

Ode to customer service

Remember the good old days?

When a live person answered your call?

Now we have to press 1 for English, press 7 for the repair department, get transferred to the installation department because they don't handle it, get put on hold for ten minutes, and then ultimately get disconnected waiting for someone to answer the call.

When your call actually WAS important to them?

Now we have to wait in queue for the next available operator (who is probably on break right now.)

When shopkeepers were happy to see you and welcomed you by name?

Now no one greets you because there are no employees on the sales floor, or if they are present, they are so busy talking with their coworkers or the person in front of you on line, that they practically ignore you. Then when they finally ask how they can help you, they don't apologize for making you wait, but instead act as if they are being inconvenienced by actually having to do their job.

When there were more than two registers open at a time?

Now we have to wait on line while the lone cashier waits for someone to check a price which holds up the line. Today there are even stores that allow you the privilege of checking yourself out. Is this because their employees are too busy to serve you? Do you get a discount for having to perform a service for yourself that they were all too happy to do for you in the past?

When the doctor made a house call?

Now we have to fight with the receptionist to get an appointment to come to see the doctor, and when we get there, we have to wait an hour before we do! Then we are honored after the visit by having our insurance company deny the claim! Oooops, the billing department input your social security number incorrectly. It will now take you a year to clear up the error. Meanwhile, the bill collectors are beating down your door.

When the clerk at the hardware store helped you find the product you were looking for?

Now we walk up and down the aisles looking for someone in an orange vest to help us only to be told "I'm not in that department".

When the cashier at the grocery store was paying attention to you when she took care of you?

Now she's talking on her cell phone or joking with her coworkers while scanning the items you are buying.

When you complained about something and you got an apology?

Now you hear “It’s not my fault”.

What happened?

How and when did we become a self-service, automated nation that stopped caring about its customers? When did we lower our standards and our expectations and agree to settle for less than stellar service, or more appropriately, indifferent service? I don’t think it happened overnight, yet, I can’t remember the last time I received really good service anywhere. So what do we do about it? Complain? To whom? The manager? Good luck finding one.

It’s time to demand outstanding service from the companies we do business with. The ones that we go to with our cold, hard cash that we CHOOSE to spend with them. And if we don’t get the service we are entitled to receive, it’s time to stop patronizing the businesses that aren’t willing, and perhaps aren’t capable, of providing it to us.

We are in a competitive environment, and most of the time, there are many businesses and vendors that are available to provide the goods and services we are looking for. I don’t know about you, but I work hard for my money, and not only do I want to be provided with high quality goods and the services that I am paying for, but I also want, and deserve, to be acknowledged, appreciated and taken care of in a professional, timely manner.

Don’t worry Business Owner or Manager. If you don’t take good care of me, your customer, somebody else will!