



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM ALWAYS BEST CARE

Tips for Getting Good Customer Service by Phone

Resolving a billing or service issues with a large company likely ranks as one of life's most irritating problems. When you go to the company's website looking for help, there's often a series of FAQs or troubleshooting tips that don't address your problem. You can't find a phone number to call, and if you do find one, you're put through a long automated phone tree. When you choose what you think is the right option, you're put on hold for long periods of time or transferred from one agent to another and have to explain your whole issue all over again.

If you think that most companies don't want to talk to you, you're right. The cost of handling a phone call ranges between \$2 and \$6 for basic service (technical support is more like \$12 to over \$20). Live chats or email, by comparison, are about 20 to 30 percent cheaper. Even less expensive are online FAQs that, once posted, require little maintenance.

The Next Avenue website (<http://www.nextavenue.org> – “where grown-ups keep growing”) offers seven tips for a more effective experience.

1. Do your homework before making a call. Explore the company's website to see if you can solve your problem online. If you can't, do some sleuthing to find the customer service number. It might be on the site or on your bill or insurance card or in the product's warranty manual. When all else fails, try a Google search for the number.

2. Determine exactly what you want to ask before calling. Be prepared to define your problem concisely and know what you want as a realistic resolution.

3. Be polite. Don't yell or curse or put customer-service agents on the defensive. It's not their fault that you've had to repeat your name and account number five times. Nor is it their fault that they lack the tools or ability to solve your problem.

4. Give the agent an excuse to help you. If you're a longtime customer, remind the agent of that. As a last resort, you can threaten to cancel your membership, contract or account if there's a valid alternative.

5. Persevere and escalate the issue if necessary. If the agent can't help, ask for a supervisor. If that doesn't work, try calling the company again (yes, enduring another hold); you may be lucky and reach another agent who's more knowledgeable and helpful. If you're still unsuccessful and unwilling to give up, search the company's website for an executive to contact. That could be the CEO's office or someone in charge of customer service or both.

6. Go public. Lodge a complaint with the Better Business Bureau, Yelp, other consumer sites and the appropriate government agency, if necessary. Try Facebook and/or Twitter, too; both

are monitored by many companies. Some firms respond to tweets if they're mentioned by name because they can then show their fans or followers that they're quick to help customers in distress.

7. Vote with your dollars. If a company is too difficult to deal with and there's a good substitute, switch to a rival. Maybe if more of us do this, customer-unfriendly firms will get the point and change their ways.

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Senior Spirit, the newsletter of the Society of Certified Senior Advisors**

The Certified Senior Advisor (CSA) program provides the advanced knowledge and practical tools to serve seniors at the highest level possible while providing recipients a powerful credential that increases their competitive advantage over other professionals. The CSA works closely with [Always Best Care Senior Services](#) to help ABC business owners understand how to build effective relationships with seniors based on a broad-based knowledge of the health, social and financial issues that are important to seniors, and the dynamics of how these factors work together in seniors' lives. To be a Certified Senior Advisor (CSA) means one willingly accepts and vigilantly upholds the standards in the CSA Code of Professional Responsibility. These standards define the behavior that we owe to seniors, to ourselves, and to our fellow CSAs. The reputation built over the years by the hard work and high standards of CSAs flows to everyone who adds the designation to their name. For more information, visit www.society-csa.com.



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Founded in 1996, Always Best Care Senior Services is based on the belief that having the right people for the right level of care means peace of mind for the client and family. Always Best Care assists seniors with a wide range of illnesses and personal needs, and currently provides more than 3 million hours of care every year. Franchise opportunities are available to individuals interested in leveraging the company's clear strategy and proven track record for delivering affordable, dependable service to seniors in their local areas.

By working with case managers, social workers, discharge planners, doctors, and families, Always Best Care franchise owners provide affordable, comprehensive solutions that can be specifically matched to meet a client's particular physical or social needs. The hallmark services of the Always Best Care business portfolio include non-medical in-home care and assisted living finder and referral services, with skilled home health care now being phased in throughout the country. For more information, visit www.AlwaysBestCare.com. For franchise opportunities, visit www.FranchiseWithAlwaysBestCare.com.

Always Best Care also offers *Always in Touch*, a telephone reassurance program that provides a daily phone call to seniors and disabled adults who are living alone and have limited contact with the outside world. Always in Touch is the *only* absolutely **free** national telephone reassurance program of its kind anywhere in the USA and Canada. For more information on Always in Touch, or to request an application, visit www.Always-in-Touch.com.

Another special program from Always Best Care is *Always on Call* –provided **free** to Always Best Care clients and their families with a minimum of 5 hours of monthly care. Families will have *anytime* access to physicians 24/7 if they're considering ER or urgent care for non-emergency issues, if they need a non-narcotic prescription or refill, if they can't take time off from work or school, if they're traveling and need medical care, if their primary physician is not available, or if they have a sick child, spouse or elderly parent. This special service is provided to Always Best Care clients and their families by 24HourMDNow, an independent company not affiliated with Always Best Care.