



The Customer Communicator Web Extra



Build better relationships

Creating connections or building relationships with customers will put them at ease, encourage a smooth, conflict-free interaction, and leave a positive and lasting impression.

In addition to the three relationship-building techniques in the February issue of *Customer Communicator*, Dr Paul R. Timm, a customer service trainer and consultant recommends adding a little **LIFE** to your interactions with customers.

Here's how it works:

L is for the little things

The first step in building relationships with customers is focusing on the little things — saying "Please" and "Thank you," listening attentively, and injecting some of your personality into your customer interactions. "The devil is in the details," says Timm, "and it really is the truth."

I is for insight

"And the insight that I teach people to look for are the things that are potentially turning customers off, and these include value turnoffs, system turnoffs, and people turnoffs," says Timm. Value and systems turnoffs are essentially

management issues, but people turnoffs are primarily related to individual customer interactions and personality, and are things that the rep can control.

F is for feedback

"You have to get feedback on how you're doing to be able to get an accurate understanding of what you are doing that might be turning customers off," Timm says.

Surveys and monitoring can be helpful from the manager's point of view, but reps should also be looking for individual feedback from managers, coworkers, and customers about how they are doing.

E is for expectations

Customer service reps have to ask themselves, "What can I do to improve my interactions with customers in a way that will exceed expectations?"

