you want to learn how to get your clients to do your selling for you through exceptional customer service, read on. Learn these simple - yet powerful customer service principles from successful tourism professionals, apply them to your business or career and you are guaranteed to prosper.

1. Be a Good Listener - Most important, listen to your customers' concerns and complaints, as well as their praise. Discover what it is they want. Your guests are your best source of information in assessing your services and performance. Well-written guest surveys are invaluable for getting feedback, testimonials, and referrals. Help prospects qualify themselves before signing up. Make sure they understand the rigors, responsibilities, and dangers, as well as the level of exertion, entailed in the experiences you offer.

2. Exceed Expectations - Under-promise and over-deliver on a consistent basis with exceptional service. This is what they'll remember and tell their friends about. It is amazing how small details can make a big impression. You work hard and spend big money to get qualified prospects to call your office or e-mail you. How professional, informative, and timely is your response? That first contact can set the tone and significantly impact a purchasing decision.

3. Practice Safety - Clients want to know the destination and activities are safe. They will feel more at ease during real or perceived risks if they have been educated about their new activities or environments in advance. Unfortunately, if most human beings' fears or worries are not addressed, their minds will grow weeds, not flowers. Advise on plant, animal, and natural resource cautions. Let them know that there is generally nothing to worry about if they respect the environment and heed your advice. Brief guests on your safety procedures for any excursions without staff away from home base.

4. Provide Great Food - Guests must eat well, never be hungry, and have adequate water and drinks. Fresh food with ample portions served at a scheduled time can make any adventure more memorable and satisfying. If meal service is going to be delayed, provide a little snack to tide guests over.

5. Cater to Sleep Needs - Guests need and want comfortable and peaceful sleep. Make sure everyone is comfortable with his or her bedding. Cater to individual needs by offering single accommodations. Charging an extra cost is okay. Provide easy access to bathrooms with safety procedures for nighttime use. Separate late evening social areas from sleep areas by distance and/or trees or a hill. Hand out earplugs if necessary.

6. Think Comfort - Provide first world standards when possible. Bathroom breaks and bathing is important on a regular basis. Give people every opportunity for comfort: hammocks, beach chairs, portable toilets, whatever you can provide. Never go too long between bathroom breaks. Some guests may have weak bladders and need more frequent breaks to feel comfortable and relaxed. Make sure everyone has adequate water, as well as appropriate clothing and footwear.

7. Be Sensitive to Capabilities - Never exceed physical or mental capacities of guests. Always ask groups and individuals if they are comfortable with the activity and exertion level before and during the activity. Be sensitive to the slowest as well as strongest in the group. Splitting the group into two smaller groups is a good option. Rest as needed. I believe in a trip rating or difficulty system that allows guests and outfitters to jointly participate in selecting the most appropriate trip.

8. Be Fun - Be friendly, helpful, courteous, and fun! Make sure your staff is there for the guests and not for themselves. Good storytellers, jokesters, and musicians can distinguish your staff and company from other companies. Be sensitive with humor and with families with kids. If you cater to kids, employ staff that loves kids. Guests sometimes need encouragement or guidance to try an activity. You are the guide and activity director combined. Discuss activities or mini- classes in advance so guests will know what is happening and when.

9. Provide Information - An informed guest is safer and more relaxed, and has more fun. Our guests are educated and want to learn about their new environment. Assume that guests know little or nothing about their surroundings. Look for opportunities to provide a minimum of three details about each type of surrounding element during any outing. Be prepared to talk about the plants, animals, birds, trees, rocks, geological formations, fish, marine mammals, and shells. Include information about local culture, economy, and history, too. The more we can share, the more value we are providing our guests.