

Connecting with Your Customers

Customer Service



Be Attentive

- When customers walk by greet them and ask if you can help them find something.
- Don't sit in a chair hiding behind your booth, find a stool to sit on and stand up when a customer comes within speaking range.
- Don't have your head down looking at your phone.
- Know what other vendors have that you don't have, help customers locate what they need.
- Listen to customers when they speak, if they ask a question repeat the question back before answering.



Being Attentive

- Listening to your customer: Pay attention and don't act distracted by activities around you
- Tone of Voice: Yours and theirs
- Delivery pace: Slow, rushed, anxious, annoyed
- Mood: irritated, upbeat, positive, upset
- Body Language: Standoffish, domineering, meek, engaging
- Eye Contact: Keep constant eye contact, eyes floating around the table, looking down.



Communicate Clearly

- Be mindful of how some of your communications might translate to customers, err on the side of caution.
- Speak clearly and make sure your customers understand what your saying.
- Remember that body language tells the most about you, be aware of your distance from a customer, hand gestures, eye contact, and touching customers all tell a story.



Patience

- Customers don't always know what they need or want when buying produce.
- Answer questions and take time to have a conversation about your growing practices and what varieties you have.
- Know what vegetables go with different foods, herbs, and settings.
- Frustrated customers are needing to be heard and to know that you are there to alleviate their frustrations or concerns.
- Be honest about your products.



Empathy



- The ability to understand and share feelings of another
- Listen Carefully; be aware of customers need for conversation
- Smile
- Make their problems your problems
- Understand their priorities
- Be respectful
- Show that you care

Use Positive Language

- Language is a crucial part of persuasion; customers create perceptions about you and your products based on the language you use.
- Use verbs positively; Don't reject = If you Accept
- Avoid Current 'in' Words i.e. Absolutely or Always
- Use Powerful Words i.e.: Imagine, discover, safe, proven
- Avoid Negative References; This is going to get a little trickier : This is where it is going to get a bit more interesting
- Don't Over-Apologize
- Don't use Accusatory Terms
- Don't Pre-empt or Presume
- Offer Options



Know Your Product

- The best customer service personnel have a deep knowledge of their products.
- Variety
- Taste and Texture
- Best way to cook



Customer Education

Customer education refers to your role in providing consumers with the information, skills, and abilities needed to become a more informed buyer.

This does not refer to advertising or marketing. Advertising and marketing attempts to persuade a consumer on an emotional level.

Research shows that an effort to enhance a customer knowledge is tied directly to trust in the product.

Sellers with positive attitudes and an outgoing personality increase the customers trust and willingness to buy even if the product is not different than the competitors or is lacking compared to competitors.

The truth is with the pushy advertising and over the top fantasy advertisers use customers are looking for sincere incite.

Customer Education

Start with the Customer

Before you can begin educating your customer you must first understand your customer.

- What are their strengths
- What are they lacking
- Why are they looking to buy your product

Only after you understand your customer can you begin to effectively educate them.

Main Bases of Segmentation

Geographic	Demographic	Behavioural	Psychographic
e.g. "Customers 10 miles or more outside of a major metropolitan area."	e.g. "College students ages 18-24."	e.g. "Customers wanting a competitive edge on graduate admissions applications."	e.g. "Students who are interested in sustainability and environmental issues."
Location Region City/Town/State	Age Gender Occupation Socio-economic Group	Benefits sought Loyalty status Ready to buy Early adopters	Lifestyle Attitude Education Level Class Personality

Understanding Elderly Customer

Older customers are buying and looking for a different experience than young customers.

- Old customers like to be heard too, even if this means them telling a story, sharing recipes, the gardens they used to grow.
- Take their time, they no longer feel the need for a fast-paced life
- When in doubt, write it out
- Keep coupons handy or off rewards
- Show respect, don't be patronizing
- Be patient and kind when answering questions



Understanding Younger Customers



- Like to know the facts
- Acknowledge how great their kids are
- Colorful and bold colors and statements; create fresh, relatable content
- Social media matters
- Build a genuine brand; be authentic

Invest in Content

- Develop a content rich blog and an intuitive website
- Provide accurate and concise content
- Use social media to educate, schedule posts that educate customers every week on the same day and time.
- Recipe Cards: ONIE and other organizations provide free recipe cards that educate customers about different produce
- Calendars: ONIE provides calendars that educate customers on produce
- Brochures: Create a content rich brochure about your farm and farming practice

Become Hands On

- Use Point of Sale Displays
- Cooking Demonstrations
- Give Samples

Consumers enjoy being able to touch and feel; and will resonate better with you and your product.



Putting it All Together

When you put customer education and customer service together in the correct manner you will become successful retaining old customers and gaining new customers who trust you and want to buy from you.

Remember that being respectful, understanding, and knowing your product goes a long way in letting the customer know that you care about their needs and desires.



Questions?