

Customer Service Is Marketing

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No matter the size of your organization and whether it is regional or international, customer service has been – and will always be – the essential ingredient in successful marketing. How your customers are treated via phone or in person can make the difference between a purchase and a bad experience that is shared with others, resulting in lost sales.

There are just too many choices for products and services, and with the advent of the Internet, now we can purchase almost anything online and bypass human beings overall. Many businesses spend so much time developing a product, and so much money in marketing and sales, they often overlook one of the easiest attributes to earn a customer's business: customer service.

So how good is your customer service and how can you improve it? Invest some time and effort into a "secret shopper." Contact people that you might know from networking and provide them with a checklist of what they should look for when purchasing from your organization. Some of these items might include whether the phone was answered in a timely manner and if questions were handled in a professional, courteous and/or friendly manner. Were returns or problems solved to the "customer's" satisfaction? Was the shopping environment clean and inviting?

Make sure that whomever you deem as your secret shopper is willing to be honest about the results. More importantly, ensure you are ready to hear the results and be ready to make changes if necessary.