

Reading: Customer Service

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow

How to keep your customers happy

❶ How do you keep customers happy? Today, an excellent product is not enough. Customers also want first-class support: warranties, free delivery and installation, hotlines, newsletters and upgrades. But all these services are expensive. So why do we put so much time and money into customer support?

❷ The simple answer is: it's less expensive than finding new customers. A typical company needs to contact a thousand leads to find just ten new customers. That's a big investment in sales and marketing. So if you can keep existing customers happy and get repeat business, you actually save money.

❸ How do you do it? Firstly, listen carefully to what your customers tell you about your company and your product. Listen to what they tell their friends too, on social media services like Twitter and Facebook. Secondly, your marketing, sales, support, order processing and accounts departments already know a lot about your customers: put all that valuable information in one place and share it! Use CRM (customer relationship management) software, for example. In this way, everybody in the organization knows exactly who their customers are, what they need now and what they would like in the future.

❹ But customer support is only part of the story. Every year, businesses spend millions on customer service training. On every course, staff learn the ten 'golden rules' of customer service.



Give customers what they want, when they want it.

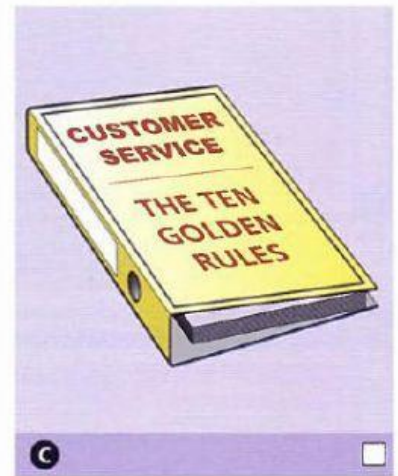
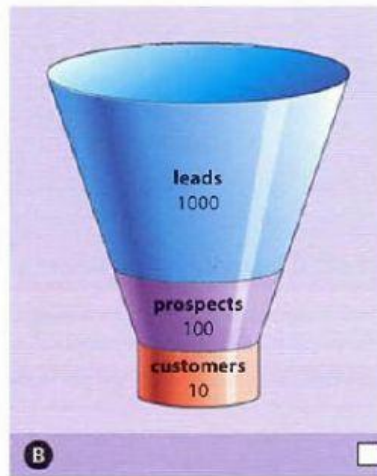
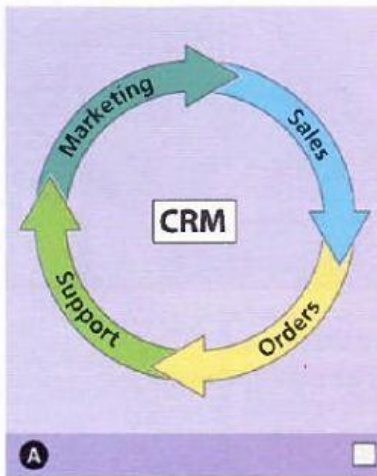
But there is really only one rule you need to know and it's very simple: be like your customer.

❺ So, how can you be like your customer? Here are four examples:

- Talk to customers when they want to talk. Be there to answer questions easily and quickly, in store, by phone, by email, by text message – whatever your customers like best.
 - Give customers what they want, when they want it: the right product, in the right place, at the right time and, of course, at the right price. Make the customer's priority your priority, especially when there's a problem!
 - Show customers that you feel like they feel, especially about problems. If they are disappointed or angry, show the same level of emotion in your determination to solve the problem.
 - Talk like your customers talk: if they talk quickly or in short sentences, do the same. If they talk slowly with pauses for reflection, you talk slowly too. And give them time to think.
- ❻ There are many ways to be like your customer, but perhaps you're asking why? Well, we all like people who are like us, so, naturally, we all prefer to buy from someone we like! Simple, isn't it?

Skim reading

3 Quickly read the article opposite. Match each picture to one paragraph in the text.



Reading for detail

4 Read the first three paragraphs again and mark these statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- 1 It is more expensive to find new customers than to get repeat business. ☐
- 2 On average, 10% of a company's leads become customers. ☐
- 3 Companies ask customers for comments on Twitter and Facebook. ☐
- 4 CRM software helps companies make better long-term strategy decisions. ☐

5 Read paragraphs 4–6 again and underline the best options in *italics*.

The article suggests:

- 1 companies spend *too little* / *too much* / *enough* on customer service training.
- 2 contacting customers *when and how you want* / *when and how your boss wants* / *when and how they want*.
- 3 you don't need to share your customer's *priorities* / *feelings* / *opinions*.
- 4 people prefer *not* to buy from someone they *look like* / *dislike* / *like*.