologize for mistakes, don't depend on your memory--- write it down, respond to all requests, and don't ever make excuses for not communicating.

THE ERNST 4 COMMANDMENTS OF ENSURING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. Test your service. Conduct regular surveys of your customers to ask about your service; personally call your customers or a reasonable sampling of customers and ask about customer service.
2. Don't wait for a complaint. Be proactive in checking on the quality or consistency of your service.
3. Assess your company's responsiveness.
4. Re-think your approach to providing exceptional customer service in this new economy.

Call 847/438-8977 to schedule a confidential assessment of your customer service practices. To learn more about all of our business adviser services, click on [Ernst Enterprises](#) to go directly to our website.

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We bring experience and innovative thinking necessary to help you grow your company in these tough economic times. Call today to schedule your appointment for a Dash Board review. This tool gives you an objective review of your business and identifies opportunities that often hide in plain view because you have been so busy working "in" your business you have not been working "on" our business.

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Sincerely,

Mark

Mark Ernst
Ernst Enterprises, LLC

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