

# #86: Ideas & Inspirations

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## Words of Wisdom

*"Everything begins with the resolve to take the first step. From that action, wisdom arises and change begins. Without action, nothing changes."*

## 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:

- Give your customers a little thrill
- Improve your listening skills
- Simple truth to excellent service



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



## Digital Revolution

*Have you grabbed it yet or are you nervous something bad might happen?*

It's no secret that the world has embraced technology and that web 2.0 has enabled multiple simple communication channels between company and customer for the first time. In many ways this has shifted the balance of power to the consumer for the first time.

Whilst this is a bit scary for many business people, businesses should embrace this ability to communicate and engage with customers. This engagement enables you to not only turn customers into evangelists for your business, but in the case of disgruntled customers, it provides you with the ability to immediately rectify potentially damaging situations.

Historically 65% of people have told more than 4 people about a bad service experience (KiwiHost/JRA 2010 Customer Service Survey). The ability to either get to those disgruntled customers before they tell those people or respond in a timely manner is crucial in winning the service perception battle. Not only will this one customer be

happy at the result, but all those using social media will see the 'happy' end result.

Obviously historical data on how many people you told, now have no resemblance to what is the reality with online feedback for sites, either via industry specific portals asking for feedback e.g. travelocity, or via social media sites like Facebook or Twitter. There is no limit as to how many people you can tell in an instant.

Online feedback is a worldwide phenomenon, and one that New Zealanders are rapidly embracing. Nearly three-quarters of Kiwi internet users now read other consumer's product opinions before booking a holiday or buying a new computer, according to Nielsen's 2010 Social Media Report. And around 44 per cent had published their opinions on products, services and brands they'd experienced.

Can your organisation afford to ignore the opportunities any longer? cont...

# Digital Revolution: Are you in? cont...

If you are looking to engage with your customers; do you think they are going to do that via your company's corporate website or via Facebook? Facts, figures and glossy pictures might get them interested, but real-time communication with other clients may be the evidence they need to make the purchase.

So, if you've decided to take the plunge, Facebook is an easy way to start out with social media. Here are a couple of tips to get you started:

#### **Link to your page from everywhere:**

If you want fans, you have to let people know you're on Facebook. Put an icon or link in your newsletter, on your website or blog, in your email footer, everywhere.

#### **Email and blog it:**

Don't be shy. Do an email blast driving subscribers to your fan page. Post a blog about what's happening on your fan page with an invitation to become a fan.

#### **Post often:**

The same rules apply to Facebook as any other social media. It's all about content and interaction.

#### **Subscribe to similar fan pages and groups:**

A cheap way to reach beyond your fans and attract new fans is to subscribe to similar



pages and groups and post short messages inviting people to visit your page. Don't do it too often. And don't be spammy.

There is much much more that you can do with Facebook, but this should get you started.

Is it worth it? Absolutely. Facebook can drive significant traffic to your website as your fan base grows. And it gives you a totally independent way to interact with potential customers or supporters.

## Prospecting Tips

1. There's no magic bullet.

Prospecting takes time and if your sales pipeline isn't always filled with prospects in various stages of being worked, then you are in for a future sales slump

2. Follow-up and follow-through are keys to prospecting success. If you don't remain in contact, you will never break through.



## 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.kiwihost.co.nz](http://www.kiwihost.co.nz)

Winners will be announced in the next hard copy of Ideas & Inspirations.

**Congratulations to last issue's winner Joanne Kendall, Airways New Zealand.**



# Good relationships will develop your business

The power of good relationships is often underestimated as an important marketing tool for business development. Whether your business has a product to sell or is a service you provide, strong relationships can help grow it. Relationships are the key to referrals, because people refer business to those they like, respect and trust.



Here are some relationship-building tools that will energize your business:

- > Keep track of who referred business to you. Keep a database of some sort and make a note in it that shows who referred your business and who was referred to you by a contact.
- > Look for opportunities to refer business to people you know
- > Join organizations specifically to meet other business people (e.g., Rotary Club, social clubs, Chamber of Commerce etc.).
- > When you meet new people, in addition to exchanging business cards, take an interest in them. Ask thoughtful questions about them and their business. Give them ample time to respond. Learn about their business needs.
- > Make notes on the back of business cards afterward and enter your notes into your contact database. Include where and when you met, and key points to remember.
- > Find opportunities to stay in touch with those you know. A simple phone call on occasion to inquire how things are going is valuable in establishing good relationships.
- > Don't forget that invitations for coffee, sporting events, group picnics, etc., keep relationships alive and strong. The stronger your relationship, the more people will value you. People do business with people they like and trust.
- > Consider who is already in your network with whom you can begin to expand your relationship: family, friends, neighbours, other businesses in your location, people you do business with (banker, accountant, lawyer, plumber, etc.).
- > Schedule some time and mark your calendar to give people a call. Think of the time spent as business development. The conversation doesn't need to be long.

Keep and nurture your business relationships. They are an investment in your business and will pay you back tenfold.

## Eight Keys to Creating a Customer Service Culture

1. Management must make the measurement of service quality and feedback from the customer a basic part of everyone's work experience. This information must be available and understood by everyone, no matter what their level. The entire organization must become obsessed with what the customer wants.
2. Be very clear about specifying the behavior that employees are expected to deliver, both with external customers and their coworkers.
3. Explain why giving excellent customer service is important -- not only for the company, but for the world. What does your company do that makes life easier for everyone? What does your product or service add? Be sure to include this in the reasons for achieving customer service excellence.
4. Create ways to communicate excellent examples of customer service both within and outside the company. Institute celebrations, recognition ceremonies, logos, and symbols of the customer service culture and its values.
5. Indoctrinate and train everyone in the culture as soon as they are hired.
6. Encourage a sense of responsibility for group performance. Help employees see how their performance affects others. Emphasise the importance of "internal customer service."
7. Establish policies that are "customer friendly" and that show concern for your customers. Eliminate all routine and rigid policies and guidelines. Knock yourself out to be a company that is easy to do business with.
8. Remove any employees who do not show the behavior necessary to please customers. Too many companies allow frontline service representatives to remain on the job when they are not suited to a customer service position.

In order for a culture of customer service excellence to grow and thrive, management must have a burning desire for it to be that way and the energy to ensure that this desire spreads throughout the organization and remains there permanently. You must become a totally customer-focused organization. Everyone, from the top down, must believe that they work for the customer.

# 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

	AUG	SEP	OCT
Whangarei		5	
Auckland	10	22	
Waikato	9	13	
Bay of Plenty	2	14	19
Taranaki	23		11
Palmerston North	18		13
Napier & Hastings	31		19
Wellington	16		18
Christchurch	10		
Dunedin	24		4

## ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Duration: 1 Day

	AUG	SEP	OCT
Whangarei			7
Auckland	17	15	27
Waikato	10	14	
Bay of Plenty	24		4
Taranaki	25		13
Palmerston North		7	
Napier & Hastings	17		
Wellington	9	13	11
Nelson	10		
Christchurch	9		4
Dunedin	8	28	

## PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

Duration: 1 Day

	AUG	SEP	OCT
Whangarei	29		
Auckland	9	20	
Waikato	11	15	
Bay of Plenty		28	
Taranaki	24		12
Palmerston North	17		
Napier & Hastings		28	
Wellington	2		4
Nelson			27
Christchurch			26
Dunedin	30		6

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Duration: 1 Day

	AUG	SEP	OCT
Auckland		7	
Waikato			12
Taranaki			
Wellington		12	
Christchurch		21	

## 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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## Four steps to strengthening B2B customer connections

IBM's 2010 CEO Study confirmed what marketers already know: getting closer to customers is a strategic priority. An overwhelming 88% of large enterprise CEOs told IBM that getting closer to customers is a top business strategy for the next five years, placing it at the top of the list. An even higher number of the best performing CEOs, 95%, stressed the point.

Isn't this just Marketing 101? Well, sort of. The idea is basic, but making it happen, especially in large organizations, is not so easy.

The CEO imperative makes sense. Big company CEOs are struggling mightily with "the complexity of operating in an increasingly volatile and uncertain world."

In this context, and especially from a B2B perspective, close customer connections are essential to:

- > Gain deep insight into customer wants and needs
- > Gather input and advice on potential new offerings
- > Uncover new opportunities and co-create solutions

Creating and sustaining those trusted connections is extremely difficult, though, when our customers are overwhelmed with their own professional demands and tune out most of our marketing.

Social media brings promise of new and potentially more effective ways to build and maintain vibrant customer connections. Meanwhile, face-to-face connections remain essential for key customers. But our sales people have less time for relationship building and beyond sales and customer

service it is difficult to know which face-to-face programs are worth funding.

Here are four steps to consider:

**1. Do an assessment.** Review effectiveness of all your connections with customers, in terms of customer insight and relationship growth. Benchmark the competition. We need a baseline to identify gaps and next steps and to help build a vision of where we need to go.

**2. Put someone in charge and build a cross-organizational team.** You need someone with the big picture in mind and organizational partners and resources available to improve coordination, integration, and information sharing and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across the range of relationship-oriented programs.

**3. Build executive commitment.** The CEO wants to get closer to customers but is the rest of the leadership group on board? Operationalising the commitment to customer connections requires real investment and, as important, TIME. Send the message that these initiatives are indeed a top priority.

**4. Provide incentives.** Companies that take customer satisfaction seriously put serious incentives in place to support the right behavior. Improving customer satisfaction is not the same thing as strengthening customer connections and relationships, but the principle certainly applies. Set specific goals, measure results, and then reward the folks in marketing, sales, service, and delivery teams for hitting their relationship growth targets.

