



## ‘Are you being served?’

Exceeding customer expectations and going above and beyond the call of duty will make your pharmacy the talk of the town.



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### Correction

Retail Pharmacy wishes to correct an error in the article entitled, 'Inside Tips - Landing the Perfect Job', which appeared in the December 2007, edition. In the article, Retail Pharmacy incorrectly published the phone number of Horizon Resourcing with an 02 area code. Retail Pharmacy unreservedly apologises to Horizon Resourcing for this error on our part.

The correct contact number is 03 9882 7977.

Have you ever personally received great customer service? When this happens you think "I will definitely come back here again". If the service you received was exceptional, you'll tell everyone you meet!

Similarly, news about a bad experience also travels fast. Customers love sharing their bad experiences just as much as their good ones. In an industry where word of mouth advertising is more successful than any other marketing tool, superior service levels for your pharmacy can be your point of difference.

Retail pharmacy has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. Differing styles of pharmacies emerging and a stronger emphasis on cost reductions have made the industry more competitive than ever before.

Nowadays, you cannot expect to retain your customers simply because the service you provide them with isn't bad.

Your service needs to be consistently exceptional to build and maintain strong customer loyalty. Good customer service is to provide your customers with service at all the stages of their purchase – before, during and after.

Exceptional service needs to be tailored to the needs of all your customers – both paying and non-paying.

Superior service increases customer gratification, building loyalty and increasing revenue for your pharmacy business.

As you increase (and retain) your base of happy customers, your profits and reputation as a

leading healthcare provider will soar.

Are you and your pharmacy:

- Providing service of a high standard every time?
- Ensuring the customer benefits from the experience, making it worth while to give you their business?
- Delivering consistent service that your customers can rely on?
- Providing an end-to-end service for your customers?

### Three golden tips to build customer loyalty

#### 1: Make customers feel special

Have you ever experienced the feeling of someone remembering a previous conversation you had with them? It feels great! If you're looking for a point of difference to win your customers, here is one that works.

References to their personal stories will make customers feel like you take a personal interest in them and not just the number of prescriptions they fill. Making them feel special will make them want to give you their business. More importantly, they will share this with all their friends and family – giving you more referrals. Making your customers feel special all the time will make them want to come back and see you even when they're not ill.

#### 2: Fix problems immediately

Customer service is not just treating your customers in a courteous and friendly manner. Customers want solutions. If a mistake has been made, acknowledge it with an apology and set about rectifying the issue immediately.

For example, one of our

pharmacists, Rick\*, recently experienced a very irate customer who had received his account statement where he had been billed for incorrect purchases. Rather than suggesting the customer check his statements properly or handball the issue to a manager, Rick\* quickly investigated the matter and recognised a mistake had been made.

He quickly apologised, taking accountability and set about fixing the problem. Rick\* arranged for the account to be amended and provided the customer with his correct account statement. Rick\* then credited an amount to the customers account in light of the error made.

## “Customers will share their shopping experience with at least nine other people.”

The customer was pleased but concerned that this may happen again. Rick\* reassured his customer, letting him know he would take personal responsibility to make sure his next statement is accurate. This really bowled the customer over, and he walked out with a smile, almost forgetting the bad experience that initiated the whole process.

Getting it right in the first place is a lot easier than having to make a difficult and expensive attempt to win back a customer's loyalty. If an issue arises, focus on fixing it quickly – and go that extra mile to make sure your customer walks out the door feeling great, and not just satisfied.

#### 3: Consistent follow through

Most businesses say they are customer focused. But how do they compare to competition? How many businesses over promise and under deliver? Customers these days are quick to remember and will often wait to see if service providers follow through with what they say they will do.

The top performing pharmacists provide an extra level of service where they contact a customer several days after dispensing a new medication for them, to make sure everything is ok.

If you tell a customer you will order something in for them, make sure it's done ASAP and you have made contact to let them know the status of their order.

Providing a higher standard of service will often involve you doing some research, or making a few phone calls to get the solution your customer needs. It's essential to do what you promise – and exceed expectations and go above and beyond the call of duty.

However, providing superior service will not only ensure your regular customers come back, it will ensure they will also refer new customers to you. It is estimated that customers will share their shopping experience with at least nine other people – that's nine customers you can either gain or lose to the pharmacy down the road!

\* Names changed for privacy.