

6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CUSTOMER RIGHT

...even when he's not.

Extenuating circumstances, cranky personalities and downright rudeness can present a customer service challenge for even the most experienced employees.

In today's society, people are stressed to the max. The latest figures claim that 84% of all hospitalizations are due either directly or indirectly to stress. People are working harder, longer and facing incredible demands on their time and abilities. In addition to that, the bar has been raised and expectations are high when it comes to receiving good service. With it's "me only" mindset, today's customer brings with it the entitlement factor. They feel they are entitled to extraordinary service and they want to be left feeling satisfied and even pleasantly pleased at the outcome.

With all of these customer ingredients and expectations, customer service is faced with a bigger challenge than ever. It is inevitable that things are going to happen that generate difficult customer service issues.

So how do you handle a potentially angry complaint without losing a customer?

1. Do not take it lightly.
No matter how minor a problem may appear to you, you need to take the attitude that it is very important. Know that the analytical and dominate personalities need to have their issues dealt with direct and specifically. Don't small chat with them. They see it as a waste of time and it actually intensifies their anger. On the other hand, you will get further with the influencers and calmer styles if you integrate some relationship building skills. Small problems have a way of exploding into big issues if not handled correctly and nipped in the bud.
2. Accept the customer's innocence.
Don't interrogate. By accepting his word you are showing you validate credibility and sense of worth--his self-esteem soars.
3. Sh-h-h. When a customer has a problem, be quiet and let them tell you all about it. Allow them to vent their feelings. Do not interrupt. Maintain direct eye contact. Listen to what they are really saying. Determine what their underlying pain is that is triggering their anger. (Look for the emotional factors such as: inconvenience, caused use of their time, embarrassment, disappointment)
4. Acknowledge the fact that he is upset. Often people try to skirt around the

fact that the customer is upset and try to compensate by being overly cheery. This sends the message that you are not taking him seriously and, and chances are, will upset him even more. Do not ignore feelings of anger. Acknowledge them. Recognize frustrations. One might say: *I know you are upset because.....Let's talk about what we can do to fix the situation for you.*

5. Offer assurance

Be quick to show solutions and alternatives and how they might work best for him in his specific situation. Depending on their behavior style, together with their generational mindsets, you may want to enlighten the customer to how many people have been helped by this product, use testimonials. If the customer is aggressively angry to hear about other people is only going to make him more angry. Conversations need to focus on *his* needs to help him calm down and get him back into a calm conversational state.

6. Talk in terms of we, never “you people”

Using the “we” concept communicates that by working together you can resolve the problem. Keep him in a team mindset.

7. Believe in your customer. We all have our bad days. Heavens forbid that any of us be forever judged on our worst day! Look for the good. In most cases, they are good people just having a bad day. Let them know you care.

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