

Essential Customer Service Email Skills



LORMAN[®]

Published on www.lorman.com - October 2017

Essential Customer Service Email Skills, ©2017 Lorman Education Services. All Rights Reserved.

INTRODUCING

Lorman's New Approach to Continuing Education

ALL-ACCESS PASS

The All-Access Pass grants you **UNLIMITED** access to Lorman's ever-growing library of training resources:

- ☑ Unlimited Live Webinars - 120 live webinars added every month
- ☑ Unlimited OnDemand and MP3 Downloads - Over 1,500 courses available
- ☑ Videos - More than 700 available
- ☑ Slide Decks - More than 1700 available
- ☑ White Papers
- ☑ Reports
- ☑ Articles
- ☑ ... and much more!

Join the thousands of other pass-holders that have already trusted us for their professional development by choosing the All-Access Pass.



Get Your All-Access Pass Today!

SAVE 20%

Learn more: www.lorman.com/pass/?s=special20

Use Discount Code Q7014393 and Priority Code 18536 to receive the 20% AAP discount.

*Discount cannot be combined with any other discounts.

Essential Customer Service Email Skills

Customer service professionals are responsible for a wide variety of communication duties. They must be able to field calls, letters and emails from customers in a professional, effective manner. For many customer service professionals, responding to customer emails presents a challenge.

Writing a polite, effective email that addresses customer issues doesn't need to be difficult. Successful communication with customers via email requires basic written communication skills and the ability to write in a semi-formal, polite tone. More important than such skills, however, is the ability to successfully craft a message that customers will understand and to which they are likely to respond positively.

The following guide provides straightforward tips and advice for customer service professionals who are required to answer customer emails. It addresses successful writing, grammar and communication in the context of customer service. By following this step-by-step guide, any customer service professional will be able to compose clear, effective emails.

How to Compose Effective Email Messages

Composing effective email messages is about more than just using good spelling and grammar. In order to compose effective emails, it is necessary to understand what a customer wants. It is also necessary to understand the type of email to which a customer will respond positively. The goal of customer service emails should *always* be to build strong relationships with a business's customer base.

Understand What Your Customer Wants

It is impossible to respond effectively to an email from a customer unless you truly understand what your customer *wants*. It's important to keep in mind that not all customers who send emails or written feedback to companies have a strong command of the English language. Their emails may seem unnecessarily rude. Keep in mind that it is important to respond to such emails professionally. Rude responses are sure to isolate customers and may lead to a poor reputation for a company.

Take the following factors into account when deciding what a customer wants. You may want to take notes on the email or on a separate piece of paper if the customer's email is particularly long or confusing.

1. **Why did the customer choose to write to your company?** Pay attention to whether or not the customer states why he or she is writing to your company. Uncovering this information can help you determine what type of response is appropriate.
2. **What does the customer ask for?** On some occasions, customers make very specific requests in an email. They may want store credit for defective merchandise or they may want to pass praise along to a particularly helpful employee. It is essential that you directly address any specific item the customer wants.
3. **What is the customer's overall tone?** You will probably be able to pick up on the customer's overall tone quickly. Does he or she seem angry or satisfied? Is the customer praising or critiquing the company?

Look at the basic information you've gathered from the customer's email. This will serve as a guide when responding to the customer. After all, the customer expects your response to directly address his or her concerns. If the email is unclear, ask a coworker to read it over and offer an opinion.

Outline A Successful Response

If you understand what a customer wants, you will be able to compose a successful email. Customer service professionals who don't have strong writing skills may wish to outline their responses prior to writing. While an outline may seem time-consuming, this tactic can actually save you time in the long run. It is also a great way to be sure that you are addressing every concern or comment that a customer offered in his or her email. Use the following outline as a guide. Remember that you will need to include the date and your company's contact information when composing emails. Many company email systems are set up to automatically include contact information in your email signature.

- *Salutation.* Be sure to greet the customer in friendly but professional fashion.
- *Acknowledge the customer's email.* Thank the customer for sending an email, briefly noting the customer's concerns or compliments.
- *Offer a solution.* If the customer has issued a complaint, clearly outline a solution. If the customer has offered a compliment, thank them and let them know if you've forwarded the compliment to the employee in question.
- *Summarize.* In a separate paragraph, briefly summarize the customer's concern and the solution you are offering to the customer.
- *Offer your thanks.* Thank the customer for writing. Let them know that they can respond to you with further questions or concerns.
- *Sign the email.* Be sure that your signature is professional and that it includes your company's contact information and your direct email address if appropriate.

Using The Right Language

Once you've completed your outline, you're ready to compose your actual email to the customer. Using the right language is absolutely essential when responding to customer emails. Remember that you are writing a formal email. If your company uses a certain slogan or catchphrase, you can certainly include that in your email. Review these basics do's and don'ts before composing emails to customers.

Do:

- Use proper forms of address, such as Mrs., Mr. and Miss.
- Write in complete, clear sentences.
- Break your email into paragraphs for readability.
- Use appropriate capitalization and punctuation in all sentences.

Don't:

- USE ALL CAPS, as it is often perceived as rude.
- Use slang or informal language that you wouldn't use in front of your boss.
- Use emoticons, which are generally viewed as unprofessional.
- Insult, degrade or demean the customer.

Content, Content, Content

Keep in mind that it is essential that your communications with customers include *meaningful* content. If you are awaiting an answer from a supervisor regarding a customer request, be sure to send a brief email that lets the customer know that you are investigating the issue and will be in touch with them shortly. If you are unable to grant a customer's request, be sure to decline them in a polite, positive manner. For example, if a customer has requested a refund that your company is unable to provide, you could write a sentence that reads: *Unfortunately, we are unable to provide a refund for your product but would be happy to help you find a different item in one of our store locations.* Try to provide a solution, even if it isn't the solution that the customer requested.

Essential Grammar Skills for Customer Communications

The heart of a customer response email should be content. So long as you are polite and address a customer's concerns, you have done your job. However, it is important that you ensure that the customer fully understands your email. Using proper grammar and spelling will help to make your meaning clear. If you have difficulty with grammar, be sure to use the grammar checker on your word processing program before sending an email. Some of the most common grammar mistakes include:

To, too and two. To is a proposition or direction, as in *we are going to school*. Two is a number, as in *there are two ducks*. Too means more or also, as in *there were too many flavors*.

They're, their and there. They're means *they are*. Their is possessive, as in *this is their house*. There is a proposition or direction, as in *the jacket is over there*.

Comma confusion. There are many rules about commas. You don't need to learn them all, but try to be conscious of using too many commas. If you are unsure of your comma usage, split sentences up. It never hurts to write a simpler sentence.

You should also be wary of using words unless you are absolutely sure that you know their meaning. When in doubt, check a dictionary just to be sure. If you can, avoid using overly technical language in customer emails. If you work in a field that requires the use of technical or scientific terms, try to simplify them for customers if you can.

Proofreading for Optimal Success

Don't forget that it is essential to proofread your emails before you send them to customers. Proofreading is an easy, quick way to catch common errors. Many individuals prefer to proofread out loud. Doing so can help you catch mistakes that your brain will automatically fix if you read silently to yourself. Look for the following when proofreading.

- Simple errors in spelling and grammar.
- Did you remember to address the customer's concern?
- Did you remember to provide a solution?
- Did you remember to summarize?
- Have you signed the email and included your contact information?

Create A Successful Communication System

Mastering customer service emails doesn't have to be difficult. Keep the tips provided in this paper in mind when composing your emails. If you are responsible for answering a high volume of customer emails, it may be beneficial to create a tracking system. Be sure to note when you received a customer's email and when you sent a response. Sending responses quickly is essential to maintaining great customer relationships.

The material appearing in this website is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Transmission of this information is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. The information provided herein is intended only as general information which may or may not reflect the most current developments. Although these materials may be prepared by professionals, they should not be used as a substitute for professional services. If legal or other professional advice is required, the services of a professional should be sought.

The opinions or viewpoints expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of Lorman Education Services. All materials and content were prepared by persons and/or entities other than Lorman Education Services, and said other persons and/or entities are solely responsible for their content.

Any links to other websites are not intended to be referrals or endorsements of these sites. The links provided are maintained by the respective organizations, and they are solely responsible for the content of their own sites.