

There is No "Try": Keeping Commitments and Creating Experience

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When customers feel like they've been heard, they start to feel like they're working together with the agent to solve the problem. For some agents, this is the toughest part of the job--being in the moment and experiencing what the customer is going through. The problem-solving mentality is rewarded in many arenas of customer relations.

Resolving the problem should be the easy part, right? But it doesn't always turn out that way. Why are customers compelled to call back over and over to find out about how things are going?

We Don't Let Them Know What To Expect Next

"I'll let you know when I have more information."

"We'll have to look into that."

"I'll be back on the line in a minute."

Reading the first two statements, it's not clear when either of these things will happen and when the answers might come. Is it likely that the third one is accurate? Setting and keeping commitments, however large or small, matters.

- Tell them you'll call back tomorrow.
- Tell them what you'll be working on in the meantime.
- Tell them what they can expect to happen next.

Make Things as Easy as Possible

"Call the other department and let me know what they tell you."

"Let me know when you get the appointment made."

"I tried to call your home number,"

These are experience killers. When customers call, they present concerns, which we must see as opportunities to retain and enhance relationships. Think about how these non-committal and unrealistic statements strain relationships in other arenas. What would we expect to happen to a relationship with a family member if we use these non-committal phrases?

To build relationships with friends and colleagues, we make the effort to show invitation. We find out what works for them and try to meet them there. Treat customers the same way and we'll create relationships that are deeper than customer and agent.

- Ask for best times and numbers to call.
- Ask if a detailed voicemail or email would be appreciated.
- Make sure the invitation to connect before then is there.

Show Up to Build Relationships

It's almost as easy to take the steps that make the difference than to settle into formality and indifference. The same old tropes of non-committal language and broken promises are still the unfortunate norm, so there is much to be gained from taking a few small, meaningful steps to secure customer relationships.