

According to Barbara Wold, International Speaker, Author and Business Strategist, she ask, "How Well Do you Know your Customer? The following are tips to make a concerted and consistent effort to get to know your customers.

Step One: Be a Good Listener.

Don't impose your own beliefs or preferences on your customer.

Step Two: Get Down in the Trenches.

Have personal one-on-one encounters with your customers every single day.

Step Three: Ask the Right Questions.

Find out how much customers will pay, what level of quality they desire, how quickly they need your products or services, what they like or dislike about your products.

Step Four: What are the Customer's Alternatives?

Know what the customer's alternatives are. Know who the competition is and shop it regularly.

Step Five: Dig Out More Facts.

Learn about your customers through demographics, other factual data and most important -- talking to them.

Step Six: Buyers Can Be Liars.

Don't just listen to your customers but strive to understand their needs. This may require the use of subtle techniques to establish enough of a rapport to get your customers to open up and articulate their wants and desires.

Step Seven: Be Creative.

Find new and innovative ways to get to know your customers.

Step Eight: Stir the Pot.

Don't let the information you have obtained gather dust. Use it to improve your products or services and to create new ones.

"Genuine listening means suspending memory, desire, and judgment — and, for a moment at least, existing for the other person."

Michael P. Nichols, Author