

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor and I am your host.

Speaker 2 00:00:18 I think another key point is to make sure you invest in great people. Your customer care department, team, whatever the case may be, is only as strong as the people that you have within that department.

Speaker 1 00:00:30 How do your customers feel when doing business with you? After a phone call or an email exchange, are things better or worse? Today on the Clear Impact Podcast, we talk with Raymond Jones, our Training Specialist Manager for our customer care teams. We stress the importance of the customer always being right, or do we? You'll have to keep listening to find out.

All right, well, good afternoon. We are here on the Clear Impact Podcast and today my guest is Raymond Jones.

Speaker 2 00:00:56 Thanks for having me.

Speaker 1 00:00:57 Glad you're here today. Raymond, tell us a little bit about your role here and just a little bit of background about you. Sure.

Speaker 2 00:01:04 So currently I am the Customer Care Training Manager. I do wear many hats. So my primary focus is obviously training and making sure that our CCRS are up to speed with the processes, procedures, and whatnot. But I also do a lot of work with manufacturing from a quality perspective, as far as making sure that our processes are correct and in place and not having a negative impact on manufacturing, but also making sure that we are basically working with each other. So I meet a lot with different leaders within the plant and to make sure that we are achieving our common goal.

Speaker 1 00:01:39 Um, nice. So how many people are you responsible for training?

Speaker 2 00:01:43 I'm responsible for, I want to say about 40 to 50 representatives somewhere in that neighborhood we have about 30 or so that are working from home and then we have some that are still in the office.

Speaker 1 00:01:54 So that's tricky when they're remote.

Speaker 2 00:01:56 Yeah. It's been a learning process for sure. You know, making sure that they are engaged when they are, you know, sitting in and participating in any training, trying to figure out, you know, the best delivery methods, depending on what the subject matter is and whatnot. So it's had its challenges, but we're making good headway.

Speaker 1 00:02:13 Yeah. We're all getting kind of used to the whole zoom thing. And this is just how it's going to be for a bit, or maybe forever who knows.

Speaker 2 00:02:19 Yeah. Seems that way. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:02:21 So how long have you been in that role?

Speaker 2 00:02:22 I've been in my current role as a manager for about two and a half years. Prior to that I was the specialist. And then prior to that, I was a team lead. Prior to that, I was just a CCR, customer care representative. Um, I actually started out on the floor with, with PGT. So I worked in the glass plant, did that for about four months, which, I won't tell you how, how much I did not like it. Um,

but I, it was a stepping stone, right. Is definitely an opportunity to get my foot in the door with PGT. And from there, I've pretty much, you know, worked my way up into my current role, um, of today.

Speaker 1 00:02:58 I think it's good to appreciate the manual labor side of things that happen here, says the girl who doesn't own a pair of steel toes yet. And hasn't spent a minute on the floor.

Speaker 2 00:03:00 Yeah. It's been a, it's been a pretty cool process to, you know, kind of start on the floor and get a feel for, you know, what those guys go through and then, you know, transfer up into customer care and get the other side of the business as well.

Speaker 1 00:03:22 It makes you a more well rounded leader. Yes. Awesome. So one of the things that I feel like is a vital component for running a successful business is the forward facing employee. You know, who you interact with, who do you have answering the phones, who is greeting customers when they walk in the door, tried and true customer service. And because that's kind of your role in terms of training and educating our team, I thought it might be a fun conversation for us. What are some principles that you would recommend that a dealer follows when it comes to their customer service?

Speaker 2 00:03:56 There's a few, I'd say my number one would be communication. Definitely, you know, communicate with their customer, let them know what's going on with their orders or whatever the situation is. There's going to be times when you're not going to have the answer that they're looking for. But as long as you have that open line of communication, they at least know what's going on. And they are aware of, um, how it's being handled or whatever the case may be. Obviously treat every customer with respect, make sure you are doing all that you can to take care of them in that moment. And also be honest, transparent, don't over promise and under deliver.

Speaker 1 00:04:32 That's a hard one.

Speaker 2 00:04:33 That is, that is a hard one.

Speaker 1 00:04:34 Because everybody likes to hear what they want to hear. And we always like to be the bearer of good news. Nobody ever wants to be the bearer of bad news.

Speaker 2 00:04:43 Right. So yeah, definitely making sure that you are working within your own means, it goes a long way with the customer. Although they're not going to like what you have to say or you know what that resolution may be, but as long as you're doing what you can do, and they understand that, that'll go a long way with strengthening that relationship.

Speaker 1 00:05:04 Just a quick little side story. So I had a boss that never returned phone calls, and I would have to take messages from people all the time. And I found myself saying this, I will make sure he gets your message. I never said, I'll have him call you back because I couldn't make him return phone calls. But I would say, I'll make sure he gets your message. And that was true. And that was within my power. Right. It just seems like a natural thing. I'll have him call you right back. You might not be able to do that. So what are some best practices around phone etiquette, speaking of phones? Do you have to have a script when you answer the phone? Should you have the name of the company and your name and good morning, good afternoon. What, like, what would you recommend?

Speaker 2 00:05:44 Uh, I definitely think that you want to have a proper greeting, you know, always announce yourself. Hi, my name is Ray, or thank you for calling PGT. This is Ray. How can I help you? Or something to that effect, maybe the name of your department, who knows if they were transferred to

the wrong department by mistake, but definitely having a greeting so they know who you are and what department you're in and all that good stuff. Some other tips I would recommend is speaking clearly, taking the time to listen. But another thing that I like to do or recommend to my representatives is to recap the conversation. So there are times when you can have a lengthy conversation with the customer about a particular order or there's multiple tasks that need to be accomplished to satisfy their deal or whatever the case may be, at the end of the conversation. It's always good to kind of repeat some of the things that you guys discussed to make sure you're still on the same page and you know how to handle that customer or take care of their situation, but also kind of set expectations as well,

Speaker 1 00:06:42 Just to kind of recap what the conversation was. And here's what we talked about. Here's what I'm going to do. Here's what you can expect back from me. I'll get back to you in a week or I'll, you'll see an email from me later today or whatever the, whatever the followup is. That's excellent. That's probably good in all conversations, it's easy to misunderstand people sometimes. Right. Anything around email etiquette? Cause of a lot of that is customer service too. And that's even a trickier space because you can't detect tone through email. And so you can read an email and depending on where you are, you could receive that as wow, they're being sarcastic or wait, are they angry? Are they being snarky? Like what's their mood. So, um, what are some good email tips?

Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at pgtiuniversity.com. You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Speaker 2 00:07:47 Yeah, I think definitely you hit the nail on the head right out the gate is with tone. Making sure you are checking your tone, um, reread or proofread your email before you hit send for sure, to make sure you are sending the right message, that you aren't, you know, overly excited when you are sending your email. Another big key is to know your audience. You know, you could have individuals on an email that you've probably worked with for 7, 8, 9, 10 years, and you just have that dialogue. But when you have large groups of individuals on an email, you're not really sure who that email could be going to, could be going up to the CEO. It could be going to your supervisor's supervisor, and whatever the case may be. So definitely know your audience, know your tone and, um, definitely proofread your email before you hit send.

Speaker 1 00:08:38 And if you're angry, you should sit in the draft box for about 24 hours.

Speaker 2 00:08:43 Yeah. I've been known to do that for sure. You know, there's been plenty of times where I'll draft up an email and before I hit send, I'll just leave it depending on the nature, you know, and, and kind of walk away or do something different. And then I find, when I go back to read that email, I was happy that I didn't actually hit send because it was not worded properly. Or my tone was not correct for that type of response.

Speaker 1 00:09:09 I mean, because people are still people and everybody has emotions and some days are easier than others, but you know, we all want to do our best to be professional and to handle things in the best possible way. I mean, we're all getting a paycheck. So we need to represent our company and be the best version of ourselves in the, in whatever situation we're in. Right?

So this is a big thing. So I worked in retail when I was in high school and the number one rule now, this was many years ago, so

Not too long.

It's been a bit, so the rule I always heard was the customer's always right. No matter what, and I don't know if that's really true. What do you think about that statement?

Speaker 2 00:09:45 I do not think the customer is always right. I think that you can use that situation or that conversation as a, uh, opportunity to educate the customer on, you know, um, not necessarily point the finger and say that they're wrong, but you can take that as an opportunity to make the situation right. Okay. So whatever, let's use a scenario that dealer said that he ordered something and white, we shipped it in bronze, but come to find out, the dealer actually did order it in bronze and not white. And that situation you can basically, you know, educate the customer, show them how they know made the mistake, but also provide some sort of a courtesy to help them out or whatever the case may be. You know, they can sit and point the finger at you and your company, all they want to, but at the end of the day, you have to do what's best for your customer and for your businesses as well. And the best way to help out in that situation is to, again, educate the customer, let them know, actually not in these words, but you're wrong because this, this and this, but then at the end of it, you know, find a way to make it right for the customer so that you can maintain their business.

Speaker 1 00:10:52 That's hard because everybody wants everything to be done right the first time. And obviously everyone wants to do a good job and they want things to be right the first time. But mistakes happen and people are people and no, one's perfect. At least I haven't met anybody yet. So what is a great piece of advice when it comes to customer service in general,

Speaker 2 00:11:12 I would say, make sure you are, make sure that the customer feels like they're being taken care of is one piece of advice. So do whatever you need to do in order to satisfy that customer within reason. I think another key point is to make sure you invest in great people. Your customer care department team, whatever the case may be is only as strong as the people that you have within that department. So it's important that you find individuals that are willing to, you know, do what they can to take care of the customer, go the extra mile, if need be, but also have the same, you know, beliefs as, you know, whatever you're trying to portray to the customers as well. So I think those are two big keys. That'll get you pointed in the right direction.

Speaker 1 00:11:57 Right? Yeah. We talked in another episode in this series around company culture and making sure that it's a good fit and making sure that people are on the same page around values and behaviors and things like that. So kind of all ties in together. Yeah, absolutely. That's awesome. Well, I really appreciate your time today, Raymond. Thank you so much for joining us and maybe we'll talk again, maybe. All right. Take care. Bye-bye

Speaker 1 00:12:23 PGTI University is the customer education team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original Eze-Breeze porch enclosure line then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows and Eco Windows and Doors. We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure, and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality. PGTI University is here to educate you, our listener, so that you can be a more informed consumer of window and door products.