

# *What's News*

**JANUARY 2001**

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## **CUSTOMER SERVICE IS DEAD**

Yes it is! Don't try to tell me otherwise. Maybe at your company you think there's customer service but I'll bet you if I make one phone call to your company, you'll be shocked at how your company responds to a "nobody" calling in.

I've just finished two days worth of calls to Xerox. We have a Xerox copy machine we love. We have had it since February 1999 and it has worked like a charm. We couldn't ask for a better or more reliable machine. It needed service so I called Xerox to get the service that they say is one of the reasons I should buy their copy machine rather than their competitor's.

I called the number they give you to call. I got the ever popular electronic receptionist who gives me 4 choices (I can get the choices in Spanish or French). I select one of the choices and press the corresponding number on my phone. Then I get 4 more choices. I select the number that corresponds with the choice I've made and press it. I get 4 more choices, so I select another number and push that. I get another electronic receptionist telling me the "average wait time for a customer service representative is 7 minutes". After 10 minutes, an actual human comes on the line. The human tells me I've called the wrong place. She assures me that she knows I've been waiting a long time and so she will connect me directly to the right place; a direct line into the very people who will send out a repair man to fix my machine. I am being connected to "TEAM XEROX" she says with pride and she gives me the number just in case I get disconnected. At this point I'm sucked in. I really believe this nice woman understands what I want and what I've been through to get it. I say to myself "finally some customer service!"

Then as if on cue I hear the voice of the same electronic receptionist I heard before! The voice is giving me 4 choices which gives me 4 choices which gives me 4 choices..... You get the idea! When I finally get a human after another 10 minute wait, he asks me lots of questions and I have to put him on hold to research them (now he's on hold and that's fine with me).

I'll say it again, we love our copy machine. It does everything we want it to do. But I doubt we will ever buy another Xerox machine again because of the lack of customer service. It takes 2 days of calls and 2 ½ hours of call time over the 2 days to arrange for a service person to call me back within 8 business hours and then come out within 5 business days. As of 2 days later I still have no date for a repairperson to come out.

But I've learned something; I now have some idea why Xerox isn't doing so well: No Customer Service.

Of course no article of ours would be complete without our making some suggestions to you and to Xerox on creating and maintaining good customer service.

Here goes:

1. Call your own customer service lines pretending to be Mr. or Miss Average Customer and see if you feel taken care of. This is always an eye opener. I first saw this technique being used to see why an adoption agency had no people applying to adopt. It was no wonder, no one could get through the maze to get an application!

We also believe how many electronic choices you have to make as a customer correlates directly to the level of anger a customer feels when they finally get through to a human. That makes the job of the customer service rep almost impossible to do. Ultimately overdoing electronic phone receptionists won't save you money, it loses you customers.

2. Call your office from outside your company pretending to be someone else. Count how many rings it takes to get an answer and then how you're addressed when you get through. Several secretaries have literally verbally attacked us this year alone and all we asked was to speak with their bosses.

3. Take your promotional materials home and let your family critique them particularly any teenaged kids in the family. You'll get feedback from another generation you may not want to hear.

4. Tape your customer service people and review the tapes at least monthly. Make them attend trainings in which they are video/audio taped doing their jobs. There is nothing better than playing back their tapes and letting them critique themselves.

5. Lastly, for those of you who want more intensive training on how you come across we have a course called: "Training For Change Agents and Change Agent Trainers". This is an intensive 4 day program in which each participant is video taped three times with feedback. It is grueling and a very big confront to see yourself on tape but you will self correct more quickly when you do. The workshop is scheduled for February 26 - March 1, 2001 in Denver.

If you are interested give us a call. We promise to answer your call within 4 rings or answer your voice message within 24 hours. That's one of our company's customer service policies. What are your company's policies?

