

SafeLite puts guiding service principles in place

SafeLite customer service reps can be empowered to make a lot of decisions on their own because they work from a set of basic principles that the company put together based on its research into customer service best practices.

SafeLite AutoGlass knows from its customer research that its service is used infrequently — once every seven years or so. “So a lot of people don’t even know that this category exists,” says Rich Harrison, COO and EVP for SafeLite AutoGlass. “And we know that when somebody does have a broken windshield or broken door glass, they will ask friends and family members about where to go. Our goal is to make sure that whoever has used SafeLite will be a promoter of our services to their friends and family.”

To do that, SafeLite has adopted a number of principles, designed to create a world-class experience for every customer. They include:

- Having strong measurement of the impact you are having with customers. For this, SafeLite uses a concept called the Net Promoter Score, which indicates how likely a customer is to recommend your product or service to other customers. “We developed a net promoter score so that after their experience with us, we could ask

customers, ‘Would you recommend SafeLite to a friend or family member?’ We ask the question of all customers, but we religiously track the results from those customers who have had some sort of service issue.”


- Believing the customer is always right. “This is a guiding principle for us,” Harrison says, “though we have found that it is sometimes difficult to do.”

- Finding a quick resolution. “In particular, we don’t want customers to be dragged along endlessly as they try to get a service issue resolved,” Harrison says. “Related to that issue is the fact that we want to avoid any negotiation with the customer that may keep our costs down, but is going to drag out the process for the customer. We just want a quick resolution.”

- Using the “one and done” mantra. This means that the customer issue should be owned and resolved by one person within SafeLite — ideally the person who has had the first contact with the customer. “Passing customers back and forth from one department to another

with voicemail and email back and forth is only going to intensify the problem,” says Harrison.

- Empowering employees. “Our employees who take these calls are empowered to resolve them, regardless of cost,” Harrison says. “We just want people to use their brains and do the right thing for the customer.” Harrison adds that SafeLite has also trained its “frontline associates” — the people who install and repair the glass onsite — to resolve customer issues on the spot, as well. “We encourage them, we’ve trained them, and we’ve empowered them to do what they can immediately to resolve any problems they encounter with customers,” he says.

- Focusing on the long-term value of the customer. “There’s quite a lot of research that documents the greater lifetime value of a customer who is a promoter versus one who is a detractor,” Harrison says. “And we want that attitude to provide the underpinning for the behavior of our customer services group.” 

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