

# Valuing the Customer—it's All in the Notes

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Larry King, the famous television interviewer, once said, “I remind myself every morning that nothing I say this day will teach me anything. If I am going to learn anything, I must do it by listening.” The advantage for Larry King, of course, is that he sits across the table when interviewing his guests for his nightly television show. He can easily demonstrate he is listening by nodding and looking his guests in the eye. For those of us who talk to customers only by telephone, we need to convey that we are observant and thoughtful. A terrific way to do that is to take notes during the conversation.

By jotting down the way the customer answers your questions or the repetition of key phrases or concerns, inside salespeople, customer service and technical support representatives can more easily identify the customer's needs and thus better position their product or solution. By linking the product or solution directly to the stated issues, the phone rep typically snags the customer into listening further. Additionally, subsequent questions from the customer are usually more focused. Assuming the salesperson or rep knows the product or solution well, questions are easier to answer.

Salespeople and phone reps also increase their client knowledge by recording what they hear in “small talk.” Information such as the customer's interests, preferences, or concerns, as well as personal data, such as marital status, children, hobbies, travel destinations, secretary, other contact names, and numbers make current and subsequent conversations flow more naturally. The most successful phone reps state that they make it their business to learn at least three new things each conversation.

When the call is complete, notes need to be transferred to the client contact data entry system so that they are organized for the future. The new information gives a reason to follow up later when another product or promotion might be of interest. As customers see that you are mindful of their business and are sincere, inside salespeople and phone reps shift into the role of a trusted advisor. The documented information also helps others in the organization to better handle future inquiries or complaints. It helps them know what has been said and/or promised.

Customers need to feel you value them. While good note-taking requires effort and takes time, it is a measure of your professionalism. It ensures quality service. Knowledge is power. The more you learn and record, the better able you are to hold productive conversations.

**Question:** *We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our website, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.*