

THE NORDSTROM WAY

Inside America's #1 Customer Service Company

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MAIN IDEA

The Nordstrom Way is to focus solely and exclusively on doing whatever it takes to create a satisfied customer.

The underlying philosophy and culture of the Nordstrom Way is disarmingly simple: Use your own initiative to provide customers with exceptional levels of service. You'll never be criticized for doing too much for a customer, only for doing too little. If you're ever in doubt, err on the side of doing too much rather than too little.

How the company organizes and empowers its employees to use their initiative in practice is impressive. Firstly, the company has a culture which lauds exceptional acts of customer service and stresses employees are free to use their initiative at all times and in all situations -- to act as if they were entrepreneurs in business for themselves. But equally importantly, the company then delivers on that basic premise by supporting its employees in the decisions they make.

The result is employees find innovative and appropriate ways to provide customers with knock-out levels of service. Customers love it, employees thrive on the responsibility and flexibility of their job and sales soar.

And paradoxically, the Nordstrom Way illustrates the direct link which many companies fail to realize -- specifically that the more front-line employees are trusted and empowered, the stronger the long-term relationship that can be built between a company and its customers. When a company gets the mix right (like Nordstrom has), it creates a sustainable competitive advantage that endures and flourishes.

The Nordstrom Way is the gold standard of customer service.

1. America's #1 in Customer Service Page 2

Nordstrom is the gold standard of customer service -- the measuring stick by which other companies (in a variety of industries) measure themselves.

What's interesting about that fact, however, is that Nordstroms is not just one company -- it is actually structured as an army of self-motivated, self-empowered men and women who use their own initiative to create satisfied customers using the Nordstrom model of customer service.

2. How It All Began Page 3

3. The Essence of the Nordstrom Culture Page 4

Everything that has evolved into the Nordstrom approach to business has one simple objective -- to free employees to treat customers the way they like to be treated. The company's entire organizational structure is designed to provide the flexibility needed for employees to achieve that objective.

4. How Nordstrom Creates A Compelling Place To Visit Page 5

Nordstrom's objective is always to create a memorable experience whenever a customer visits one of its stores. To this end, what's in the store is considered to be another facet of the way Nordstrom provides superior customer service.

5. A Company of Independent Entrepreneurs Page 6

The salespeople who thrive under the Nordstrom system are those who have an entrepreneurial mindset, who are motivated self-starters and who love the flexibility that comes from being dedicated to doing whatever it takes to create a satisfied customer.

6. The Art of Selling The Nordstrom Way Page 7

Outstanding customer service is the key to sales at Nordstrom. The company is aggressive -- it wants to sell everybody. Nordstrom sales associates work hard at not losing potential sales, applying practice, experience and commitment.

7. The Future of Nordstrom Style Customer Service Page 8

Despite the fact the retail industry is facing major challenges brought about by new technology, the Nordstrom of the future will still be based on one essential premise: Giving great customer service.

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