

Handling customer complaints (Customer service)

The greatest business professional in the world, employed at a fantastic company and completely focused on performing his or her work-related tasks, will undoubtedly be faced with dissatisfied and potentially angry customers at some point; these customers will speak of complaints that they believe to be entirely valid and pressing.

Because, as seasoned financial experts can attest to, even if one does everything correctly in business, unforeseen dilemmas will appear; that's simply the nature of the industry.

It must be emphasized that how a business specialist reacts to these issues will define his or her reputation, as well as that of his or her company. Furthermore, responding to customer complaints, or specific issues voiced by clients with regard to a transaction, can be demanding, exhausting, and aggravating, but it's once again imperative that the process be completed to the highest possible degree of quality.

Typically, customer complaints are addressed over the phone, as the communication form is a favorite of business experts, given its personal and direct general nature. To understand how a customer complaint should be addressed, consider the following example:

Customer support: Hello, this is Todd Jasper with LDT Appliances. How can I help you?

Mrs. Davis: Hi Todd, it's Patty Davis. I just received my order and I'm not at all satisfied.

Customer support: I'm sorry to hear that. What seems to be the problem? Mrs. Davis: What seems to be the problem? I don't know where to begin! The item's back casing is cracked, I'm missing the extra nob I requested, and the unit isn't pre-assembled!

Customer support: I'm sorry to hear that as well. I'm confident that we can make this right.

Mrs. Davis: You'd better, or else I'll have to take my business elsewhere! Customer support: I understand, mam. Here's what I'm going to do: since it would take too long to ship a replacement item, given your schedule constraints, I'm going to send one of our professionals over with the appropriate nob and some new casing, and he's going to assemble the unit and get it set up for you right away. Does that sound good?

Mrs. Davis: Yeah, I guess that sounds okay. When's he coming? I've got a lot to do today.

Customer support: What time works for you?

Mrs. Davis: Noon would be convenient.

Customer support: Great, he's free at noon and will arrive then. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Mrs. Davis: No, no. Thank you for your help. And I'm sorry I got a little bit angry—I just really need to get my order set up and ready to go.

Customer support: It's not a problem, Mrs. Davis. I should mention that we value your business here at LDT Appliances, and if you need anything else at all, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Mrs. Davis: I won't. Thanks again.

As was noted, customers are likely to be angry, annoyed, and frustrated when reporting a complaint; clients often believe that unexpected order dilemmas solely affect them. Thus, it's not difficult to see why they become agitated; from their perspective, order issues are personal slights. If a support professional is calm and focused, however, he or she should resolve the issue quickly, and in a way that enhances the chances of a long and healthy business relationship being enjoyed.

Did you understand the text?

1) How can a business professional avoid encountering dissatisfied customers?

- a) By failing to address them
- b) By performing all aspects of work perfectly
- c) By yelling at customers until they are satisfied
- d) Business professionals cannot fully avoid encountering dissatisfied customers; it's how they respond to these customers that matters

2) What is a customer complaint?

- a) A specific issue voiced by clients with regard to a transaction
- b) Something that, from the customer's perspective, is not acceptable with regard to a business practice
- c) A formal declaration of satisfaction from a customer
- d) 1 and 2

3) How will most customers speak and act when explaining their order complaint?

- a) In a happy and understanding tone
- b) In a bored and uninterested tone
- c) In an angry, frustrated, and offended tone
- d) In an excited, positive tone

4) How should a business professional respond to angry customers?

- a) Shortly, to end the conversation as quickly as possible
- b) Calmly, respectfully, and understandingly
- c) Communications should be ceased with angry customers altogether
- d) Loudly, to speak over the customer's complaints

5) What are some of the benefits of successfully resolving a customer complaint?

- a) Improved client relations
- b) A lower transaction cancellation rate
- c) Fewer dissatisfied customers and an improved long-term company reputation
- d) All of the above