State of Mind

Have you ever noticed what a lot of advertisements have in common? No matter what the business is selling, the ads emphasize exceptional customer service. Here are just a few examples:

- Zappos.com:
  http://www.ispot.tv/ad/7F_o/zappos-not-just-a-customer

- Discover:
  http://www.ispot.tv/ad/7wIO/discover-card-talk-to-a-real-person

- Ford Motor Company:
  http://www.ispot.tv/ad/7ofk/ford-customer-service-feat-mike-rowe

- Xfinity:
  http://www.ispot.tv/ad/7tpJ/xfinity-customer-service

All of these businesses are attempting to make their attention to customer service stand out above the competition. They want to demonstrate that they have a customer-service mindset.

What does it mean to have a certain mindset? Don’t overthink it—this word means exactly what it sounds like! A mindset is a way you’ve set your mind to thinking—it’s an overall attitude or set of beliefs that guides your actions. An optimist, for example, has a positive mindset. S/He looks at the “bright side” of any situation. On the other hand, a pessimist has a negative mindset. S/He sees the glass as “half empty.” A mindset might be environmental consciousness. A person with this mindset will continually look for ways to care for the environment by conserving energy by walking to school, setting up a neighborhood recycling program, picking up litter, etc.

In business, it’s very important to have a mindset of customer service. When each member of the organization adopts this attitude, it benefits customers, employees, and the company itself. Learn more about how you can set your mind toward customer service!
A customer-service mindset also benefits the business by reducing complaints. Handling complaints costs money because of the time and effort involved, the possible loss of business, and, in some cases, refunds to customers. Customers who receive excellent service are less likely to complain. Or, if they do, they may receive a very good impression of the business if their complaints are handled satisfactorily.

**Employee benefits.** The most obvious personal benefit of demonstrating a customer-service mindset is that it will support and advance your career. Customers who appreciate your efforts may compliment you to management. And, when your supervisor observes the way you interact with customers, your mindset and actions should positively affect your performance evaluation. A good evaluation often means a raise or a promotion. In addition, learning to deal with customers competently will likely increase your own self-confidence.

Step Two—Use a pleasant tone of voice. The old saying that “it’s not what you say but how you say it that’s important” is very true. Make sure that you develop a pleasant tone of voice, and use it with customers at all times. Speaking pleasantly is especially important when you must deliver bad news (e.g., the service cannot be provided on the requested date, a popular item is completely sold out, an order was filled incorrectly, etc.). You can learn more about developing a pleasant tone of voice by reading Owen R. Smith’s article “How to Create a Positive Tone of Voice”:

Step Three—Smile and make eye contact. Put a smile on your face to support your pleasant tone of voice. If you don’t smile, you may send your customer a mixed message—perhaps you’ll convey that you’re doing your job but aren’t willing to go above and beyond to be of service. Your smile helps customers to feel recognized and important.

Looking customers in the eye shows that you are focused on them and their needs. Failing to make eye contact indicates indifference and could cause customers to believe that you aren’t interested in talking to them. However, you shouldn’t give customers fixed stares because that could intimidate them or make them feel uncomfortable.