

Retune Your Customer Touch Points

Importance of Customer Service

Presented by

Jim Schalberg

Jim Schalberg Auto Rental Solutions

Dick Radzis

Ace Rent A Car

Car Rental Show
Las Vegas Hotel
Tuesday, March 13, 2012



Ace Rent a Car

- Founded in 1966, ACE Rent a Car has approximately 200 locations worldwide.
- Each location is independently and locally owned and operated.
- Most Ace Rent a Car airport car rental locations are just off-terminal with fast, efficient shuttle service to the airport.
- ACE Rent A Car features late model Cars, Vans, 4x4 SUV'S and other specialty vehicles.
- Ace offers low-mileage rental cars for vacation, weekend trips, business travel or just around town.
- The mission of ACE Rent A Car has been to save customers money while providing outstanding customer service.

Ace Rent A Car

“Ace Rent A Car Wins the 2011 JD Power, Rental Car Satisfaction Study”



- ACE Rent A Car ranks highest in customer satisfaction among rental car companies for the first time with a score of 793, performing particularly well in the shuttle bus/van and costs and fees factors. This is also the first time the Indiana-based independent rental car company appears in the study rankings.

Jim Schalberg Auto Rental Solutions

- Jim Schalberg Auto Rental Solutions provides a variety of products and services related to the **car rental market**.
- Whether you are new to the **auto rental industry** or a veteran owner of an auto rental agency, we can provide you with the car rental expertise you need.
- Innovative counter products like Renter's Collision Protection, Renter's Additional Liability, Renter's Personal Protection and a 24 Hour Roadside Assistance Package, set Jim Schalberg Auto rental Solutions apart from all the rest.

Great Customer Service

- Great customer service starts at the top of every successful organization.
- The combination of excellent internal and external customer handling procedures ensures a positive experience for customers and a productive working environment for employees.
- Customers are attracted to companies that excel at customer service and are more prone to refer family members and business colleagues to businesses that value their customers.
- A customer service training program will increase return customer rates, help retain quality employees, and establish predictability in customer handling.

Tips for Trainers

- Spend time every few months to reinforce the importance of this program and help increase employee buy-in.
- Train new employees immediately upon hire to establish a strong customer-oriented culture
- Maintain effectiveness by occasionally monitoring employee performance and coaching individuals in private sessions if needed.

First Impressions

- **Housekeeping**

- It is always good practice to look at your location every day through the eyes of the customer.
- Many customers will be entering your location for the first time and the outside appearance is your welcome mat.
- View the facility from the street to the front door.
- Customers should see the inventory parked clean and ready to go.
- If there is a damaged or unclean vehicle, have it removed to another area.
- Removing accumulated trash and cleaning up any cigarette debris at or around the entrance door is of the utmost importance.

First Impressions

- **Housekeeping**

- A clean office gives the customer a good first impression.
- Successful rental locations take time to organize daily paperwork and separate front-office procedures from back-office procedures.
- Keeping oily parts and work orders located where they belong in the maintenance area not only displays company pride, it also increases employee efficiency by reducing the time it takes to locate random items left scattered around the building.
- Keep the rental counter free of clutter. The rental counter is a place of business. It should not double as a break area for coffee and lunches. Stand on the customer side of the counter and look to see what the customer sees.

First Impressions

- Good housekeeping shows customers that owners and employees care about the appearance of the company.
- A neat and clean customer reception area is safer, more attractive to customers, and improves employee productivity.
- The effort put forth in keeping a clean and presentable office pays dividends many times over through return customer patronage and increased employee efficiency.

Housekeeping Checklist

- Work area is clean and organized
- Customer paperwork is filed and orderly
- Rental counter clean, neat and orderly
- No extension cords or other trip hazards in customer greeting area
- Trip hazards in parking lot are eliminated or well-marked
- No car parts or items unrelated to customers visible in customer greeting area
- Add-on sales item brochures are visible to customers and are organized
- Floor is free of debris and is vacuumed
- Windows are clean
- Chairs in waiting area are lined up properly and not greasy or dirty
- Employee personal items are tasteful and not distracting or offensive to customers

Customer Service

- Customer Touch Points
- Customer service at the rental counter begins with a smile and a positive customer greeting.
- These may come in two forms, in-person customer service, and telephone customer service.
- The successful rental car location trains employees in both areas to maximize the customer experience and sell more rental days.
- Establishing strong customer service procedures improves first impressions and creates a measurable employee skill set that makes sure the company has the right people at the front desk.

Speech, Attitude, and Predictability

Training employees with the “SAP” method of **Speech, Attitude, and Predictability** will build a strong foundation for first and future conversations with customers.

- **Speech**, concerns the employee’s speaking ability and language.
 - speak clearly and at a reasonable speed
 - refrain from using slang or foul language
 - Professional speech is easy to identify.

- If the employee would not tell a specific phrase to their mother, pastor, they should not say it to a customer.

Speech, Attitude, and Predictability

- **Attitude**, or personality, involves building the agent's ability to control their attitude.
- The last thing a customer wants to deal with is someone in a bad mood or too tired to pay attention.
- A positive attitude goes further than making a customer happy on the day he or she rents a vehicle; it helps the customer decide where to take their future return business.

Speech, Attitude, and Predictability

- The third basic component is **Predictability**.
- Takes time to master, and will come with practice.
- Management must first decide what they would like employees to say.
- A script, something like this
 - “Welcome to ABC Rent a Car, my name is Mary, may I help you please?”

- In the rental car business, first impressions are extremely important. Training employees on proper etiquette and standardizing counter procedures with the **SAP** method will improve customer relationships and turn inquiries into sold rental days. A good first impression has the power to create a customer for life.

On the Telephone

- The majority of customers have their first contact with a company via the telephone.
- First impressions, even over the telephone, can mean the difference between sold rental days and wasted time.
- One of the most important counter procedures to have in place is a company telephone customer service standard.
- For example, “Thank you for calling ABC Rental, my name is Jane, may I help you please?”

It is best to train all staff members how to answer the telephone in a way that invites business and shows the professionalism of the rental location.

Successful rental car locations use the same guiding principles whether customers call or visit in person.

Enhancing the customer experience is a main building block for improving business success

In Person

- The walk-in customer demands undivided attention.
- Employees should greet this customer immediately with eye contact, a verbal greeting, and most importantly, a smile.
- If several different customers come at the same time, greet them all the same way and let them customers know you will assist them shortly.
- The front desk agent should listen carefully to the customer's request and ask probing questions to gather important pieces of information about the rental.
- The employee should remain aware of customer body language and listen for clues that may reveal an increased risk with the potential renter.

One Customer at a Time

- No customer wants to feel like just a number.
- Interaction with customers must consist of building a relationship, displaying the company's ability to meet their needs, and asking qualifying questions.
- When applied properly, these three items establish a lasting connection with each customer, increase customer confidence, and reduce risk by determining renter eligibility early in the sales process.

Professionalism

- Successful rental locations train employees to be professional.
- Training front desk agents to ask simple, direct questions to gather facts reduces processing time and improves customer service.
- Employees do not need be short with customers; they should question with confidence and show their competence in handling the client's needs.

Employee Education

- The successful rental location builds customer confidence by teaching employees important elements of the job such as knowing rental rates and availability.
- Locations with large, diverse inventories must help the customer determine the type of rental that will best suit his or her needs. Locations with limited inventory must promote available vehicles to maximize utilization.
- Successful rental locations develop a clear, accurate rate and availability system, which front desk employees use at the counter to help connect renters with vehicles.
- Location leadership determines daily rental and mileage rates, which can vary depending on geography and presence of competition.
- A good practice is to mystery shop a random sample of area competitors to help establish competitive pricing.
- Once this information is collected, the designated training representative must instruct employees how to use it effectively in handling customer rental requests.

Pick up and Drop Off

- Pick up and delivery service options are part of building customer confidence.
- These services are by no means required for business success, but can be an attractive option to customers.
- To determine need, rental locations may choose to survey random customers or check offerings from area competitors.
- Rental location leadership may wish to consider adding a policy of free pick up and delivery within a predetermined radius of the organization if the market demands.
- Again, once the decision to offer pick up and delivery has been made by company leadership, employees must be instructed how to offer the services to customers.

General Employee Behavior

- Great employees are made, not born.
- Teaching and reinforcing good work habits helps shape desirable employee behaviors and reduce undesirable behaviors.
- Using feedback to give recognition for a job well done is one of the best ways to improve the morale and effectiveness of front desk staff.
- Basic behavior shaping can begin with the use of three practices, including giving feedback, breaking bad habits, and creating vision.
- These commonly used techniques are the foundation to creating model employees.

Giving Feedback

- Giving good feedback, both positive and negative, is a valuable skill for management to learn.
- The theory driving behavior modification based on feedback is that positive reinforcement of good behaviors increases the likelihood the individual will repeat the good behavior.
- For instance, complimenting an employee on a large add-on sale encourages the employee to repeat the behavior.
- The employee enjoys receiving the feedback, so they change their work habits and offer more add-on items so they will receive another compliment in the future.

Creating Vision

- Strong leaders, both in business and in public life, all create a vision for their followers.
- Successful rental operation owners share their vision of success with their employees.
- The vision must be clear, repeated frequently, and include mention of employees as an important piece in achieving the goal.
- Employees who hear and understand the company vision gain emotional ownership in the organization.

Worth the Effort

- Strong customer service is the foundation for any business that hopes to be successful.
- Employee coaching and maintenance builds a culture of customer service and sets a standard that employees at all levels can embrace.
- Following the steps in this training manual can help rekindle the cooperative customer service spirit needed to make any rental location a customer's dream.
- It is important that management work with the employees, establish customer service goals, and maintain the program with occasional retraining to achieve company directives.

We would like to say thanks!

Thanks to all of you for your patience and attention.

Remember we will e-mail you a copy of this presentation....minus the slides we mentioned...simply fill out the Presentation Form completely.

A Special thanks to our sponsors:

The Car Rental Show

The Las Vegas Hotel

Enjoy the rest of the show!