

Going The Extra Mile In Customer Service

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If you run your own software business like I do with **scribblar**, an online tutoring and collaboration platform, and **membermeister**, an online membership management system, you'll already know that providing outstanding customer service is hugely important, in fact it can make or break your business. But sometimes you may doubt yourself and questions arise if it's really worth going the extra mile for a particular customer or if it would actually be in your business's best interest to simply lose a customer and move on.

There's no hard or fast rules to making this decision, but I'd like to share a little episode I recently had and where I did question myself - and where I was glad in the end to have seen things through.

With **scribblar** I sell two types of accounts: personal plans which allow you to imply upgrade a free plan and so called Pro accounts which give you API access and integration options for your own website. The latter requires some technical knowledge, but from time to time I encounter less technical customers sign up for this anyway, and they struggle to get to grips with the plan. Maybe this is my fault for not being clear enough, but it is what it is right now and I accept that it happens from time to time - and I have to deal with it.

Recently I received this message from a new customer:

"I'm afraid I'm fairly unfamiliar with all of this. I can't seem to make anything work. Is there a tutorial page other than the one provided on the website that has more details for the complete newbie such as myself?"

I replied with some tips, and received this reply:

"The online portion of the company I work for is a one-woman show (me). I use iWeb and cyberduck - I do have FTP access, but regrettably, I have no idea how to set this up. I do not have a developer on hand who can help me. I apologize for the inconvenience, but if I can't set this up on my own, I would like to suspend the account until I can get in touch with someone who can help me."

I now had to make a decision: lose this customer who was paying \$25/month (not much by any stretch) or see if I can personally get involved with the setup and integration (not something I usually do, for good reason...).

I decided to try and help and requested the customer's FTP details. When I logged in I saw that the site structure was a mess and I proposed to tidy things up a bit first.

I got another reply:

"I am so grateful for your help on this! By all means, tidy up anything you'd like."

So I did.

Half an hour later I had everything tidied up and some Scribblar rooms nicely integrated.

The final email:

"Can't thank you enough! Everything works great - don't foresee any issues now. Many,

many thanks."

Was it worth my going the extra mile and adding one happy customer instead of leaving one behind, frustrated? You bet it was.