

What Are the Behaviors of Great Customer Service?

In addition to the nonverbal skills that are necessary to be a successful communicator, here is a list of typical behaviors that make up great customer service in a typical library, particularly when you are dealing with a library user's problem.

1. Ask the library user his or her name by introducing yourself first and politely asking them theirs. This applies to people of all ages and status.
2. Call them by their name. Use a formal form of address (Sir, Miss) unless they ask you to use an informal form, such as their first name. Do not call them by the first name on their library card or identification card unless they invite you.
3. Offer your hand to shake when appropriate.
4. Offer them a place to sit, if appropriate, such as when you have to talk with them at length, or if you sense they may prefer sitting.
5. Offer to move away from other library users if it is a private matter.
6. Smile at them with a friendly, relaxed, neutral smile.
7. Write notes about what they are saying, but otherwise focus on them and keep your body still. You can move your hands, of course; however, avoid fidgeting.
8. Ask questions about the situation they encountered.
9. Avoid using library jargon, such as interlibrary loan, unless you have evidence (they use the word) that the library user knows what the words mean.
10. Do not interrupt them. Allow for small pauses of silence.
11. Nod when they are talking so they have physical evidence you are listening.
12. Ask them how they want the situation resolved.
13. Tell them what the library plans to do to resolve the situation.
14. Find out how the library user wants to learn about the resolution: phone call, letter, postcard, fax, email.
15. If you are working with a library user who is somehow different from you, take extra care that you are using the same polite behaviors you would use with anyone.
16. If the person has someone along as a helper or companion, such as a family member who is translating or a caretaker who is helping them navigate, remember to talk to the library user as a human being and to treat all parties as equal.