



Are You Prepared?

September is National Disaster Preparedness Month and we have been supporters for many years.

Most natural disasters include the possibility of power outages. Power outages from storm-related events cost the U.S. economy between \$20 billion and \$55 billion annually. According to Agility Recovery, 70 percent of U.S. businesses will be affected by a power outage in the next 12 months, so it is essential that you understand your risk, develop a preparedness and mitigation plan, and take action.

Not only have we seen tornados in our area, the weather is in a very active tropical storm pattern, so it's wise to be prepared if you lose power. Here are some tips that we have gathered to help you weather the storm.

Make a plan

- If power outages are forecast in your area, who will take the appropriate steps before the emergency happens?
- What equipment should be unplugged to prevent damage from power surges, including computers, and all other important equipment?
Who is responsible?
- Do all computers have battery backups for short-term operation?
- Do you know how to turn the equipment back on?

- Where is your off-site backup stored, and how do you access it?
- Is there anything under refrigeration that needs to be protected or relocated?
- Is your VoIP phone roll-over going to an active and monitored smartphone?
- Do you use social media to advise clients of your outage? Who posts the info? Have your clients been advised to look at FB or the usual places you post?
- Who is your internet provider, and who is responsible for contacting them for updates?
- Is all equipment documented along with other valuables? Maintain a current photo or video inventory of your premises, equipment, inventory, supplies, etc.
- Who is able to work from home?
- Brief all team members of your plans in the case of an emergency
- Download the FEMA App for National Weather Service Alerts, Safety Tips, Preparation Checklists, and Maps of Disaster Resources.

Get complete information from https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/ready_business_power-outage-toolkit.pdf



From The Desk of David Snell

Happy September! (Although it feels like August!)

As I write this, another tropical storm has turned into a hurricane and could be heading up the east coast!

With several instances of tornados in our local area, and 2 stays in the basement (1 at home and the other at the office) until we were told all was clear, we have embraced this year's "September is National Disaster Preparedness Month" even more than usual!

For our front page article, Pam has done research, as usual, and has focused on what to do when you lose power at the office. It's stressful enough when it happens; having a plan with designated responsibilities will take a little of the stress off.



She has also created a Tip Sheet that includes a FEMA-

Recommended Supply List, additional items to consider adding to your kit as well as What to Do if You Lose Power, How to Protect Yourself During a Power Outage, and Returning After a Power Outage. You can download that free report on our website homepage;

ACTSmartIT.com.

On a personal note, the Grandkids are back to school. Xander is in 3rd grade and Sarah started 1st.

And, Sarah just turned 7! We held her birthday at the pool at the John Carver

Inn in Plymouth. It was a very special day!

As many gardeners know, this has not been a great year for some



vegetables. My tomato crop was sparse with many scared and cracked from too much rain. The zucchini had one harvest and then their flowers withered and died! It was disappointing. My brother-in-law Eric, said that he had a similar problem because he had more male than female plants! Who knew?



The one bright spot was this years green beans. The kids and I picked a colander full and would have had more but, to our surprise, they kept eating more than they put in the container!

Stay safe and healthy!

Strengthening Mobile Device Security: Five Imperative Business Policies

In today's business landscape, mobile devices are indispensable tools for productivity.

However, their use also poses significant security challenges that we must address diligently.

To fortify our organization's mobile device security, we have identified five crucial policies:

1. Mobile Device Usage Guidelines

We need clear and comprehensive guidelines on how and when employees may employ their mobile devices for business purposes. Personal devices must remain distinct from work-related activities. Employees should refrain from connecting to unsecured public Wi-Fi networks and exercise caution regarding the use of specific applications that may compromise security.

2. Device Locking Protocols

Mobile devices are akin to vaults containing sensitive data. To safeguard this information, we must institute stringent device-locking mechanisms, such as PINs, and biometrics (fingerprints or facial recognition), to prevent unauthorized access. This becomes especially critical in cases of device loss or theft.

3. Robust Password Policies

Passwords serve as the initial defense layer for mobile devices. Encourage employees to create and regularly update strong, unique passwords. Implementing two-factor authentication adds an additional security layer, further safeguarding our data.

4. Timely Software Updates

Mobile devices require regular updates, akin to maintaining good health. These updates resolve vulnerabilities and enhance protection against emerging threats. Employees must consistently update their device's operating systems and applications to maintain optimal security.

5. Security Training Initiatives

Educational efforts are paramount. Employees must possess a thorough understanding of safe mobile device usage. This includes never leaving devices unattended, delineating boundaries between personal and professional activities, and adhering rigorously to established security protocols. We aim to foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness.

By adhering to these policies, we not only mitigate the inherent risks of mobile device usage but also safeguard our organization's sensitive information and preserve our professional standing. Mobile device security is a shared responsibility, and our collective commitment to these policies ensures the robust protection of our business interests.



How to Deliver Excellent Customer

In a business landscape marked by fierce competition and rapidly changing customer expectations, the ability to deliver excellent customer service has become more critical than ever. As a result, it's not just about meeting the demands of today's clients; it's about exceeding them and creating unforgettable experiences.

As businesses strive to thrive in this dynamic environment, one thing remains clear: Delivering excellent customer service isn't just a strategy – it's a necessity. So, let's explore the art of delivering exceptional service, building lasting customer relationships, and overcoming the challenges that come with it, all while retaining a loyal customer base for sustained growth.

The Challenges and Importance of Excellent Customer Service

Of course, navigating this ever-evolving landscape presents formidable hurdles. Rising expectations, fierce competition, and online reputation influence demand innovative solutions. However, [creating a total customer service culture has many benefits](#) – from solidifying your clients' loyalty and elevating your brand to thriving in today's business arena.

Rising Customer Expectations

Consumers demand seamless interactions, personalized services, and instant solutions as technology advances. Adapting to these elevated standards is essential to meet and exceed their expectations, creating a standout experience that ensures their loyalty and advocacy.

Competition and Customer Choices

In a marketplace flooded with options, exceptional customer service becomes decisive. Therefore, businesses must differentiate themselves by providing unparalleled experiences, demonstrating value, and cultivating relationships to secure their place in the minds of discerning consumers.

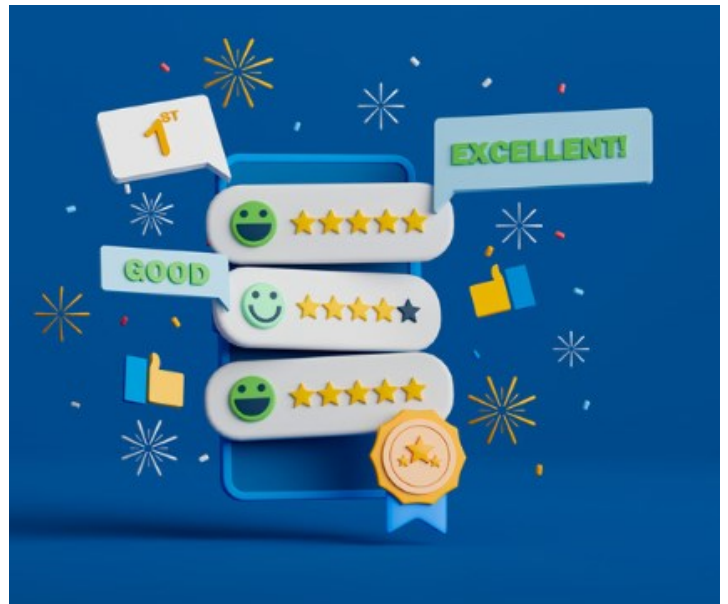
Online Reputation and Social Media

The digital era has amplified the impact of online reviews and social media on brand per-

ception. Maintaining a positive online presence, promptly addressing feedback, and leveraging platforms for engagement is pivotal in shaping public opinion and retaining your customers' trust.

The Art of Delivering Excellent Customer Service

As you may see, exceptional customer service isn't just a box to check. It's a transformative approach that sets businesses apart. Crafting experiences that resonate requires understanding your customers' needs, empowering staff, and maintaining consistency across channels. So, let's see how you can do that.



Understand Customer Needs

To deliver excellent customer service, active listening and genuine empathy are paramount. Always acknowledge their unique preferences, pain points, and expectations as that forms the foundation of personalized interactions. Feedback isn't just valuable; it's a treasure trove of insights that can guide improvements and innovation, showcasing a commitment to meeting everyone's demands.

Training and Empowering Staff

Behind every exceptional service experience is [a skilled and motivated team](#). Properly trained employees possess the knowledge and confi-

Service and Retain Loyal Customers

dence to address all queries efficiently and to resolve issues promptly. A knowledgeable staff isn't just an asset; it's a strategic advantage that breeds trust. That makes techniques like role-playing, ongoing training, and empowering employees to make decisions instrumental in elevating service quality and fostering customer satisfaction.

Consistency Across Channels

In a multi-channel world, delivering consistent service experiences is a formidable challenge. Maintaining uniformity across platforms – in-store, online, or through social media – is a litmus test of a brand's commitment to its values and promises.

The digital age's rapid pace demands constant vigilance in aligning messaging, tone, and service quality. So, consider using integrated systems, monitoring customer journeys, and involving cross-functional teams to achieve a cohesive experience.

Building Lasting Relationships for Retention

Customer loyalty thrives on genuine relationships. Personalized interactions, emotional connections, and anticipation of needs create bonds that transcend transactions. As a result, fostering these connections drives repeat business and transforms buyers into brand advocates.

Personalized Interactions

Addressing your clients by name and understanding their preferences creates a valuable sense of individual recognition and connection.

Data analytics enables you to tailor offers and recommendations finely, showcasing an in-depth grasp of each individual's desires. This personalization fosters a stronger connection and resonates more deeply.

Creating Emotional Connections

Also, we cannot overstate the value of emotional bonds. Crafting stories that evoke genuine emotions forms the basis for enduring consumer-brand relationships. Active listening and respectful and pleasant communication help you stay professional and deliver excellent customer service. Understanding their behavioral style and adapting your approach to meet them where they are is a very effective approach. Our clients love using the tool Everything DiSC Sales to help them quickly identify the customer's style and adapt to it for maximum success.

Keep in mind that your clients may be irritated, annoyed, impatient, or angry. So, it's important to keep an open mind and positive attitude when dealing with impatient customers or even angry ones. Creating a balance of empathy and swift solutions will demonstrate your dedication to their satisfaction and help you build a good rapport and lasting relationships.

Anticipating Customer Needs

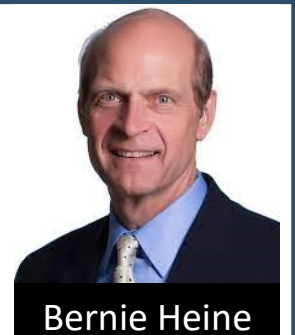
Last, solving problems before they arise showcases a proactive approach to customer service. Analyze your customer's behavior and purchase history to predict preferences, allowing for timely recommendations and solutions. This forward-thinking strategy heightens their satisfaction, setting a new benchmark for service excellence in a competitive market.

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Going Above and Beyond in Exceeding Customer Expectations

Of course, exceptional service doesn't stop at meeting expectations; it surpasses them. Surprising and delighting your clients will create memorable experiences that leave a lasting imprint. Therefore, let's explore strategies that turn complaints into opportunities and transform routine interactions into extraordinary moments.

Surprise and Delight Strategies

Surpassing expectations through unexpected gestures and rewards can foster remarkable loyalty. The element of surprise adds a touch of novelty, while authenticity ensures that these interactions resonate genuinely.

For instance, sending personalized thank-you notes, exclusive discounts on special occasions, or unexpected freebies with purchases can create delightful moments that stick with customers and contribute to their overall satisfaction. Such genuine gestures demonstrate a brand's commitment to going beyond the transactional relationship, leaving your customers satisfied and genuinely thrilled with their unique experiences.

Handling Complaints and Resolutions

While unhappy customers may seem like a rep's worst nightmare, they can turn the tide to your business's advantage. Complaints offer a unique chance to turn negativity into positivity, showcasing exceptional service.

Even when the customer is wrong, treating them with understanding and patience is important. Effective complaint handling involves active listening and empathy. Clear steps in addressing issues show your dedication to customer satisfaction. Swift, transparent resolutions not only mend relationships but also bolster loyalty, assuring customers that their concerns are taken seriously and resolved promptly.

Deliver Excellent Customer Service to Nurture Lasting Loyalty

Elevating customer service isn't just a strategy; it's a culture that propels businesses forward. Addressing challenges head-on, delivering personalized experiences, and exceeding expectations enables you to deliver excellent customer service and cultivate lasting loyalty. Fueled by genuine connections, these strategies turn clients into advocates, ensuring success and a legacy of exceptional service that echoes through time.



Why Can't We Find Help?

In the recruiting business that we are in, we tend to notice patterns and trends in dealing with a wide variety of practices in different locations and offering different services, and helping them with their recruitment needs. You might be surprised to learn that the reason many businesses can't find help often has to do with the client themselves.

Some don't realize it is a candidate's market today and they are using the same hiring criteria they used 20 years ago.

Others have a prolonged recruitment process such that they can never make it to an offer being extended as candidates find positions rapidly today.

Others, have a 2.4 rating on Glassdoor and Indeed, and this is what a candidate sees when they research the practice. This is a poor rating, and the rating is made by either current or former employees, which candidates put great weight and credibility in. This is social proof today.

Still others, try to recruit in a candidate's market offering below market compensation package. A compensation package includes the hourly rate of pay or salary, and benefits. Today, you need to be equal to or better than market average in order to attract candidates. If you are below market, you will have a difficult time filling

any position, and even when you do, you will likely only be able to attract "C" players, as "A" and "B" players will be able to command higher market rates.

This all seems so obvious and simple, yet, every week, I have new potential clients who I meet with who may have one, two, or sometimes, all of the above issues ensuing at the same time. And they wonder why they can't recruit?

We all know recruiting isn't easy, but you have to know what you are doing today. There is an art and science to it. It isn't as simple as just placing an ad and hoping for the best. It is a fierce

competition to attract the best to your business when those candidates simply have so many choices.

Either invest in a recruiting certification for yourself to learn the methods of cold calling and candidate outreach and networking,, learn how to develop marketing content to attract folks to your door, learn how to use social media for candidate sourcing, or get the help of a professional recruiter.

They will evaluate your market position and tell you what you need to do in order to increase candidate flow.

Develop the skills, or get the help you need so you can focus on managing a profitable practice which runs smoothly without interruptions from unfilled vacancies.



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You can view Debra's recent webinars at:

<https://actsmartit.com/recruit>

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Multi-Factor Baby Steps

If you're like most people, you have a lot of online accounts. Start turning multi-factor on for your most sensitive accounts, like banking, and work your way down the list to protect them all.

Learn More about Multi-Factor Authentication
ACTSmartIT.com/training