

# #85: Ideas & Inspirations

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## Our hearts go out to Christchurch



Our thoughts & prayers go out to the people of Christchurch during this distressing time. As fellow Cantabrians we know that you will get through this and come out stronger on the other side. Hang in there.

To everyone from outside the Canterbury region that has worked tirelessly since the 22nd February on everything from tending to our injured and dying, protecting us and our property and risking their own safety on our behalf, we thank you sincerely.

## Words of Wisdom

*"That some good can be derived from every event is a better proposition than that everything happens for the best, which it assuredly does not."*

## Service Tips:

IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS offers a weekly customer service success idea delivered by Pod Cast. Each Monday we will help you start your week with a 90 second dynamic service message that will inspire you to focus on one aspect of your customer service. It will get your mind stimulated to look for ways to implement real customer service improvements.

### Here are the latest Service Tips from KiwiHost:

- Surround yourself with good people
- The benefits of good service tools
- The right time to fix things



To listen go to our website [www.kiwihost.co.nz](http://www.kiwihost.co.nz) and click on: service tips.

## Service in 2011

*For the last five years, since New Zealand was granted the rights to host the Rugby World Cup 2011, there has been a lot of talk about the need to improve New Zealand's service standards.*

This has been in relation to the tens of thousands of tourists that will inhabit our shores for much of the duration of the tournament and the 'word of mouth' marketing that this will provide back in their countries of origin.

To date we have seen little increase in companies focusing on this event, or other major events like the rowing world championships held on Lake Karapiro, as a reason to upskill their staff.

2011 provides a significant opportunity to use this tournament as a catalyst for all businesses, not just those in the hospitality and tourism sectors, to focus on improving their overall service provision. There is no reason why only visitors should receive good service. Improving service is not just nice for the customer to receive, it is one of

the real differentiators for a business that leads to improved profitability and business sustainability.

As with any opportunity there are pitfalls to look out for and this time they come in the form of those who don't perform. Any poor service experience can not only be told to friends and family on return, but with blogs and social media websites the story can be splashed around the world in a matter of seconds. This combined with international media being here in huge numbers for two months and looking for any story to send back home present both a huge opportunity, and a threat if we don't hit the mark.

All eyes will be on New Zealand in 2011... service is our best ally in ensuring a fantastic return on the investment made to date.

# Satisfied customers : What do customers want?

With today's cut-throat competition from big business, trying to compete on price can be a quick road to ruin for a startup company. But here's a little secret you should know: contrary to common perception, customers won't always go elsewhere just to save a buck.

So if you want to avoid getting beat up on price, stop trying to compete on price alone. What your business needs to stand out is better customer service and satisfied customers. But don't make it the simple "please and thank you" variety. Aim higher. Strive for fabulous, standout, outrageously great service to set your startup business apart from the crowd. Most customers will put service ahead of price - if you give them the chance.

## WHAT KEEPS CUSTOMERS SATISFIED

- **Knowledgeable and available staff:** While a customer is making the buying decision, they want knowledgeable assistance, available when they want it. Customers place a high value on accurate information and want to be served by employees who know the product inside and out.
- **Friendly people:** Customers not only want product-savvy sales people, they want them to be friendly and courteous. Your staff should value each customer more than any individual sale.



- **Good value:** This is where price factors in. But customers surveyed see price as only one component of the bigger picture of "value" that includes the service, information and follow-up they also receive.

- **Convenience:** The service rule here is simple: make it easy! Customers want merchandise that is well organized, attractively displayed and easy to find. That's how today's customers define convenience, and the easier you can make the shopping, the more money you will be logging to the bank.
- **A fast finish:** This final item is where too many businesses fall flat, right at the finish line. While customers are in the process of deciding to buy or not, they are proceeding on your time. They want thoughtful help making the right decisions. But once the buying decision is made, get out of their way because now you are working on their time, and they want to complete the transaction and be on their way as quickly as possible. At the cash register, there is no time for making additional suggestions.

## OUR BOTTOM LINE

In the end, it may be your service - not your price - that dictates whether or not you secure customers for the long term. If you give people what they want, the way they want it and follow through with a fast finish when it comes time to pay up, you are much more likely to turn them into satisfied customers.

## Ideas for finding new customers

Realise there is no one path to success. Sales often happen because prospective customers hear about your products and services in several different ways and from several different sources. The more often they hear about you, the more likely they are to consider what you have to offer when they are ready to buy.



## Find us on Facebook!

Check out our Facebook page for news, updates, Service Tips, customer service related articles and special offers on workshops!

## Sign Up and Win

SIGN UP TO THE ELECTRONIC KIWIHOST IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS NEWSLETTER and go into the draw to win your choice of any one of the Effective Series Workbooks. These self-paced self-learning workbooks foster development and improve staff performance.

To sign up visit [www.kiwhost.co.nz](http://www.kiwhost.co.nz)  
Winners will be announced in the next hard copy of Ideas & Inspirations.

**Congratulations to last issue's winner  
Julie Patterson from Antarctica New Zealand.**



# It's time for your tune-up

Just as your vehicle has needs that should be addressed regularly, you can also benefit by giving yourself a "tune-up". During your personal mental tune-up, you can examine the old routines that need to be replaced or identify new actions that will rev up your engine.

Here is a check-list that you can use for your next tune-up.



- Take a class or study a new subject. Learning something new will be exciting and will expose you to new people and new situations. Whether it's art history, ballroom dancing or learning another language, this will rejuvenate you as you rediscover the joy of learning and broaden your horizons.
- Stop participating in activities or organisations that no longer interest you. The fact that you joined an organisation or have engaged in an activity does not mean that you entered into a lifetime contract to stay involved.
- Confront a fear that stands in the way of your personal or professional growth. Fear holds us back from reaching our potential and living an exciting life. We have dreams and goals, but we don't take steps toward them because of a variety of fears - the fear that we might fail, the fear that someone may criticise us, the fear of the unknown, or even the fear that we might succeed.
- Examine whether your activities are in line with your stated priorities. Ask people about their priorities, and they'll probably tell you that it is in their family, faith or their health. Bring your activities in line with your priorities? If you will not make any changes to be more consistent, then don't kid yourself any longer. Your priorities are simply not what you say they are.
- Support others in the pursuit of their dreams. Take every opportunity to support friends, relatives or colleagues who are pursuing their dreams. From your own personal experience, you know how tough it is to blaze a new trail, start a new business or try to achieve something ambitious. Give support to others. It will make a world of difference to them. In addition, getting involved in their dreams will rekindle your enthusiasm and encourage you to pursue your own dreams.
- Do something to improve your health and energy. Start treating your health as a top priority instead of something you "don't have time for". If you don't have time to maintain your car, or if you put sludge into the petrol tank, your car sputters and breaks down. The same holds true for you. Find the time to walk several times each week or to do some other type of exercise at home or in the gym. As a result, you're going to feel better and perform more effectively - on the job and at home. In addition, taking care of your body builds self-esteem.

Have you gone through the checklist for your tune-up and are you ready to attend to each of these items? You wouldn't want your mechanic to skip over any areas when checking your car. So, don't cheat yourself by ignoring these areas. When you give yourself this regular tune-up, your body, mind and spirit will be firing on all cylinders.

## Tips for effective business emails

- Think before you write. Just because you can now send information quicker than ever, it doesn't mean that you should always send it. Analyse your recipient's needs or interests to make certain that you are sending a message that will be useful and clear.
- Remember that once you have written something down you can be held accountable for it. Also you may be surprised where your message ends up.
- Keep your message concise. Send more in-depth discussions, reports or other documents as attachments.
- Don't copy (cc or bcc) many people needlessly. Open communication may be nice in theory and shows you are keeping others in the loop, however in real terms it can be wasteful of other peoples' time and therefore counter productive.
- Check that attachments are attached and that they are the correct attachments. Make sure they don't contain confidential company information.
- Remember that email is not confidential. Do not send anything you wouldn't be comfortable seeing published in a newspaper.
- Don't attempt to discipline your recipient. It's unprofessional to lose control in person - to do so in writing usually makes the situation worse.
- Don't "spam" your recipients. Sending them frivolous or unnecessary messages will devalue your communications and they may stop opening all emails from you.
- DON'T TYPE IN CAPS. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE YELLING AT YOUR RECIPIENTS. Remember, if you emphasise everything, you will have emphasised nothing!
- don't type in all lower case. If you violate the rules of English grammar and usage, you make it difficult for the reader to understand your message.
- Use the "Subject" line to get the readers' attention. Replace vague lines ("Status Report", "Information on Project C") with better hooks: "Need your input on Project C" or "Analysis of recent problems with Central City branch"
- Always proofread your document before you send it. Run the spelling and grammar check. Simple mistakes will make you look sloppy and damage your credibility.
- If the email is particularly important have a colleague or assistant read through it. They may spot simple mistakes, or point out if your tone or language is inappropriate for your purpose.

## Don't forget about our New Programmes!

### DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Difficult people can be a nuisance, an embarrassment or a challenge.

Handled correctly, these situations are an opportunity for your organisation's reputation and customer service relationship to be seen in a positive way.

### TELEPHONE SELLING SKILLS

The skills of telephone selling are specialised, and excellence in these skills provides a strong and valuable basis for business success and individual opportunity.

### TIME MANAGEMENT

Is time management an illusion? an effective ideal? or a learnable skill?

In a time where the reality is the need "to do more with less" what are the secrets of the effective, productive, management of time.

*Please contact your local KiwiHost representative to see if these workshops are running in your area or for more information!*

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## How you answer the phone says a great deal about your business

Phone answering skills are critical for businesses. The telephone is still most business's primary point of contact with customers. And the way you answer your company's phone will form your customer's first impression of your business. These phone answering tips will ensure that callers know they're dealing with a winning business:

1. Answer all incoming phone calls before the third ring.
2. When you answer the phone, be warm and enthusiastic. Your voice at the end of the telephone line is sometimes the only impression of your company a caller will get.
3. When answering the phone, welcome callers courteously and identify yourself and your organization. Say, for instance, "Good morning. Cypress Technologies. Susan speaking. How may I help you?" No one should ever have to ask if they've reached such and such a business.
4. Enunciate clearly, keep your voice volume moderate, and speak slowly and clearly when answering the phone, so your caller can understand you easily.
5. Control your language when answering the phone. Don't use slang or jargon. Instead of saying, "OK", or "No problem", for instance, say "Certainly", "Very well", or "All right". If you're a person who uses fillers when you speak, such as "uh huh", "um", or phrases such as "like" or "you know", train yourself carefully not to use these when you speak on the phone.
6. Take telephone messages completely and accurately. If there's something you don't understand or can't spell, such as a person's surname, ask the caller to repeat it or spell it for you. Then make sure the message gets to the intended recipient.
7. Always ask the caller if it's all right to put him or her on hold, and provide callers on hold with progress reports every 30 to 45 seconds. Offer them choices if possible, such as "That line is still busy. Will you continue to hold or should I have \_\_\_\_\_ call you back?"
8. Don't use a speaker phone unless absolutely necessary. Speaker phones give the caller the impression that you're not fully concentrating on his call, and make him think that his call isn't private. The only time to use a speaker phone is when you need more than one person to be in on the conversation at your end.
9. If you use an answering machine to answer calls when you can't, make sure that you have a professional message recorded, that does the same thing as tip # 3, and gives callers any other pertinent information before it records their messages. Update your answering machine message as needed. For instance, if your business is going to be closed for a holiday, update your recorded answering machine message to say so and to say when your business will reopen.
10. Train everyone else who answers the phone to answer the same way, including other family members if you're running a home-based business. Check on how your business's phone is being answered by calling in and seeing if the phone is being answered in a professional manner.



# National Training Courses



## KEY SERVICE SKILLS

Customers rate personal interactions miles ahead of any other feature in the buying experience – including convenience. Key Service Skills is a dynamic fresh new course from KiwiHost that will keep customers loyal when you empower your staff with core customer service techniques and a “Can Do” attitude from KiwiHost.

This workshop is the essential first step to inspiring a passion for customers in every corner of your business, and will provide staff of any business or organisation with grounding in the concepts of professional customer service.

*This workshop will enable the participant to:*

- > Communicate effectively.
- > Meet, greet and remember names and faces.
- > Listen actively and ask open questions.
- > Understand that the customer is the lifeblood of the company.
- > Avoid assumptions and change customer perceptions for the better.
- > Give the customer a quality experience and demonstrate how that benefits everybody.
- > Handle complaining customers and solve service related problems.

*Duration: 1 Day*



## ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Regardless of your business or the make-up of your staff, everyday your business is presented with opportunities to generate new customers and to retain and grow existing ones – well trained, professional staff will recognise those opportunities.

Advanced Customer Service will motivate participants with customer service experience to expand their skills in dealing with a wide range of customer interactions, by developing an understanding of what the customer wants and expects. The workshop also includes training on how to add value to transactions and how to build a customer ladder of loyalty making sure that the customer returns.

*This workshop will enable the participant to:*

- > Understand 'how and why' their role is important.
- > Turn all customer service scenarios into gold.
- > Use the strategies to turn problem, angry and difficult customers into happy ones.
- > Complete a self-analysis of their service attitude and skills, to build empathy.
- > Identify the four levels of customer expectation.
- > Give great first impressions.

*Duration: 1 Day*



## PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

The drive for greater productivity, cost cutting and environmental changes have only increased the importance of the telephone as a business tool. Few businesses have equipped their staff to cope with the demands, pressures and opportunities that the telephone offers.

Professional Telephone Skills has been substantially updated and improved to equip business for a telecommunication driven world, and to develop participants' understanding of the telephone as a customer service tool.

*This workshop will enable the participant to:*

- > Understand that the telephone is a vital element toward achieving professional customer service.
- > Have meaningful and pleasant interaction with the caller and offer excellent service and help.
- > Be positively aware of the need for clarity, good pronunciation, tone and attitude.
- > Be able to listen, use open questions and clarify the caller's needs.
- > Use questioning techniques and effective listening.

*Duration: 1 Day*



## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

People that challenge you also present you with a great opportunity to become a better, wiser, more experienced Customer Service Provider. Understanding the differences between real problems and concerns, and the habitual responses or games makes all the difference to how we respond to and deal with such situations.

Gain the skills and techniques to recognise and deal with a number of difficult and distressing situations. Participants will, at the conclusion of this workshop, have the skills to enable them to deal competently with any challenging situation in such a way that the organisation's reputation and customer service relationship are seen in a positive way.

*This workshop will enable the participant to:*

- > Clearly identify the emotions and behaviours that arise during a stressful or difficult interaction.
- > Understand the part each party plays - ownership and responsibility.
- > Know the difference between real problems and habitual responses that provoke and destroy customer relationships.
- > Have a series of practical easily used tools to move from a difficult situation to a satisfactory resolution.

*Duration: 1 Day*

# National Training Schedule

## KEY SERVICE SKILLS

Duration: 1 Day

	APR	MAY	JUN
Auckland	5	19	29
Waikato	12	17	
Bay of Plenty	12	17	
Taranaki	5		21
Palmerston North		3	23
Gisborne			3
Napier & Hastings		10	
Wellington	27		21
Christchurch	11		8
Dunedin	19		1

## ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Duration: 1 Day

	APR	MAY	JUN
Auckland	12	18	23
Waikato	13	18	
Bay of Plenty		10	
Taranaki	7		23
Palmerston North	14		9
Napier & Hastings			16
Wellington	12	10	14
Nelson		30	
Blenheim	12		
Christchurch	12		14
Timaru		13	
Dunedin		4	22

## PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

Duration: 1 Day

	APR	MAY	JUN
Auckland	6	17	30
Waikato	14	24	
Bay of Plenty	13		
Taranaki	6		22
Palmerston North			14
Napier & Hastings	7		
Wellington	5		7
Nelson	14		
Christchurch		17	
Dunedin		2	8

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Duration: 1 Day

	APR	MAY	JUN
Auckland	14		
Waikato		25	
Bay of Plenty	11		
Taranaki		11	
Wellington	11		20
Christchurch		18	