

How to Relate to Customers for Long-Term Success



As a business owner or manager, you want happy, [loyal customers](#) who order repeatedly and refer you to their friends. Some people have a knack for relating well with others and it shows in their business relationships and success. Most of us struggle at least a little with how to relate to customers, so here are a few tips you can use to improve.

Listen (Stop Talking)

Whether it's in an email, voice call or a [video chat](#), listen to your customers more than you speak. Ask them questions about your product or service, what they like, what they'd like to see, or anything. If you listen intently and with interest, it does two great things, both valuable to your business.

First, listening makes them feel important. Everyone wants to be heard and understood. If a customer has a beef with your product or service, just letting them express it takes you half-way to solving the problem. Complaints are sales opportunities. If you listen and solve their problem, they'll be ready to buy again.

Second, listening gives you important feedback that you need to successfully [design and market](#) your products. If you want to be efficient and effective in your marketing and sales efforts, you need to understand your customers. And that comes from listening to them, often.



Be Positive (The answer is always yes)

Every problem, delay, price increase or product change can be phrased in positive language. Instead of, "I'm sorry, we don't have that," say, "Thanks for asking about that. You've helped us identify what's important to you in our product."

A no is an immediate downer for a customer. Create yes answers for all the things you have to say no to. For example, instead of, "No, I can't give you a discount," you could say, "Yes, we can do that, and here's what you need to do to qualify for the reduced rate." Or, instead of, "John can't speak to you now" say, "John would love to help you. Until he's available, I'll have Elena take your request."

Be Personable

Start and end every communication with something personal. For example, [give customers a complement](#) before discussing the business at hand. Then conclude by thanking them in a personal way, "Hey, thanks for your time today!" You can talk about the weather, ask about their location, or comment on any number of non-business topics.

Everyone likes to hear their own name spoken. Address your customers by name and comment or ask about personal details like birthdays, children, and favorite sports. Store these details in the customer's record so you can easily access it when they contact you or you call. Then you can easily begin the conversation on a personal note.

Be Timely and Brief

No one likes to wait. Organize your day to be ready to respond to customers quickly. Or delegate it to someone else. You may want to create standards across the organization for responsiveness.

Aggressive support [response time](#) goals and timely email replies go a long way towards boosting customer satisfaction. And don't waste customers' time with long answers. Be direct, positive, and brief in your responses.



Ask them to Help You

Benjamin Franklin famously turned a rival and detractor into an ally and friend by asking to borrow a rare book from him. This small act reframed their relationship and aided Ben's career. He turned a rival into a friend because enemies don't lend each other books.

Ask your customers to do something small for you, like sending a product suggestion, and they will quickly become more loyal. Or ask them to try a new feature and report feedback or give you a quote. A great way to ask for one is, "What would you say to another CEO about our [product or service]?"

Tips You Can Remember on How to Relate to Customers

Long lists of suggestions on how to relate to customers can be found online. But no one remembers more than a few items. So, pick one, two or three of the above to focus on to improve your relationship with customers. You'll be amazed by the outcome. Then start collecting case studies and testimonials from loyal customers.

eMazzanti Technologies encourages its business customers to provide obsessively [great customer service](#). Cultivating long-term relationships and delivering, proactive and timely support transforms every customer into a friend and a partner in success.