

Excerpt From:
Respect is Free

By William T. Pearsall

Use the following article and self-test, excerpted from William T. Pearsall's *Customer Service Is Free*, to motivate yourself and your customer service reps to communicate respect to your customers and coworkers.

Respect is earned through exceptional customer service and it is invaluable to any business. A respected business is trusted because the standards are upheld. It's critically important for employees to believe in the standards and the products of a company. When employees believe the standards, they also respect them. Employees must respect the standards and customer service first. Then, and only then, will customers respect that their wishes are being met and exceeded.

Respect is a very important and complex component of customer service. In fact, you should say that respect is excellent customer service. Yet, respect is difficult to explain.

Respect is demonstrating to people (or things) that they have value and are important to you. You genuinely care about them, their feelings, and their existence. You enjoy their company and conversation. You admire them. In business relationships, respect is a display of gratitude, consideration, and importance.

Establishing respect with new customers is extremely important. The first step is the most important step: earning their respect. The quicker you show respect to customers, the quicker you'll see the results.

Respect is the result of true selflessness. In other words, you do things because you know that they are the right thing to do, not because you expect something in return. When you treat people as if they are valuable to you (and everyone is in some capacity or another), you will in turn be treated with respect.

Respectful people nurture positive relationships with customers, coworkers, and employees. They treat people fairly and with importance. They realize that every person on their team, no matter their place in the authority hierarchy, has value to the common goal of customer service.

Effective leaders can earn respect by treating and respecting all employees and coworkers equally. They also know that people will want to work more diligently to accomplish their goals if they are respected. A highly respected leader always remembers that he is only as good as the people around him.

When you are respected, people want to do more for you. Your competition will emulate you, and your customers will speak highly of you to their acquaintances.

Likewise, your customers can also bring you down. We've all heard acquaintances say that they will never go back to so-and-so because they were treated poorly and disrespected.

Once respect is lost, it is nearly impossible to regain. When you lose respect, you lose business. People don't patronize places that disrespect them. It will be a long road to recovery.

Check Your Respect

Use this short true and false assessment to evaluate your level of respect. Be completely honest with yourself and your answers. Consider your interactions with all people, personal and professional.

True False

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I listen and allow people to speak uninterrupted. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I treat all people with a sense of worth. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use manners and common courtesy. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not talk down to or about others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I consider others' feelings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I uphold and believe in standards and policy. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I treat people fairly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am selfless when dealing with others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a positive attitude. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I accept that others' opinions may differ from mine. |

If you did not answer true to all of the above statements, you're not alone. You have some areas that you can improve in, as most people do.

Contact: William T. Pearsall, (419) 290-9063. The above excerpt is adapted from Pearsall's *Customer Service Is Free*. For a printable version of the respect assessment, go to Pearsall's website at www.customerserviceisfree.com.