

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 362 Words Count When it Comes to Customer Service

When it comes to customer service, the words we use can solve issues and build relationships, or cause problems. I'm Jerry Roberts and we dig into this, today on The Extra Point.

In our course, CSI:Guam — Customer Service Initiative:Guam — we give emphasis to the importance of words and making sure we don't say the wrong things to the people we try to attract to our business.

To start there are a couple of good rules to follow. One, don't boss your customer or prospective customer around; and two, don't make them feel stupid. The wrong words can easily send the wrong message, change the emotional condition of the customer, and lead to trouble. Examples follow.

1. You can't quickly provide the service the customer needs because the person who handles that work is out of the office. You say, "You're going to have to wait. The guy who does that is out and it's going to be a while before he comes back." Or maybe it's "The guy who handles that is out right now, you'll have to come back later."

In either case, there's a good chance to get a negative reaction from the customer. "I'm going to *have* to wait?" "I *have* to come back later?" This falls under telling the customer what to do and people don't like that. Most people already have a boss who tells them what to do, and they figure that when they're spending money with a company, they shouldn't be dictated to by them.

It's a simple fix to turn this around. Instead of just telling them they have to wait or come back, try this: "I'm sorry, I really want to get this done for you quickly. However, our technician is out and not due back for an hour. I'd like to offer you some options. One, we can make you comfortable and I'll get you something to drink if you'd like to wait...or if

that's not possible and you'd like to come back, I can call you when he arrives. I can also schedule you for another day if that's better for you. What would you like to do?" People like options, they don't like to take orders.

2. People also don't like to be made to feel dumb. I know it's frustrating for service workers who have to guide people through simple procedures, especially when they are clearly outlined in the instructions provided at the time of sale.

Well — newsflash — most of us don't read instructions. If we did you might not have that job, so consider it a good thing. Don't sound bored and annoyed, spitting out this: "As it says in the instructions...in the documentation ...in the warranty...in the whatever — you just made me feel dumb for not reading it and now I don't feel so good about having done business with you.

Instead, try this: "Mr. Gibson, I'll be happy to go over that with you." When you've finished, you can add: "We value your business and friendship and it's a pleasure to serve you. By the way, Mr. Gibson, here's another copy of the instructions in case you no longer have yours."

These are just two examples. In CSI:Guam, we did deeper into the customer mindset and how to keep them feeling good about buying from you. Our choice of words matters. Make sure you're saying the right things in the right way to your customers.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

###

For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com)

