

How to Lose Customers Without Really Trying

The A - Z Guide

26 mistakes to avoid so your customers keep coming back

PLUS over 100 tips for *getting it right!*



By Chris Bennett & Sue James

Illustrated by Carolyn Dixon

Sample Only

Introduction

All of us in business have heard the story. It costs far more to gain new customers than to keep existing ones.

And it's no secret that the key to keeping existing customers is excellent customer service!

Yet in so many businesses, customer service falls short – and often it's the little things that make a very big difference.

So how does your customer service rate?

How to Lose Customers without Really Trying – the A-Z Guide draws on our experience working with businesses of all sizes (including nonprofit or community businesses) as well as our many years of experience as customers ourselves.

We take a humorous look at 26 typical mistakes businesses make in their customer service and provide over 100 very practical tips for avoiding those mistakes.

We hope you find the information helpful for enhancing *your* business!

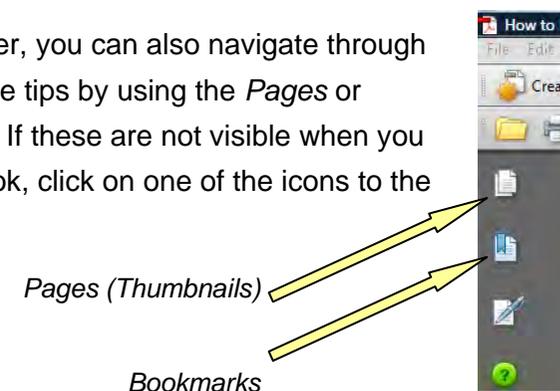
Chris Bennett & Sue James

How to Use this E-Book

You may want to begin by reading *How to Lose Customers without Really Trying – the A-Z Guide* from start to finish. As you read, you can then pick chapters or tips you think are most relevant for you and your staff. Or, if you already know the challenges you face in customer service, you may wish to read those chapters first.

For easy reference, we've provided several ways to navigate your way through the content.

1. Clicking on any of the chapter headings on the [Contents](#) pages will take you to the beginning of that chapter.
2. The [Index of Tips and Strategies](#) on pages 77-79 is also provided as a reference. Click on any of the links to be taken directly to that particular tip or strategy.
3. To return to the *Contents* or *Index*, click on the links provided at the foot of each page.
4. In the Adobe Reader, you can also navigate through the chapters and the tips by using the *Pages* or *Bookmarks* panels. If these are not visible when you first open this e-book, click on one of the icons to the left of your screen.



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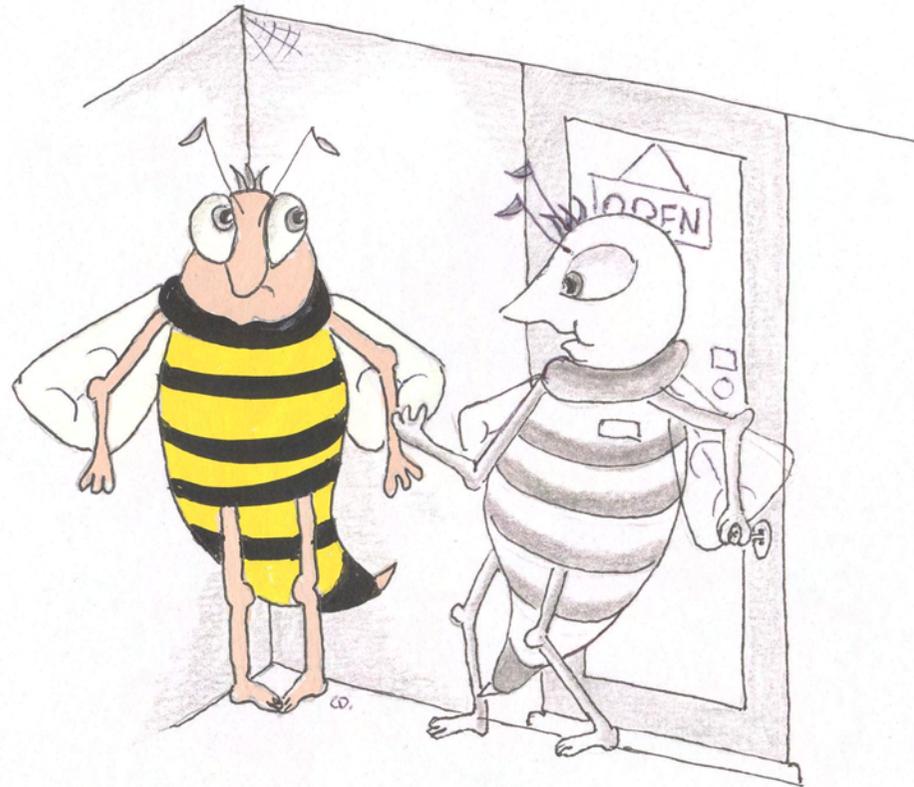


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'If you need me I'll be right here.'

Corner your customer like a rat in a trap and then close the door

It was too late.

I entered the shop and my escape route was cut off in an instant.

The shopkeeper had closed the door and I was trapped.

I had no alternative but to look like I was going to buy something. I browsed around, looked at the shirts, all the while planning how I could break out to freedom.

Perhaps I could rush him, bowl him over and run out of the door. Then I thought what if he'd secretly locked the door? No, that wasn't a good idea. I kept thinking of my options for escaping this hellhole. Nothing came up so I kept looking at the merchandise, stalling for time.

He hovered nearby and I felt the pressure of his presence. It was not supposed to be like this. I thought I would pop in and buy a shirt and then go down the road for a coffee. The coffee would have to wait.

He occasionally glanced towards me and smiled. But he didn't fool me. He was up to something. And I figured I had little time left before something dreadful would happen to me.

Sample Only

I subtly edged around the shop trying to cut the distance to the door. He did the same, blocking my potential escape route.

Then it happened.

The phone rang.

He looked up and walked towards the phone to answer it.

As he did I saw my chance.

I moved quickly to the door and turned the handle.

The door opened.

A huge relief!

I walked out a free man.



Hovering salespeople can make customers feel claustrophobic and their discomfort will make them far less likely to buy anything.

Here's how to avoid the pushy salesperson syndrome and allow your customer to 'breathe' so they'll feel happier buying from you.



Stay Put

Curb the impulse to rush over to the customer as soon as he enters your shop. If you practically leap over the counter and rugby tackle him, you'll likely put him under pressure. You can cover the same distance with a smile and a greeting without moving your feet.

When you greet your customer you'll know whether he wants to engage you in a conversation or just wants to be left alone to shop.

If he wants to be left alone, do so until he's ready to talk to you.

At this stage, switch off any aggressive, pit bull tendencies you may have and stay put.



Visibility

When a customer enters your shop try to stay in sight while he's there.

Your visibility will make it easier for him to motion to you, ask a question, or walk up to you if he needs help. If you're invisible to the customer he will probably disappear too.

If the customer can see you, then avoid any movements that make it appear you're stalking him. For example: he moves, you move; he stops, you stop. Instead, go about your business naturally and be available when the customer is ready to be served.



Space

Allow enough space between you and the customer so he doesn't feel overcrowded. This distance should be at least an arm's length away.

A customer can also have his personal space invaded if you watch him while he's shopping. So avoid staring.

You can still see him without staring, by using your peripheral vision.

Here's an exercise to help develop peripheral vision.

- Stand upright and extend your arms out in front of your body, about shoulder high.
- Now wriggle your fingers and look at them.
- Keep looking straight ahead and now slowly move both arms to the sides of your body.
- Keep your fingers wriggling while you are doing this.
- Without moving your head you should be able to see your fingers still wriggling until they are pointing out from the sides of the body.

With practice, this exercise will allow you to develop your vision so you can see a wide area in front of you without having to look or stare at a specific point.

This is an ideal skill to have because it allows you to respond to a customer when you need to.

It's probably not a good idea to practice this exercise while a customer is in the shop. Someone may throw a net over you and drag you away!

Great customer service occurs when you allow your customer to buy without feeling pressured or closed in.



We don't want to push our ideas on to customers, we simply want to make what they want.

(Laura Ashley)