



## 50 Ways to Improve The Customer's Experience

Here are 50 ways to be a more customer-focused retailer and deliver to them a better experience. When you let your customers know that you appreciate them, they'll show you that they appreciate you by purchasing more of your products and by becoming a loyal customer and advocate.

1. Open the door for your customer whenever possible. This is especially important if her hands are full.
2. Don't just hand your customer his product, "present" it to him.
3. Keep the store temperature at a setting that is comfortable for customers. Most retailers set the thermostat at what's comfortable for the employees.
4. Acknowledge your customer's children.
5. Offer to gift-wrap purchases if you already know it is a gift. Don't wait for your customer to ask.
6. Always suggest accessories and other items that will enhance a customer's purchase and his/her life.
7. Offer to carry your customer's purchase, however big or small, to her car.
8. Send handwritten thank-you notes. Come on, do you really do it?
9. Smile.
10. Introduce yourself to your customer.
11. Ask your customer her name. Use it.
12. Compliment your customer on his purchases. This is especially effective if he is another staff member's customer.
13. Don't give your customer too many choices. You're the experts, so recommend a product based on what you learn from him/her.
14. Tell her why a product isn't right for her.
15. If you can't fulfill a customer's need, suggest another company that may be able to do so.
16. Never ever say something negative about another company.
17. Act just as happy to see a customer with a return or complaint as you are one who walks into make a purchase.
18. Make it easy for customers with returns. Almost all customers are honest and should be treated as such. If you have to give a customer a refund, end the conversation with "I'm sorry this product didn't meet your needs but we will welcome the chance to serve you again."
19. Warmly welcome every customer who comes into your store.

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20. Loan umbrellas on rainy days for customers to get to their cars. Ask them to either drive up to the sidewalk where you are waiting to receive the umbrella back or to bring it back on the next visit. Most customers will turn you down but you score major points for offering.
21. Don't interrupt the customer to talk. Talk - listen - talk - listen. You get the idea.
22. Do whatever you can - within reason - to keep an unhappy customer. What you'll lose on the one transaction you'll make it back because he will tell his friends and family how wonderful you are.
23. Refrain from visiting with a colleague when he/she is with a customer. It's distracting to both the customer and the colleague.
24. Never rush customers out at closing time. Gently let them know that you'll be closing in a few minutes. Never flash the lights or sound the air horn. (I'm joking.)
25. Offer to teach your customer how use the products. Clothing and home goods retailers might show their customers how to accessorize the items he/she has already selected.
26. Never blame the company for a policy or decision. You are the company.
27. When a customer says "Thank you," say "You're welcome."
28. Add "It's my pleasure" after you say "You're welcome."
29. Provide written details of frequently asked questions.
30. Don't coach or reprimand an employee in a customer's presence.
31. If you're on the phone with a customer and you absolutely must put him on hold, tell him approximately how long he will have to wait.
32. Don't interrupt an employee with a customer unless it's extremely important.
33. Create a children's craft area in your store so the kids can create art while their parents shop.
34. Give your customer your undivided attention when she is talking. Everything else can wait.
35. Accept responsibility when the store has made a mistake. Too err is human. To not admit it is stupid.
36. Empathize with upset customers. Say you're sorry.
37. Offer free drinks to your customer.
38. Give a gift for no reason. Even better, give a gift for being such a great customer.
39. Have the owner or manager personally call a high-ticket customer and thank her for her purchase if another staff member made the sale.

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40. Loan books and other resources at no charge. This positions you as an expert and creates repeat traffic.
41. Ship a replacement to a customer with a defective product before you receive the original back.
42. Open the doors early when customers are waiting outside.
43. Provide comfortable seating for customers and offer to bring them product to look at.
44. If you're busy and a customer is waiting for help, give him an estimate of how long he'll have to wait for someone to help him.
45. Stop cleaning and doing busy work when customers are in the store. They're less likely to ask for help if you're doing other things.
46. Partner with restaurants and other stores to present exclusive discounts and offers to your customers. (A win-win-win. The other company gets incremental revenue, your customer saves money, and you're the nice person doing it for both of them.)
47. No checking email or text messages on your phone when customers are in the store. It makes you look bored and nobody wants to shop in a boring store.
48. If you have to walk away from your customer to go to the backroom or counter tell her what you are doing.
49. Always offer to contact your customer when a product she wants comes in. Never tell her to call and check.
50. Always thank as many customers as you can for coming into your store and invite them back.
51. Always go above and beyond for every customer.

**About the author:** Doug Fleener is a veteran retailer with over 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation and The Sharper Image. As director for retail at Bose, Doug was instrumental in developing Bose's unique and engaging retail methods. He has also owned and operated his own specialty store.

Doug is now president and managing partner of Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a Lexington, MA based retail and customer experience consulting firm dedicated to helping retailers improve their customer experiences that results in higher sales and profits.

Fleener is the author of the book *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits*. He is a frequent speaker around the world on retail and customer experience issues and his insights has been covered in leading business media including *The New York Times*, *Entrepreneur*, and *Shopping Centers Today*. Along with partner Matt Norcia they write the popular retail blog *Retail Contrarian*.

Doug lives in Lexington, Massachusetts with his wife and two daughters, where in his free time he barbecues while listening to Jimmy Buffet music.

Learn more at [www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com](http://www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com) or call Doug at 781-861-7803.