**Telephone Etiquette**

* **Attitude is Everything**

Remember, the customer is calling or emailing us because they want to read our product; they are contacting us because the newspaper is important to them. Every interaction with a customer is a chance to show them that we value their business. If we start with that attitude, the customer will recognize it and appreciate that they are valued.

* **Listen and Repeat**

Customers often feel that they are not being heard, even when that is not the case. Listen carefully to what the customer is telling you, then repeat back the issue in your own words to make sure you have understood them correctly. The interaction will proceed to a quicker and more successful resolution if you and the customer are working toward the same goals.

* **Show Empathy**

One of the most difficult parts of customer service is empathizing with a customer. This can be as simple as apologizing for whatever issue the customer has experienced, or agreeing that their experience has been frustrating. Empathizing with the customer shows again that we appreciate their concerns. **Be careful!** While we do want to show empathy, we should avoid talking down parts of our operation; for example, “Yes, that carrier is terrible, I don’t know why we keep him.” Commiserate but offer positive solutions.

* **Say What We CAN Do**

Customers often ask for things that we cannot provide. While we sometimes will need to simply give them a “no” the best option is if we can say “yes” to something that will help the customer. Starting with “What I can do is,” moves the conversation towards a solution and helps prevent frustration for both the customer and for you. Always look for a positive solution you can offer to the customer, even if it is something small.