



Business Tip #2 Customer Service

One of the most important things I've learned since I started my own business is that everyone matters.

Even though Internet and e-mail is great, too many people think it's an easy way to avoid dealing with the customer. But if you don't treat your customers right, eventually it will affect your business. It shouldn't matter if you're a big business or small business; sometimes the littlest things make all the difference in the world.

Here's what I've done since the day I started Pencil Bugs.

- Check my e-mail every day.
- Replay within 24-48 hours. Even if I don't have an immediate answer, I at least let them know I received their e-mail and I'm working on it.
- With every order I receive through my website, I send a personal thank you e-mail letting the customer know I received their order and when it will be shipped.
- If someone sends an e-mail just to compliment me, I send a thank you back for those also.

These may be obvious, simple things but just think how often you leave a message for someone or send an e-mail and never hear back from them. How does it make you feel? Without any response, people start assuming whatever they want and many times, it's not positive.

Here's a perfect example of how important it is to acknowledge people and what amazing things can come from doing something so simple.

I received two e-mails on the same day from two separate employees working at a company in Nairobi, Kenya. They simply said how great it was to see a young entrepreneur doing a good job. I could have left it at that and thought, "Wow, that's cool. Someone from Kenya found my website." But I was too curious and had to find out how they found me. So I wrote back to both, thanking them for their compliments and told them a little more about my business and what I've been doing but then also asked them a few questions about their company. Before I knew it, they had invited me to be a guest speaker and key judge at their company's young entrepreneur contest/camp during August, 2008. Opportunities like this don't happen every day. I don't think this would have happened if I hadn't have written back and took the time to thank them.

It really does make a difference. People are important.