



The Customer Communicator Web Extra



Reading for results

A reading group or book club is a unique way to learn more and to share ideas and experiences with coworkers.

Starting a book club in which reps meet regularly to discuss what they have read and how it can be applied to their work is a great way to improve skills and share some relaxed downtime.

Kristen Hayer of VerticalResponse, a social media software company, started a book club for her organization that meets for an hour every Friday and tries to read a book every quarter. The group reads a chapter or two every week and then discusses it to see how it applies to their work and to identify any takeaways that they can implement. She says the brainstorming helps new members of the team get up to speed more quickly, and even senior team members like being able to share their experience and bounce ideas around with others.

What are some of the customer service publications that your group could be reading? Following are recent titles that have crossed our desks here at *The Customer Communicator*:

■ For a look at how the Disney organization approaches customer service, including how it supports its customer service culture and how it gets those cultural values across to customers, try *Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World's Most Engaged, Loyal, and Customer-Centric Employees* by Doug Lipp.

■ For ideas on how reps can express genuine interest in customers, offer sincere and specific compliments, and share unique knowledge, consider Steve Curtin's *Delight Your Customers*.

■ For advice on how service reps can deal with difficult customers by "leaning in" to manage flare-ups, paraphrasing customer complaints, avoiding trigger phrases, and telling the customer what you can do, rather than what you can't do, look into Richard S. Gallagher's *The Customer Service Survival Kit*.

■ To help your team improve the language that reps use with customers and for suggestions on the types of language and phrases that will help to build connections with customers, try *Powerful Phrases for Effective Customer Service* by Renée Evenson.

■ Jeff Toister's *Service Failure*, on the other hand, looks at some of the things that can get in the way of effective customer service on the frontline level and offers advice on what reps can do about it.

■ And for ideas on the little extras that reps can add to provide customers with a more memorable experience, take a look at *Sprinkles: Creating Awesome Experiences Through Innovative Service*, by Chip R. Bell, whose insights also provided valuable input to *The Customer Communicator's* recent article on "promoting customer loyalty."

So, to improve your group's service efforts, think about starting a reading and discussion group, and keep an eye on future issues of *The Customer Communicator* for authors and consultants who may be worth looking into more deeply.

