

The Impact of Pet Peeves on Customer Service **©copyright by Robert (Bob) W, Lucas**

Most people have something that bothers them about how others communicate or behave. These hot buttons or *pet peeves* can lead to customer relationship breakdowns if you are not aware of what yours are and how they impact you. By identifying and acknowledging potential irritants you can potentially avoid situations in which such behaviors are present in customers, or might manifest themselves and cause problems for you.

Your customers also likely have a list of behaviors that they dislike about service providers. If you exhibit one of their pet peeves while serving them, you could find yourself opposite a disgruntled person who is not afraid to voice his or her displeasure. They may even escalate their complaint to your supervisor or elsewhere.

Some typical behaviors that service providers exhibit, and that might bother customers, include:

- Disinterest in serving;
- Excessive wait times;
- Unprofessional service provider appearance;
- Lack of cleanliness (environment or service provider)
- Abruptly putting someone on telephone hold without their permission;
- Failing to answer telephone within four rings;
- Eating or chewing while dealing with a customer;
- Lack of knowledge or authority;
- Poor quality of service;
- Condescension (taking an air of superiority to the customer);
- Rudeness or over familiarity.

By avoiding such behaviors, you reduce the possibility that a customer may become dissatisfied with the service being provided and the organization.

Source: Lucas, R.W., *Customer Service Skills for Success*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

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