



The Business Lab, Inc.
 12402 Mile Drive
 Houston TX 77065-1508
 phone (281) 517-0998
 fax (281) 517-0789
www.thebusinesslab.com

For Your Customers, What is "Best" Service?

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

"Best" service, especially in the sales/service industry, can be deceiving because the needs and expectations of your customers are changing and evolving rapidly. In addition, your customers are comparing your company to both your competition and to "best" service with every company, product or service they experience. By reading this article, you will learn the steps for developing a system so your customers can tell you exactly what "best" service means to them!

Developing customer surveys: Start by gathering your team and discuss the current level of customer service being given. Also, ask for any feedback or suggestions they have heard or received from their customers. Next, prepare a customer survey that might include some of the following questions: Tell us about the best service you have ever received while working with any sales/service company. Tell us about the best service you have ever received from any individual and why was this the best. Tell us how we can improve your experience with our sales/service company. Lastly, ask your team for suggestions on how these surveys might best be presented to their customers. Many of our sales/service clients ask their team to give a survey to each customer after they have assisted them, while some give out monthly prizes to the first 25 survey responses that are returned or mailed back.

Tip from The Business Lab: Do you want to experience "best" service? Take a few hours and visit a high-end retail location like Nordstrom, a Ritz-Carlton hotel or Tiffany's. When visiting these world-class locations, observe how they greet you, the words they select when assisting you, the types and variety of products or services they provide, the colors and fabrics they use and the quality of their brochures and printed materials. As a side note, any employee of a Ritz-Carlton can fix a customer service problem instantly, for up to \$2,000!

Implementing customer surveys: Once you and your team have received the responses to these customer surveys you can now set your service standards at or above the level of your customer's expectations. As a next step, summarize the results from these customer surveys and look for any repeated suggestions or recommendations. Then design an action-plan with your team based on the suggestions they are going to implement over the next 30-60 days. Lastly, have your team share with their customers a written summary of exactly what they will be doing as a result of these customer surveys. Remember,

surveys are a great way to get feedback, but your customers will want to know what your team is going to do with their responses.

Tip from The Business Lab: Once this first customer survey has been completed, ask your team to schedule additional surveys every 90 to 120 days for the next 36 months. These future surveys will allow you and your team to stay current with the ever-changing needs and requests of your customers. In addition, by having your team ask for this ongoing feedback, their customers will know that your company will continue to evolve as a reflection of their expectations.

Learning from your customers: An additional benefit to implementing surveys will be the great new ideas or services you and your team will learn from your customers' feedback. Many of the responses to these surveys will include requests to receive something faster, something easier to use, something easier to read/understand or something that is causing a problem or frustration. Take each of these requests and look for ways to easily and inexpensively implement all of them. In addition, review these survey ideas and see if your company can earn new income from any of these suggestions. A great example of this concept is the way many of our clients are using their Internet websites to enhance customer relationships and to generate new income, 24 hours a day.

Tip from The Business Lab: Remember, make it easy to listen and learn from your customers because their suggestions and recommendations will uncover great new ideas and a variety of ways to set your sales/service company well ahead of the rest. Are you ready to raise service to world-class levels?

More Information? If you would like to learn more about this important topic, please send an e-Mail to ideas@thebusinesslab.com or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-517-0789.

Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by e-Mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com