

# Customer Service Tips from a Police Officer

"I just discovered the best customer service training video and it is a news story about a cop. It is less than three minutes long, but in that short time it encapsulates how public servants should interact with patrons [customers]. (Watch the video from the CBS Evening News: <http://www.upworthy.com/everyone-should-know-what-this-cop-has-done?c=bl3> )

Officer Elton Simmons has made over **25,000** traffic stops over the past 20 years in Los Angeles County and has received **ZERO** complaints. That is not a typo, **ZERO** complaints. Think about it, this is a guy who issues tickets and not one single person has complained. Unbelievable. What is his secret? It is so incredibly simple – **he treats all people with respect**. Officer Simmons explains, "I'm here with you, I'm not up here" (*motions his arm up towards the sky*). One thing I hate is to be looked down on - I can't stand it - so I'm not going to look down at you." Wow. Read that again.



Officer Elton Simmons

Below are the things Officer Simmons does when interacting with individuals:

- Uses a tone of voice that is a perfect blend of authority and diplomacy
- Displays no attitude
- Gives individuals the benefit of the doubt, even though he still might issue a ticket
- Refrains from laying a guilt trip on the person
- Smiles!

When he practices the above Officer Simmons immediately disarms the person from giving him an attitude. These actions instantly deescalate a possible bad interaction and the driver actually ends up appreciating what he is doing for them. Which is **GIVING THEM A TRAFFIC VIOLATION!**

Our goal as public servants should be ZERO complaints. Like police officers, most library employees are supported by taxes paid by the people they serve. This news story proves that it is possible to work every day providing exceptional customer service without a single patron complaining about the treatment they receive. It is imperative that we strive for Officer Simmons type numbers if we hope to become an essential service to our communities.

The key is respect and trust. Library employees need to trust that every patron that enters the building has noble intentions. We need to respect that a patron's reason for visiting is to possibly try and better their lives by maybe researching information, finding a book to read or even discovering a great movie. It is time to climb down from the Ivory Tower built on intellectual superiority and simply be with the patrons we serve. We need to be down here."

Library Lost & Found: <http://librarylostfound.com/2013/12/03/pull-over-watch-this/>