



Who's the King?

"The customer is always right" is a principle that has guided customer service for decades, if not centuries! In the highly competitive hospitality industry, exceptional customer service is the cornerstone of success 😊.

Customer service history^{1,2,3,4,5}

¹ <https://www.abetteranswer.com/blog/what-is-customer-service-a-look-at-its-history-future>

² <https://www.hoory.com/blog/i/history-of-customer-service-how-did-it-all-begin>

³ <https://blog.olark.com/the-history-of-customer-service>

⁴ <https://lucidworks.com/post/the-history-of-customer-service/>

⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/history-customer-service-zahid-hasan/>

The concept of customer service can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Rome and Greece when merchants were concerned with providing a positive experience to their customers. Fast forward:

- 1760s: customer support teams emerged as a result of the industrial revolution.
- 1876: Alexander Graham Bell patented the electric telephone, which became a game changer for businesses. Before that, people had to bring their product back to the store and simply hope that the owner would accept the return.
- 1894: the telephone switchboard was invented, greatly helping businesses connect with customers over the phone.
- 1920s: rotary dials were implemented, helping companies act as an operator by connecting dialed numbers to the proper phone line.
- 1960s: the first call centers were implemented. Companies started hiring agents to answer phone calls and resolve customer queries.
- 1967: AT&T introduced what would be the next big thing in customer service – the toll-free telephone number. No need to call collect and speak to an operator anymore – you could call a company directly.
- 1970s: the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology allowed callers to give simple one-word answers (such as “yes” or “no”) to direct their call to the right representative.
- 1990s: the internet (created in the 80s) became popular. Brands started developing their online presence to stay connected with their customers and reach new ones.

- 1992: US President George H. W. Bush established the *Customer Service Week* – a five-day holiday that celebrates the importance of customer service.
- Mid-1990s: the rise of the internet and the emergence of online marketplaces like Amazon revolutionized commerce. New channels were introduced to reach clients: email and one-on-one live chat.
- 1998: Jeremie Miller invents Jabber/XMPP, the open-source technology that most live chat is built on, including GTalk, Olark, and others.
- 1999 Salesforce.com launched and grew to be the global leader in CRM (Customer Relationship Management).
- Mid-2000s: platforms such as Facebook and Twitter took off, and businesses began actively engaging with customers on social media.
- 2009: Olark created the first live chat that stayed on-page, eliminating the need for the annoying "pop-out."
- 2011: Facebook released the Messenger app for iOS and Android, a practical tool for businesses to establish one-on-one communication with customers.

Some stats⁶

- A customer is four times more likely to switch to a competitor if the problem they're having is service based.
- It takes 12 positive customer experiences to make up for one negative experience.

⁶ <https://www.helpscout.com/75-customer-service-facts-quotes-statistics/>

- Investing in new customers is between 5 and 25 times more expensive than retaining existing ones.

Hospitality^{7,8,9,10,11}

The word hospitality comes from Old French *hospitalité* and from Latin *hospitalitem* meaning "friendliness to guests". In the hospitality industry, a few factors explain how high-end hotels succeed in creating a great customer service experience. These hotels:

- *Pay attention to details* – for instance, a travel writer noted some of the neat extras that came with her room at the *Shangri-La* Toronto (Canada), including an in-room iPad, a Nespresso machine, complimentary bottles of water, remote-controlled drapes and blinds, a nightlight, steam-free mirrors, and under-floor heating.
- *Offer personalized experiences* – e.g., to effectively serve its guests' unique needs, *Accor Hotels* piloted a new customer recognition program. For a month, staff checked guests' public social media profiles to learn their interests. The marketing expert said: "For the guest who likes fine dining, [Accor Hotels provided] an all-day behind-the-scenes tour of Tru in Chicago [a luxurious French dining experience], along with a night at the Sofitel Chicago Water Tower."

⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-customer-service-hospitality-industry-different-any-gyulnazaryan/>

⁸ <https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/3-things-luxury-hotels-can-teach-about-exceptional-customer/278525>

⁹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2017/07/29/5-wow-customer-service-stories-from-5-star-hotels-examples-any-business-can-learn-from/?sh=5af9961d33e6>

¹⁰ <https://www.businessinsider.com/best-hotel-service-stories-2013-12>

¹¹ <https://10best.usatoday.com/interests/hotels-resorts/best-hotel-concierges-guide-beaches-hiking-diving-fun-specialty/>

- Go 'above and beyond' – below are a couple of examples of how some hotel employees go the extra mile to satisfy guests.
 - At the *Pennyhill Hotel* in Surrey (UK) a mother requested a cot for her daughter. When she arrived, the hotel staff had put a cot in the room, a couple of blankets in the cot, and had also left a champagne bucket on the side, a kettle, some still water, a few small soft towels and a teddy bear with a note saying '*we do not have a bottle warmer available however please feel free to use the champagne bucket as a substitute alongside hot water. We have also provided mineral water in case you have milk formula and a complimentary teddy bear for company, hopefully this will be the first of many happy nights here for your family, best regards*'.
 - A family with a two-year-old son spent a weekend at the *Dove Mountain resort* (US). As they were leaving for the airport, the mom realized her son had lost his Thomas the Tank Engine toy. Flagging down two frontline Ritz-Carlton employees, she explained what was at stake, as this was her little boy's favorite toy. After the guests left, the two employees drove to a store and purchased an identical toy train and wrote a note to the boy in the voice of Thomas the Tank Engine telling a sweet tale about the extended vacation the little locomotive had taken after being accidentally left behind. The account included pictures of Thomas exploring the property, cooking in The Ritz-Carlton kitchen (wearing a miniature paper chef's toque on his head), and more. Four days after the disappearance of the original toy, his replacement arrived by FedEx, to the astonishment and pleasure of the family 😊.

Paramount to hotel guests' experience is cleanliness. Housekeepers play a central role in maintaining a sparkling and comfortable environment for them. This is why it's so important to offer guests the means to tip staff appropriately. To do so, why not implement a quick and easy electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go** 😊?

Francis Léonard, CEO

TIP&GO®

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZ75L0Xplb0>

Subscribe to our blog!

<https://www.linkedin.com/build-relation/newsletter-follow?entityUrn=7157523727176359936>

[#etipping](#), [#tippingapp](#), [#staffshortage](#), [#cashlesstipping](#),
[#electronic tipping](#), [#hotelindustry](#), [#hospit#etipping](#), [#tippingapp](#),
[#staffshortage](#), [#cashlesstipping](#), [#electronic tipping](#), [#hotelindustry](#),
[#hospitality](#), [#customerservice](#)