

## Better Customer Service On Line? Think Again

Editorial Staff

Customer service on the World Wide Web falls short in many areas. Jupiter Communications conducted a survey of 125 major websites. Forty-two percent of the sites either never responded to customer inquiries, took more than five days to reply, or didn't offer e-mail responses to problems.

"A lot of sites don't recognize it's a problem they should be servicing, and we found a large number were failing entirely," said Ken Allard, director of Jupiter's site operations group.

Responding to inquiries quickly is key to a website's success. Prospective patients will click to a rival's home page if their questions go unanswered. If your practice maintains a website, make sure to check for e-mail messages at least twice a day, or set up an automated response to all incoming messages followed by a detailed personal response later that day. Small steps like these could go a long way toward improving patient recruitment and retention.

### *Reference*

Clark T. Customer service an oxymoron online. C/Net News (www.news.com), November 9, 1998.

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