



The Survey Results That Will Surprise You by Margie Zable Fisher

While reading USA Today recently, I was surprised by the results of a Small Business survey that asked, "Which business skills would you like to develop further?"

What do you think the top response was? Technical skills? Financial skills? Sales skills?

None of the above. Customer service was the skill most small business owners would like to develop further. I couldn't believe that most small business owners identified that need -- and, as I thought about it, I had to include myself in that list.

I've written often about employees who need customer service training, but the truth is this: the customer service mentality starts at the top.

And if you are a business owner who provides great customer service, the P.R. "buzz" will take you far.

So I did some quick research on ways small business owners can offer excellent customer service, and found a terrific article, by Paul Kopp, which you can read in its entirety at <http://ezinearticles.com/?Offer-Excellent-Customer-Service&id=350473>.

Here are six key points from the article, on how you, the small business owner, can provide the kind of service that will keep customers coming back again and again:

- Answer your phone (vs. having people leave voicemail messages)

- Offer as much help as possible
- Be consistent
- Handle complaints immediately
- Go the "extra mile"
- Promise only what you can deliver

Take a few minutes and think about how to implement these customer service ideas. I did, and I am already thinking of some positive changes to make. I'm sure they'll help in my business, and they'll help in yours as well.

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