



4 THINGS

THAT REALLY MATTER IN CUSTOMER SERVICE TODAY

Winston Churchill once said, "a lie can get halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

It typically works the same way with customer service - especially in the age of social media. A bad review travels fast, while truly exceptional customer care may be slow to yield rewards. But in a world where competitors are a click away, smart agents take that in stride. They know that consistently good customer service does win referrals in the end.

What matters to today's buyers and sellers, who have a world of information at their fingertips?

The Ritz Carlton Leadership Center, which trains practitioners in any field to deliver the kind of award-winning service for which the upscale hotel chain is noted, provides four universal criteria:

- 1. Create clients for life** - Build relationships that open the door to repeat and referral business. Listen actively, communicate regularly, value your client's time - and do your best to manage expectations. If you don't have an immediate answer, let the client know you are working on it and when you expect to have it - and know what works best for them, an email, text, or phone call.
- 2. Listen for what may not be expressed** - Service that goes above and beyond means not just being responsive to what the client says, but listening for needs and wishes that may not be expressed. For example, listen closely to their comments when you show new clients a home. Better understanding what really 'floats their boat' can help set you up for success.
- 3. Create a memorable personal experience** - Talk with your clients about much more than what they need or want in a home. Know the names of their children and pets. Ask about their hobbies and interests. Point out the best dancing school in town if they have a budding ballerina - or the best pet grooming and day care center if they travel a lot on business. When you close the sale, show up on moving day with exactly the kind of take-out dinner you know they will most enjoy.
- 4. Own and resolve problems** - React to your clients' concerns with tact, but be realistic as well. You can't make a \$200,000 home sell for half a million dollars. But if the house isn't selling, you can say, "it's the market," or you can point out truthfully that improving the curb appeal or removing the draperies to let in more light could do a lot to attract potential buyers.

