

SMILE

SMILE



SELL MORE

with

Amazing Customer Service

KIRT MANECKE



Made in the U.S.A.

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Summary: A quick, easy-to-read customer service and sales guidebook to help employers and employees delight customers and dramatically increase sales.

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**A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book
are donated to animal welfare.**

*To my uncle Gene, who taught me
how to sell — and how to live.*



*And to my parents, John and Betsy,
who have always been there for me.*

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INTRODUCTION

When we give, we receive — when a business does something good for somebody, that somebody feels good about them.

BEN COHEN, BEN & JERRY'S ICE CREAM

The Delightful Deli

This book is based on the simple premise that **good service is good business** — that if you treat your customers right, you'll be rewarded in return. Doing what customers love is a proven, guaranteed way to increase customer loyalty and sell more, without gimmicks or expensive marketing.

When I think about amazing customer service — the kind that dazzles people and makes them want to tell their friends — I think of Zingerman's Deli in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Zingerman's is an Ann Arbor institution beloved by locals and out-of-towners alike. The deli welcomes over 500,000 visitors a year and boasts sales of more than \$12 million annually, due in no small part to a culture of exceptional customer service.

On a recent visit to Zingerman's I felt like I'd landed in a food lover's version of Disney World. My friend and I were greeted by an employee the second we walked in the door.

His “Hello!” was warm and enthusiastic, he made great eye contact, and his smile was genuine.

In the 20 minutes we spent exploring the deli before sitting down to eat our sandwiches, we interacted with at least five different employees — all of them smiling, welcoming, seeming to anticipate our every desire. They asked us where we were from, answered questions, recommended their favorite foods, and offered samples of anything in the store. We found ourselves smiling as we walked out the door.

Zingerman’s always seems to be full of paying customers — even at 3 p.m. on a weekday — and it’s no wonder. Great customer service makes customers smile. Smiling customers spend more money, become profitable repeat customers, and tell their friends. It really is a guaranteed recipe for success.

With the advent of social media, the marketing power of satisfied customers has only increased. Sixty-two percent of consumers have used social media for customer service issues, and these consumers will typically tell over 40 potential customers about exceptional customer service. This is amazing news for anyone reading this book!

But beware — dissatisfied customers pack even more power. Consumers who use social media for customer service issues will typically tell over 50 potential customers about poor service. And overall, one in four consumers will post a negative comment on a social media site following a poor customer service experience.

When you factor in the ripple effect of social media, one negative testimonial can easily reach hundreds, if not thousands, of potential customers. No business or salesperson

can afford this type of negative advertising, but many are getting it without even knowing.

A Kid and His Punching Bag

On the flip side, an unhappy customer can be an opportunity in disguise. When I was 10 years old, I had a punching bag that leaked. I decided to send it back and wrote a letter to Everlast explaining my problem. I really didn't expect to hear anything back, but two weeks later a package arrived. To my surprise and delight, it contained a nice letter from Everlast — and a brand new punching bag.

The story might have ended there, but the new bag also leaked. I sent it back again, this time really expecting the cold shoulder. To my shock and amazement, Everlast sent me *another* nice letter along with *another* replacement punching bag — this time, their top of the line model. This bag did not leak, and I went on to use it happily for many years.

Needless to say, I was thrilled by my experience with Everlast (picture me as a boy smiling from ear to ear), and I've been a satisfied customer ever since. I am *still* telling my punching bag story, even after all these years. Everlast not only won me back with their amazing customer service, they created a customer, and an ambassador, for life.

It doesn't surprise me that, after more than 100 years in business, Everlast continues to be a brand leader. They truly know how to create satisfied customers and increase sales in the process. On average, a satisfied (but formerly frustrated) customer will tell five people about the great job a company did resolving their issue (not to mention people like me who tell far more). That's 25 positive reviews for

every five complaints handled well. And this positive advertising is absolutely free.

Resolving complaints effectively is just one way to make your customers smile and create positive word of mouth marketing. In this book, you'll learn dozens more. As you use the simple yet powerful customer service and sales techniques presented here, you'll watch as your customers — or clients, patients, or donors — become loyal fans and ambassadors.

Why This Book?

Too often customer satisfaction is ignored or taken for granted. While 80% of companies *think* they're providing superior service, customers say only 8% are hitting the mark. Nine in ten Americans say that businesses "fail to exceed" their expectations. Poor customer service costs U.S. businesses an estimated \$83 billion a year.

There are plenty of sales and customer service books out there, and many of them are very good. The advantage this book has over others is that it's a quick and easy read. This means: 1) you'll actually read it, and 2) you can start today. You can read this book cover to cover in 60 minutes or less — or work chapter by chapter picking up a new technique in just minutes a day.

Early in my career, I established, owned, and ran a highly successful award-winning specialty store. Fundamental to its success was a six-week employee training program that I created to guarantee outstanding customer service, ensure repeat business and positive word of mouth marketing, and maximize sales.

The results were nothing short of amazing. Employees gained the confidence to interact with and satisfy customers, shoppers became buyers and ambassadors, and the store saw record sales.

In *Smile*, I've collected together powerful tips and techniques from this training program and from over 30 years of successful selling. These techniques will help you create an army of fans and ambassadors — customers who will stick by you, become customers for life, and spread the word about your business to others through testimonials and referrals.

IF YOU'RE AN EMPLOYER, THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU:

- Increase sales, donations, repeat business, and positive buzz — starting today!
- Achieve record service numbers and profits
- Save money on expensive training
- Train and orient new employees
- Refresh and upgrade skills for seasoned staff
- Improve employee confidence, morale, and productivity

IF YOU'RE AN EMPLOYEE, THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU:

- Build the service and sales skills you need to succeed in your job
- Energize and advance your career
- Become comfortable and confident with sales or fundraising
- Build life-long customer relationships
- Enjoy your work more than you ever imagined

Whether you're an employer or an employee, this simple, practical guide will help you make immediate, dramatic improvements to your customer service and sales — improvements that will help you increase customer satisfaction and sell more.

Who Should Read This Book

If you work with people on a regular basis — in person, on the phone, online, or via written correspondence, this book is for you. If you work in sales or fundraising, if you own or run a business or nonprofit or work for a government agency, if you regularly or periodically communicate with clients or customers, if you provide any type of service, dispense information, or resolve complaints — in all of these cases and more, this book is for you.

THIS BOOK IS PERFECT FOR:

- Sales, customer service, and other professionals looking to succeed and advance their careers
- Employers and managers seeking a powerful, cost-effective training resource to improve customer service and increase sales
- Young people entering the job market for the first time
- People switching jobs
- Nonprofit staff and volunteers
- Anyone who works with the public

Whatever your enterprise, you'll learn how easy it is to dazzle your customers and keep them coming back and talking positively about you and your business.

This book also includes sales tips to help you if you are one of the many employees who are uncomfortable with or afraid of selling (or fundraising) or who simply don't have a lot of experience or training in sales. The tips and techniques presented here will help you listen, ask the right questions, and sell products like a professional. If you're shy at sales, this book will give you the confidence you need to succeed.

Even seasoned salespeople will find tips and tricks in this book that will make them more effective and successful. Who is this book for? The answer is simple: this book is for you!

Smile is, quite simply, the fastest, easiest, most cost-effective investment you can make to surprise and delight your customers and create a profitable business or career. Now get out there and smile!

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

The Top Ten

This book begins with the “Top Ten” of customer service and sales techniques. If you take away nothing else from this book, these 10 powerful techniques will help you transform your relationship with customers and increase sales. You’ll learn how easy it is to surprise and delight your customers, make them smile from ear to ear, and keep them coming back.

More Amazing Service and Sales Techniques

The remainder of the book builds on the Top Ten, offering additional tips to help you give great service (Keep Them Smiling), increase sales (Sell More), handle difficult sales situations (When There’s a Problem), and build customer loyalty (Create a Customer for Life). If you take the tips and techniques in these chapters to heart, your sales and customer service success will skyrocket. Trust me — it really works!

How to Use This Book

This book is the result of over 30 years of sales and customer service experience. If the ideas are new to you, you may want to take some time to digest and practice each chapter before moving on to the next. If you already have a strong background in customer service or sales, you can use this book as a refresher course or reference tool. You can read

straight through or consult the Table of Contents to find the tips you most need to work on.

If you're using this book to train new employees or current staff, choose one or two concepts to highlight and practice each day or each week. If your staff is more seasoned, you may want to have them review the book as a whole before zeroing in on the concepts you most need to work on given your industry or service sector and your own unique challenges.

Make It Stick

It's astonishing how quickly we forget things. Whether you're an employer or an employee, take a few minutes each month to review this book so the best practices presented here become habit. This will keep you sharp — and keep your customers delighted!

1

THE TOP TEN

HOW TO MAKE
YOUR CUSTOMERS
SMILE (AND BUY!)



1

SMILE

When a customer enters your business or office, greet them promptly and politely — just as you would greet a guest in your home.

Here's How

1. **Smile.** Make it a warm, genuine, heartfelt smile.
2. **Look your customer in the eye and say “Hello!”**
Speak in a warm, upbeat, and friendly manner.

This may sound basic, but you'd be surprised how many businesses fail to greet their customers properly.

According to Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Blink*, **first impressions occur instantaneously or within two seconds.** A simple smile and friendly “Hello” are extremely powerful

and can mean the difference between a customer spending their money with you (and possibly becoming a customer for life) and walking out the door to spend it with your competition.

Indifference is one of the biggest reasons people don't return to a business.

The Smile Study

In *The New York Times* bestseller *Buyology*, Martin Lindstrom discusses “The Smile Study.” Its bottom line? A smile from a salesperson leads to more sales.

Is your business smiling? A positive first impression sets the tone and dynamics for all future interactions and transactions. It can make all the difference in the world in increasing sales and transforming customer service!

A man without a smiling face must not open a shop.

FAMOUS CHINESE PROVERB

2

MAKE A FRIEND

People buy from people they like and trust — from friends — so it's important to remember the golden rule: **Treat people the way you'd like to be treated.** Be nice, be polite, and don't be afraid to approach a customer to initiate an exchange. Make a friend!

Here's How

1. Greet your customer properly (with a genuine smile and a warm “Hello!”).
2. Engage them in an initial short and friendly conversation. Find out how they're doing: **“It's nice to see you. How's your day going?”** When appropriate, give a genuine compliment: **“I really like your sweater.”**
3. *Then* find out how you can help them: **“What exactly brings you in today?”** or **“How can I help you?”**

Shoppers who interact more with employees spend more money.

REMEMBER As you build friendly relationships with your customers, you differentiate yourself and your company from your competition — and you're well on your way to creating a customer for life!

A stranger is just a friend I haven't met yet.

WILL ROGERS

3

ANSWER THE PHONE WITH A SMILE

When you answer the phone at your place of business, you're the first point of contact with your prospects and customers. It's critical that you make a great first impression.

How do you find the right tone? It's simple — **smile as you answer the phone.**

You may not realize it, but a smile totally changes the tone of your voice and “shines through” the phone line. Try it and you'll see — your happy, smiling voice will delight your customers and create a positive impression of you and your business!

Here's How

1. Smile and say: **“Good morning (or afternoon or evening)!”** Be sure to speak clearly.
2. State the complete name of your business, or say: **“Welcome to _____ [your complete business name].”**
3. Say: **“This is _____ [your name]. How may I help you?”**

Be upbeat, warm, inviting, and genuine — greet customers just as you would greet a guest in your home.

When your initial encounter with a customer is over the phone, 70% of how you're perceived is based solely on the tone of your voice.