

Customer Service Skills Every Contact Centre Agent Should Have

Contact centre agents are the front line of customer service, entrusted with the demanding task of pleasing and appeasing customers. With a myriad number of situations that may arise in a customer service exchange, your agents need to be versatile and equipped with a strong skill set to handle the complexity of the job. Here are some of the customer service skills every agent should master to deliver the very best service.

Patience. Customers may be frustrated when they make contact, so patience is certainly a virtue every agent needs to have. Agents should give customers a chance to explain their situation in full and never react negatively to an unhappy customer. When customers are in need of a technical explanation for an issue, agents should also put customers at ease by explaining a solution calmly and patiently while remembering that customers do not always possess the technical knowledge needed to resolve an issue.

Timeliness. Timeliness is critical in customer service. Agents should be swift in responding to inquiries and prepared to switch to another channel if a case needs more attention. Deliveries and additional tasks should be handled promptly, while brands should provide customers options such as call backs or communication via all available channels to ensure an efficient customer experience.

Clear communication. Agents need to strike a balance between giving thorough answers, using a professional vocabulary, and being conversational and approachable all at the same time. It's no easy task, but agents should aim to keep their exchanges concise and relevant and resist the urge to overdo small talk. Customers do need that human touch, and it's always important to make introductions at the outset. However, always remember that they value their time, so communication should be to the point.

Empathy. It may seem dramatic, but empathy is among the most important customer service skills. A frustrated customer definitely needs attention and reassurance, but even satisfied customers need attention. For example, simply acknowledging concern for timeliness (quick delivery) and relevant promotional offers (not sending too many or unwanted marketing messages) shows consideration and respect for customers.

Knowledge of Products and services . Among the essential customer service skills is simply possessing the knowledge to discuss products and services. Agents need to receive thorough training to better understand what the company offers, and they should be updated regularly on important events such as recalls and promotional sales. In addition, agents need to be trained to use call centre technology properly (such as a CRM database) to deliver service with full confidence.

Positive attitude. No matter how upset a customer might be, agents must keep a positive attitude. Using positive language that reflects confidence in finding a solution will reassure a customer and encourage sustained loyalty in the brand.

Attentive listening. If a customer wishes to explain a situation in detail, agents need to be willing to listen. In addition, customers may not necessarily accept the solutions an agent has to offer or have questions about them, so attentive listening is critical to showing respect for customer opinions and offering them the best eventual solution.

Adaptability. Of the most essential customer service skills, adaptability to changing situations is crucial. Agents need to be ready to handle varying customer demands, possible technical issues, switching to other channels, and the like. One service interaction may completely differ from another, so a readiness to go with the flow and adapt as needed is an important skill to master.

Willingness to go the extra mile. Customers appreciate great service, but they love a gesture that shows real appreciation for their business. Agents who go the extra mile often win over customers. Such gestures might include expediting a delivery free of charge to rectify a billing error, connecting to another department or channel for better service, offering a courtesy voucher for an issue, or simply asking all the right questions to give a customer a thorough, exceptional experience.

Customer service skills should be continuously developed and refined in order to deliver the best customer experiences. A combination of training and motivation to learn such skills enables agents to deliver the best service to ensure long-term brand loyalty.