



6 Consumer Behavior

Have you heard the slogan “The customer is always right!”? Do you agree with it? If you were a shop manager, would you encourage your staff to behave as if the customer was always right?

Engaging Activity



Exposure Activity

Listen to the origin of the sentence “The customer is always right” and answer the two questions:

[Click to listen](#)

- *What store was the first one to use it?*
- *Where was this expression coined?*

The Customer is Always Right

'The customer is always right' is a slogan adopted by companies that wish to put their customers first. The implied suggestion is that some companies are so customer-focused that they will say the customer is right, even if they are not. Several retailers used 'the customer is always right' as a slogan from the early 20th century. In the USA, the expression is particularly associated with Marshall Field's department store, in Chicago, established in the late 19th century. The store is still an icon of the city. In the UK, Harry Gordon Selfridge (1857-1947), the founder of London's Selfridges store, which opened in 1909, is credited with championing the use of the slogan. The Wisconsin-born Selfridge worked for Field from 1879 to 1901. Both men were dynamic and creative businessmen and it is likely that one of them coined the sentence, although we don't know which one. Of course, these entrepreneurs did not intend to be taken literally. What they were attempting to do was to make the customers feel special by making their staff behave as if the customer was right all the time, even when they were not.

Source : Phrases.org.uk.

Exercise it!

Do you think this slogan should still be used and put into practice in the world of business today? Discuss it with the class.

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Structure Activity

PAST CONTINUOUS

Study the following situation:

*This morning I went shopping and needed some help with a product. I called a shop assistant, but he **was texting** on his phone and completely ignored me. It was so rude that I asked to speak with the manager!*

We use the Past Continuous to describe an action that was **in progress** at a certain time in the past.

- *Yesterday I went shopping. I left my house at 10 o'clock and came back at noon. So, at 11 o'clock I was not at home, I **was shopping**.*
- *Last night, Dennis wasn't at home with his family; he **was working** late at the office.*
- *- What **were you doing** yesterday?
- I **was visiting** the new branch.*

PAST SIMPLE or PAST CONTINUOUS?

Remember that the Past Simple is used to talk about actions, events or states that began and concluded in the past.

- *I **was** a an intern in 2005.*
- *We **didn't see** Paul at the restaurant yesterday.*

The Past Continuous is used to talk an action in progress at some point in the past or a temporary situation in the past. Many times, it is used in combination with Past Simple, serving as the **background information** (what was happening until something more important or relevant interrupted this situation.)



- *We **were still looking for** a gift at 9 p.m.*
- *Stacey **was arguing** with the clients when her manager **arrived**.*

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1. The office workers at a big retail company received an extra day off after the weekend. Complete the sentences with the activities they were doing during the afternoon.

Example: Steve was playing volleyball. (play)

What were they doing in the afternoon?

- a) Mara and Jenny _____ .(shop)
- b) I _____ snacks by the pool. (have)
- c) The HR team _____. They _____ some activities. (not relax / prepare)
- d) The guys from IT _____ videos on Netflix. (stream)
- e) Klaus _____ calls to his family in Germany. (make)
- f) And you? What _____ you _____ yesterday afternoon? (do)

2. Read the testimonials of service workers about difficult situations with customers and **choose** the correct form of the verb.



a) “When I **worked / was working** at Arby's, a man once **argued / was arguing** with me for five minutes when I **tried / was trying** to explain to him why I couldn't serve him a Big Mac.”

—Jen M., Facebook

b) “My brother **was / was being** a waiter in a restaurant, and a lady **ordered / was ordering** a garden salad and **asked / was asking** for it to be returned because it **had / was having** 'too many leaves in it.’”

—Anita M., Facebook

c) “I was a manager at a pizza place and once a lady **told / was telling** me to turn off the oven because she **thought / was thinking** it **made / was making** the building too hot.”

—Stephen D., Facebook

3. Complete the sentences by putting the verbs in brackets into the correct form of the verb (Past Simple or Past Continuous).

Example: What did you eat (eat) while you were visiting (visit) Paris?

- a) While the cook _____ (prepare) the order, the customer _____ (decide) that he _____ (want) a completely different dish.

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- b) The last time something like this _____ (happen), the manager _____ (fire) the waiter.
- c) Anne _____ (place) her order when Pedro _____ (interrupt) her.
- d) Everyone _____ (wait) for their drinks when suddenly the waiter _____ (slip) and _____ (drop) all of them.
- e) While I _____ (clean) the kitchen, a customer _____ (arrive) and _____ (order) lasagna.

Follow-up Activity

When was the last time you complained about a service provided to you? Talk about the experience with the class.

Homework

1. Correct the following sentences.

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a) She couldn't come to the meeting. She was travel.

b) We were making good profits when the economic crisis was starting.

c) I was trying to give him some advice, but he didn't listen.

d) What does she do this time last year?

2. Choose the correct answer.

1). I _____ with my son when you called.

a) talked

b) was talking

c) didn't talk



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- 2) The doorbell _____ while I was having a meeting.
a) ringing b) rings c) rang
- 3) As I _____ for the next customer, Joe closed the front door.
a) waited b) wait c) was waiting
- 4) Yesterday, I _____ to the head office with my new boss.
a) was going b) go c) went
- 5) When we reached the office, we discovered
that water _____ down the walls.
a) ran b) run c) was running



3. Match the meanings (a-f) to the words on the left.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| a) a period of one hundred years | _____ customer |
| b) consumer | _____ to imply |
| c) employees of a company | _____ century |
| d) to try | _____ staff |
| e) to suggest | _____ retailer |
| f) a business that sells directly to customers | _____ to attempt |

Notes