

Customer Service Crucial to Business Success

A recent report by the British Standards Institute (BSI) highlighted the importance of good customer service to consumers. Of those polled, 76% said they would stop doing business with a company who offered poor customer service, whereas 91% said good customer service was a crucial factor when deciding which company to use.

The survey indicated that 88% of UK consumers felt there should be a clearly defined set of standards governing customer service. In response to these findings, the BSI has introduced such a standard: BS 8477, a Code of Practice for Customer Service.

The new standard gives businesses the opportunity to stand out from their competitors by advertising the fact they conform to BS 8477. The standard itself has been developed to establish principles of good customer service, obligations of senior management, and customer service management. The standard also measure such activities as overall responsiveness, provision of information, customer interaction, counter, telephone, and internet service levels plus documentation and record systems.

A spokesman for BSI is quoted as saying: "Poor customer service is the largest cause of customers moving from one provider to another. BS 8477 offers an opportunity for all businesses, regardless of size, structure or sector, to benchmark their customer services and increase loyalty and retention. Compliance with the standard will provide organizations with a means of differentiating themselves from competitors and help cut the costs of complaints."

Enterprises which adopt the new standard will enjoy the benefits of increased customer loyalty and retention. Good customer service levels have been shown to significantly improve customer retention, resulting in increased profits.

Businesses who wish to buy a copy of BS 8477 can contact the BSI on 0208 996 9001 or order online at www.bsi-global.com/bs8477.



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