

3 - Marketing Tips for Customer Satisfaction

Service

- 1.) Customers are never an interruption to your work. The customer is your real reason for being in business. Chores and chatting with friends can wait.
- 2.) Greet every customer with a friendly smile. Act like you are happy they are there. Customers are people and they like friendly contact. They usually return it.
- 3.) Call customers by name. Make a game of learning customers' names. See how many you can remember.
- 4.) Remember... you and your employees are the face of the company. The way you represent yourself to your customer is the way your business will be perceived by that customer.
- 5.) Never argue with customers. The customer is always right (in his or her eyes). Be a good listener; agree where you can, and do what you can to make the customer happy.
- 6.) Never say "I don't know." If you don't know the answer to a question, say "That's a good question. I will try to find an answer for you."
- 7.) Remember... every dollar you earn comes from the customer's pockets. Treat them like the boss.
- 8.) State things in a positive way. It takes practice, but will help you become a better communicator.
- 9.) Try to give your customers a good experience at your booth so they will want to come back.
- 10.) Always go that extra mile! Do just a little more than the customer expects.

Listen to your customers

If customers suggest that you could do something better, want something you don't have or want information about something you sell, do your best to accommodate them. Within reason, take the extra effort to give customers what they want. Talk to them about their question and give their suggestions and requests due consideration.

Educate the consumer

Customers may not know how to use a product or what product will be best for what purpose—a knowledgeable suggestion will be most appreciated. Suggest something they may not have tried. Having recipes available can be very helpful. A successful meal will win a long-term customer.

Be Nice

Employees should be friendly and courteous. Many customers shop at roadside markets for superior quality and to support local producers. They will be reinforced in this judgment if the person serving them is someone they know and like. Get to know frequent customers by name. Always greet customers with a smile and a "hello." Customers are not a distraction, they are the reason you are in business. Make your market a place that customers enjoy visiting.

Complaints

No matter what you do, you will always have some complaints. Many times, when a customer makes a criticism, it's because they want to keep shopping at your market, but they want something to be improved. So listen, remain calm, address the customer's concerns, and take their comments to heart. Perhaps their complaint is evidence of something that could be done better.

Record Keeping

Your record keeping practices will be one of the keys to the success of your market. Keep accurate records of what you produce, sell, and discard. These records will need to include the cost of production, selling price, and marketing expense. Accurate records can be used to establish breakeven prices, determine profitability and aid in planning production for future seasons.

Records will help you analyze your business and make sound decisions. Are certain products selling well enough to justify their space in your market? How late should you be staying open? In order to make a good decision, you need to analyze the best data available; keeping good records is critical to the success of your business.

Advertising

Although advertising is expensive, if done properly and strategically, it is certainly worthwhile. Often ads on radio and local cable television and in newspapers are surprisingly affordable. Advertising is an investment that will pay you dividends in attracting customers to your market.

Be strategic about your advertising. Choose mediums and outlets that appeal to your target customers. Talk with advertising salespeople about the demographics of their audience and geographic distribution— does it fit your target customer profile?

If your operation is only open seasonally, it is unlikely that you'll need to advertise throughout the entire year. You may find that you only need to advertise at the beginning of the season to let customers know that you have reopened. Let them know if you are offering new products along with mentioning your current products.

Present the market and yourself well

Keep everything tidy and clean. Know what you're selling and keep displays well stocked. Treat your customers like invited guests. Salespeople should wear clean and appropriate clothing and be approachable. Consider providing employees with matching apparel or aprons with the farm name on them to promote a unified, consistent appearance.

Remember, your market employees will be dealing directly with customers; an unfriendly appearance or rude attitude will cost you customers and sales. It is likely that customers will return to your market for not only the quality produce, but the superior customer service as well. Customer service can be a significant point of differentiation between your roadside market and a big grocery store. Take it on yourself to give your customers the same level of customer service you would like to receive and train your employees to do likewise. Customers will want to know about them.

Advertising new products may entice new customers to your market as well. Never underestimate the power of word of mouth advertising. Satisfied customers that feel a connection to your market and its products will undoubtedly be your best form of advertisement.
