

E-Service is SERVICE!

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When considering the importance of service to the success of your business, it is important to look at all areas that are service driven. One to consider seriously is your website. Your Business web site is a powerful marketing, sales and service opportunity.

What consumers want online and offline really isn't that different. They want the basics: good customer service, product information, and accurate pricing information. Whether your customers are buying online at your website or going to your site for information, e-service is service. You must think like your customer coming into your site, know their expectations. If you are doing ecommerce online, it is critical that the same service and sales standards in face to face relationships with customers happen online as well. Make check out fast and painless. Provide fast, efficient fulfillment and offer simple return options. You can make customers happy at your web sites by providing accurate product, warranty, and pricing information; convenient and secure ordering; order tracking; reliable delivery; and **accessible** customer service.

Make sure you have assigned specific employees the responsibility of supporting the web site requests from your customers. It must be assigned as someone's responsibility. Not just a "whoever checks email from the website today" scenario. Make sure your employees have at their disposal the systems and tools to meet online customer requests and needs. E-Service should be easy on and for your employees providing your website service. It should not be an added burden.

Make human contact easy, ample and varied – customers expect a variety of ways to access human help. IE: phone numbers, fax numbers, email message, contact names and their role with the company, and extensions of employees.

Identify "moments of truth"- A "moment of truth" occurs anytime a customer comes in contact with any part of your organization, and uses that contact to judge the quality of the organization. A moment of truth on your website are the "touch points" with in your site that your customers access and make contact with you. Make it easy for the customers to do business with you – Walk through your website with the eyes of a customer. Evaluate the ease of navigation of your website, using your customers' eyes and expectations. Check to make sure your customers don't have to WORK at finding the information they need through too many links and pages.

Work with your partners in business, in this case your designers of your site, to deliver consistent service and quality. A Website is not any good to you or the customer if it can't be accessed or updated with current information easily. Remember if your customer finds the site difficult to navigate and hard to find what they need, it is very easy to leave you with a click of the mouse!

Make your website useful – provide all the information your customers need to know and learn about you. Make everything obvious. Avoid unacceptable download speeds – time is everything online – and in this instance it must be quick. Provide an easy source for customer contact with you, and then be sure to follow through.

Provide timely email responsiveness. It doesn't do any good for a customer to leave an email request, if you are slow in responding. Win your customer's trust through ease of contact, speed, accuracy, Frequently Asked Questions, and personalized email response.

Remember this, good service from your website will deliver you the same result that good face to face service provides through word of mouth – your customers will refer you to their peers. The only difference is it will be by Word of MOUSE!



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