

What Keeps You Up at Night?

Customers are more demanding and emotional today. How can our call center employees still wow them?

Clients and others in the industry tell us what keeps them up at night is how to meet and exceed customer expectations.

Social media and immediate access to information has created a more, savvy, smart, and knowledgeable customer than ever in history. Before customers call or e-mail a company, they come armed with information and want their problem solved already, if not yesterday. They want the right answer on the first call and to be treated professionally.

Confidence is the key. The front line needs the right resources at their fingertips. We need to train them on how to manage each and every type of customer. This does not mean just training them on the use of technology and computer screens, or how to access resources. It does mean they need to be given skills to lead and navigate the emotional, demanding customers, with a cadre of coaches available to guide them to excellence.

BEST PRACTICES

1) Hire for a “servant attitude”

Individuals who enjoy serving others already have an advantage in being professional and creating better customer experiences. Individuals who relish serving others create positive energy, easily build trust, and care about others before themselves. They strive to be the best they can be. The energy needed to “train” this innate characteristic is often viewed as frustrating and time consuming but there are certain items we recommend thinking about during the hiring process. What does their voice tone sound like during your initial interviews? Would your customers respond favorably?

2) Allow 2 hours per month for employee development

While this may seem costly, think about this in terms of return on investment. What does one poor customer experience cost in terms of loyalty, errors, and reputation? This requires some coordination with work force management, as well as your training department.

3) Leverage mixed methodologies to develop new skills

The new generation of representatives learn information differently than even three years ago. They focus best when offered different forms of learning methodology. They can jump from YouTube, to a blog, to Twitter, to looking up information on the internet. Is your training department prepared to meet this new style of learning?

Repetition still helps with retention and how to internalize behaviors, so be sure to continue including practice sessions for interacting with customers as part of every learning objective. Introduce common call types they might face so they don't freeze the first time they encounter an angry or demanding customer.

4) Know your reps preferred learning styles

We all learn in different ways. Think about how you would use a new camera you received for your birthday. How would you learn to use it? You might prefer to just "play with it" if your learning style is kinesthetic/physical. Someone who's a visual or auditory learner may prefer to watch or listen to a YouTube video about its features and uses. Another would read the instruction booklet if their learning style is reading/writing. We all use the four learning styles. However, when we learn something new, we lean on our preferred way to learn. So when we introduce a new process, work flow, or service skill, be sure to include all learning methods, such as watching how something is done, reading about the process, writing out examples, and practicing how it's done.

5) Practice making decisions in a safe environment versus with our customers

An environment that allows learners to make mistakes without repercussions from a live customer allows learners to be relaxed, and thus quickly recognize their strengths, and where to focus for improvement. Identify the most common call types first, and using a call model, practice over and over again the different scenarios that occur, along with common mistakes made. Knowing those pitfalls arms representatives with the tools to be confident and focused on the best options to solve customer concerns.

To learn more about how Ulysses Learning can help elevate your customer experience and to explore more best practices, please call us at 1.800.662.4066 or email me directly at dvance@ulysseslearning.com.

Best Regards,

Dina