

SERVICE TIPS

ABCs of telephone courtesy

This column will present monthly tips on various actions which will help you in dealing with customers, and will make your company more effective in providing quality "customer service."

■ When you receive a phone call from a customer, he or she is a voice without a face.

Over the phone, the spoken word is your only method of dealing with the customer. This means you must be prepared for each and every phone call. To improve your customer service effectiveness on phone calls, try this method:

1) Keep your desk organized. When a

customer calls, the customer service representative can better focus on what the customer has to say.

2) Have a sign near the phone that reminds the customer service representative to *smile* as they answer the phone. Some companies have a smile face or the words, "customers make paydays possible," printed on a card near the phone or on the wall in front of the individual answering the phone.

3) Relax for a couple seconds before taking the call, to prepare yourself to meet a customer over the phone. Take a deep breath, or clear the desk to prepare to concentrate on the customer.

4) Have your customer service rep-

resentatives pretend the customer is seated in front of their desk. This will encourage the customer service individual to sit up straight, and to be more attentive.

5) Have forms or specially colored note paper for customer service calls. Attention to notes and not talking initially during a customer service phone call will emphasize your interest about the customer and their concerns.

—Ed Wandke

—The author is a senior partner in PC Systems Services, Columbus, Ohio. Next month: how to talk to a customer.

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