

First Contact – Create a First Impressions That Count



When a customer rings your Company for the first time, it is normally for one of three reasons. These are that they are visiting the area, they have moved into the area or they have been let down by the company, generally it will be the latter.

Whatever the reason for the call though, their first impression of your Company comes from that initial phone call. How you deal with this initial call could decide whether you gain that new customer or not.

Firstly ask yourself how did they get your number, this could be one of your cab cards, a supermarket Freephone, word of mouth or an advert, which could be web based or a newspaper for example. One thing is certain, they are calling a Company with a name, so answering “car service” or “taxis” doesn’t let them know that they are speaking to the right company. Imagine calling Pizza Hut, or any local pizza company, and they answer the phone with “Hello Pizza’s” what would you think!

You have almost certainly spent time and money promoting your business, whether by carding, online adverts, or even paying a Taxi Facilitator Company, of which there are many now. Why would you invest time and money doing this if you are going to fail at the first hurdle because the phone hasn’t been answered correctly? On average it costs 50p to take a single cash booking and this is just the wage cost, you should insist that it is done correctly and that your staff are pleasant to the Customer, even if they are under a bit of pressure.

Your Company has a name or a trading name, which should be used at all times, and a brand built around the name. When you answer the phone it should be with your Company Name and “can I help you”. You are supplying a service in a highly competitive industry and by answering the phone correctly on that important first call creates an impression that lasts.

I appreciate that on a Friday and Saturday night your phones will be ringing off the hook, but you can still be polite and helpful and deal with the calls efficiently.

If you utilise CLI within your despatch system you can soon see if it is someone who hasn’t used you before as there will be no history displayed, and you can easily

ask if this is the first time they have used your service, and if it is mark on the booking that it is a new customer, that way the controller and the driver will be aware of the fact and can expedite the booking in such a way that the customer receives your best service, and will be more likely to use you again, and become a regular Customer.

By retaining your Customers and increasing your Customer base, allows you to take on more drivers and is key to your business expanding.

So we have the booking from your new Customer, what happens next?



What should happen is that the booking is despatched in plenty of time to one of your better drivers, one who has a high level of Customer Service skills so that the great first impression you have created on the phone carries through to the actual journey and leaves that lasting impression. If the fare has been quoted, let the driver know what that quote is so that he charges the correct fare.

If the passenger wants to chat, that's fine, chat away. However some passengers don't want to and a Driver shouldn't keep chatting if it is obvious that the customer doesn't want to. The driver should also offer the Customer one of your Cab Cards at the end of their Journey.

What often happens though is that no one takes any notice or any interest in the fact that it is a new customer and the booking is treated the same as any other. If you are lucky, you are already supplying a good service, if you are not, the chances of retaining that customer are slim, especially if they have called you because they have been let down, or given bad service from their existing Company.

Remember "**Customers Make Pay Days Possible**" and we should be doing everything in our power to attract new Customers and retain the Customers we already have. The only way to do this is by ensuring that we offer the best service possible and this starts with the first contact, which is the phone call. Only by being efficient and giving good service can we retain and build on our Customer base and overtake our competition, to be market leaders in our area.