

## Create Customers for Life – The 4 Steps to future-proofing your business



Customer Service is crucial to keeping your clients coming back and ensuring they'll refer you to others. In today's competitive environment, you have to do a lot more than just get the job done to retain and expand your client base. Customer service is all about the customer's perception so the things directly affecting client relationships should always be prioritised. Market research by Constructive Intervention, a company offering both long and short-term training to Irish industry offers the following suggestions.

1. Set and Review Expectations. Always set clear and realistic expectations and timelines that you can meet or exceed. Make sure both your and the clients' responsibilities are crystal clear. Don't forget to keep checking in with clients as the project progresses.
2. Communicate. It is vital that you have proactive mechanisms to ensure you're communicating with clients from the sale right through to project completion. Keep in mind that the client should never have to ask what's been completed, what's coming up next and above all, what results he/she can expect.
3. Be Organised. Are you organised? Punctual? Reliable and consistent? When you show up to work with your customers, have you done the work and are you prepared to make them feel comfortable and taken care of? Even though you've done it hundreds, maybe thousands of times before, do you take the time to organise and prepare to make it the best client experience possible?
4. Commit to the Little Things. Don't ever dismiss the power of all the little things. Together they can make all the difference and separate you from the competition. Returning calls and emails in a timely manner. Providing useful information to people on a regular basis. Showing appreciation for your clients through things like thank you notes and open house events.

Clearly these are not the only relevant areas for creating great customer service. Pick just one of these areas and create an action plan to improve it in your business today. Make a commitment to continuously improve the level of service you're providing and create customers....for life.

As an exercise, try the following audit tool that features in Constructive Intervention's Progress Business Development Programme.

Surprising customers with the level of service you provide – How would you answer the following:

- ❖ We have customer friendly front line people.
- ❖ We create a high level of unsolicited repeat business by delighting our customers.
- ❖ Customers often express surprise at the speed of our response.
- ❖ We can provide three good examples of customer delight from our last month's business.
- ❖ We often turn customers' complaints into delight.
- ❖ I have experienced customer delight.

Progress Business Development Programmes for senior executives and owner managers are currently being delivered throughout Ireland.

*Constructive Intervention has worked with thousands of private and state sector companies nationwide and offers both long and short-term training programmes to a cross-section of Irish industry. All our trainers are former senior managers and are highly seasoned executive coaches with experience in all sectors of the Irish and UK economy. They have worked with and have a proven track record among large corporate organisations and SMEs. As an Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) accredited centre, all Constructive Intervention qualifications are recognised both nationally and worldwide. Constructive Intervention is also affiliated with several third-level institutions e.g. Dundalk Institute of Technology. Through the Learning Forum™, our programmes range from Junior Certificate to Doctorate/Masters level.*

*Gerry Moan, Managing Partner, is one of the more inspirational trainers in the Irish corporate education market. An accomplished trainer and public speaker, he has also served as consultant to many regional and national organisations in Ireland, helping County Enterprise Boards, FÁS and others develop their own training infrastructures. His book, "Who's driving the bus" has been an inspiration to Irish managers from all sectors.*



*"It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader."*

**STEPHEN R. COVEY**