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# The competitive edge of excellent customer service

by Elizabete Pata, adult services supervisor at SCLSNJ's North Plainfield Memorial Library branch



*Having worked in public libraries within NJ, NY and PA, Elizabete has accumulated over a decade of experience in connecting businesses with the communities they serve. Elizabete is passionate about fostering the relationship between the public library and surrounding businesses by providing innovative information services to those in need of assistance.*

The business world is competitive; everyone is competing to keep existing customers and win over potential or new customers. Most customers expect the same level of service (or better!) each time they return to a business. How can you ensure your business' customer service is top notch?

Here are my five simple tips to guarantee your customers receive the service they expect and deserve:

1. **Engage:** This may seem like an obvious tip, but it's the most vital. Chatting with customers offers you the opportunity to fill them in on other services they may be interested in, and offers your customers the opportunity to fill you in on what they are interested in. Great ideas come from listening to your customers and potential customers.
2. **Invest:** Ensuring you and your team have the right skills, as well as reliable and up-to-date equipment, to provide the best possible customer service makes your customers and potential customers confident in working with you. Investing in staying current and relevant to your customers is imperative to customer retention.
3. **Evaluate:** Take time to analyze each point of contact with customers. Is your parking lot clean and inviting? Is your website easy to navigate? Are you offering customers any perks like free coffee, WiFi, loyalty programs, etc.? Remember to ask yourself if changes you have made are customer-driven changes -- because they should be!
4. **Learn from the negatives:** If a customer comes to you with a complaint, don't let the customer leave unhappy. Chances are, if someone leaves unhappy, they are not likely to return. Never ignore a dissatisfied customer. Offer what you can to leave them feeling like you heard them and that you care. Once the situation has been addressed, it is important to analyze what went wrong so that you and your team can learn to avoid repeating the experience.
5. **Care for your team:** Motivated, customer service-oriented employees are valuable assets to your business and should be appreciated and rewarded for jobs well done. Remember, employees who feel appreciated and cared for will in turn care for the business' success and profitability.

Following these tips will demonstrate to your customers how much you care about their experience when they work with you, and ultimately, it will keep them coming back for more great service.



SOMERSET COUNTY  
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#### About Somerset County Library System of New Jersey

Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) partners with you to connect, to explore, to share and to discover. Together we enrich lives, expand knowledge and strengthen communities. SCLSNJ branches can be found in Bridgewater, Bound Brook, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Peapack & Gladstone, Rocky Hill at Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Somerville, Warren Township and Watchung. Additionally, there are two SCLSNJ reading stations in Branchburg and Washington Valley. Visit [SCLSNJ.org](#) for further information about library services offered at SCLSNJ.

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