



**6.5 WAYS**  
**TO KNOW YOUR**  
**CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
**IS JUST AWFUL**

**Michael D. Brown**

These days, the most obvious way to find out your customer service is bad is through online reviews. People leave reviews on Yelp, Facebook, Google, and other similar websites detailing their bad experience with your company. The problem is that these reviews are visible to everyone, and if you accumulate a lot of bad reviews you're going to have trouble keeping your business open. To prevent that happening, you need to look at indicators of unsatisfactory service so you can detect problems before they are plastered, along with your business's name, all over the internet.



## 1 - MOST OF YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE FIRST-TIMERS

New customers forming a majority of your sales might seem like a good thing. On the surface, it appears that you are able to convince a lot of people to try your business, so you must be doing something right. In reality, however, if most of your customers are first timers, it means you aren't generating enough customer loyalty. This is a huge red flag when it comes to sustaining a business. Of course, you should always be happy with new customers, but businesses thrive only when they are backed by loyal customers who come to your store again and again.

## 2 - PEOPLE NEVER ORDER MORE

This one applies mostly to restaurants. The majority of people order everything they want at once, but many people decide to order a bit more. Maybe they'll order more of something they liked or maybe they want another drink. If people only make an order once, and don't bother to order anything more, it could mean they weren't satisfied with the way they were treated in making their original order. People who are happy with the service they receive end up ordering more.

### **3 - PEOPLE AREN'T TRYING YOUR NEW OFFERINGS**

If you keep coming up with new and innovative products, but no one tries them, then your customer service might be to blame. The people who are dealing with your customers have a large impact on how customers behave. If the customer service is great, then your customers will be open to suggestions made by your staff. If the service isn't good, then people will buy only what they need and leave as fast as they can.

### **4 - YOU ONLY GET SALES WHEN YOU RUN A PROMOTION**

If your sales aren't normally impressive, but are good when you are running a promotion, you might have a customer service problem. This can indicate that people are only willing to bear dealing with your staff when the promotion is too good to miss. If customers are happy with the way they are treated by the people delivering services, they will be glad to come to your store, even when you aren't running any promotions.

### **5 - STORES AROUND YOU ARE DOING BETTER**

Sometimes, you're just stuck in a bad place. However, if the stores around you are doing great, but your store is empty, then you have a customer service problem. People like going to places where they know they will be treated well. People happily pay more because they know they will get better service. If you are running a franchise of some sort, this effect becomes even easier to measure. Are other franchises in your area doing better? Since they have the same products as you, then customer service is the only thing that can be blamed.



## 6 - YOU HAVE ONLY A FEW COMPLAINTS, BUT NO CUSTOMERS

Do you know about the mushroom theory of customer complaints? This theory points out that customer dissatisfaction is shaped like a mushroom; actual dissatisfaction is as large as the top part of the mushroom while the reported dissatisfaction is as small as the lower part. Basically, if one hundred people have a problem with your store, only five will actually bother to complain. Most will end up just not coming to your store again.



### 6.5 - FIXING THINGS

Do you know the easiest way to fix things? Talk to your customers! Instead of waiting for complaints to come in, be friendly and ask your customers if they have any problems. This will provide you with valuable insight about what you need to do to fix your business. As a bonus, it will also make your customers feel great that you asked for their opinion.

## ABOUT MICHAEL D. BROWN

Michael D. Brown is a sought-after speaker, Global management expert, and author of *Fresh Passion: Get A Brand or Die A Generic*, *Fresh Customer Service®: Treat the Employee as #1 and the Customer as #2 and You Will Get Customers for Life* and *Fresh Passion Leadership: Become a Distinct, Branded Leader or Extinct Generic*.

He has over eighteen years of experience in helping companies and organizations achieve results. These organizations include US Army, US Marines, BP, Amoco, Capital One, Jason's Deli, Murphy Oil, Omni Hotels, Houston Rockets, Wells Fargo, Marriott, Ford Foundation, and Hampton University. He has held numerous leadership positions at Fortune Global 100 Companies.

Michael's work has been featured in hundreds of publications and media outlets, including: Forbes, Georgia Public Radio, Business Week, NPR Radio, The Economic Times, Black Enterprise, Management Operations, Business Education Forum, Bits and Pieces of Leadership, Inside Business, The Managers Intelligence, Black Enterprise, and U.S. Business, Review.



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