



Customer Service

Tips for taking the best care of customers

Make customer complaints the key to your success

Take a few minutes to think about the number of complaints you've received today. This week. This month. Unfortunately, despite how effective you are at your job or the greatness of your company, the complaints will keep coming. It's how you handle the complaints that sets you apart and determines your worth as a customer service representative.

Complaints are usually about:

- **Billing:** "I was over-charged."
- **Communication:** "He didn't explain the costs to me clearly."
- **Employees:** "Your delivery person was rude."
- **Response time:** "I waited 15 minutes for help."
- **Follow-up:** "I wasn't contacted to see if I was satisfied."
- **Requests:** "I asked for medium rare, and this is medium."

• **But the most frequent complaints are about customer service quality and delivery.**

It can be annoying, hurtful and downright unbearable to listen to a customer's complaints—especially if the complaints are about you. However, the most successful customer service representatives—and ultimately, the most successful businesses—recognize, acknowledge and learn from the complaints they receive.

Read on to learn how to improve your complaint handling skills:

1. Give your customers the opportunity to vent their frustrations. As silly as the complaints seem, customers deserve your full and uninterrupted attention.

2. Listen, and take both the customers and their complaints seriously. Even when you want to laugh, hang up or give customers a piece of your mind, still focus your attention on what is being said.

3. Always walk a mile in the customer's shoes. If you had a complaint you needed addressed, you'd want, expect and demand a resolution. Treat your customers as you'd expect to be treated.

4. After you've given your customers time to vent completely, ask "Is there anything else

you would like to discuss" or "What else should we be aware of?"

5. Never argue with customers even if you know they're wrong.

6. Tell the customer you agree that there's a problem that needs to be addressed. Say: "Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Now let me see what I can do to help."

7. If you need to investigate the problem and it's not possible to do so while the customer is present, say: "Great question. Let me find out the details, and I'll be back with you by the end of the day."

8. Figure out a solution with the customer. You both need to come to a mutual understanding and resolution. If you can't find a definitive solution, cover several options with the customer until the person is satisfied with the outcome.

9. Solve the problem either by taking care of it yourself or seeing that the appropriate person handles it. Follow up to see that the customer is satisfied.

10. Learn from your mistakes. If you were at fault, make sure that you figure out how to prevent the problem in the future.

Remember: Complaints are opportunities for you to improve your service. View them as such, and you'll excel at work. □

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