

## Responding serious customer complaints (Customer service)

It's been explained in previous lessons that responding to customer complaints, or specific issues voiced by clients with regard to a transaction, is far from easy, and is widely believed to be one of the most exhausting parts of the business process. The difficulty doesn't end there, however, as serious customer complaints, or complaints that require ample effort and careful maneuvering to successfully resolve, are somewhat common.

Generally, serious customer complaints pertain to issues that cannot quickly be fixed—or even gauged. For example, if a customer's order is damaged in the mail, his or her complaint is likely to be straightforward; a replacement item, discount, refund, or some combination of these things can be provided. But, if a customer complains about a product being "not good," and about customer support being "really bad," a resolution becomes much harder to achieve.

As most serious customer complaints take place over the phone, let's review some business call dialogue that's indicative of similar real-life conversations:

Customer support: This is Lotter Video Games, how can I help you?

Customer: Who am I talking to?

Customer support: My name is Michael and you've contacted Lotter Video Games. I'd be happy to assist you.

Customer: Great. Let's hope you can actually help. I've called here ten times and nobody's been any help at all.

Customer support: I'm sorry to hear that; we take pride in our customer service here at Lotter Video Games. Would you mind providing the names of the support representatives you spoke with? I'd like to look into the situation for you.

Customer: Never mind it. I emailed too, and had the same problem. It's all your representatives—they're all bad. Your customer support is terrible. Anyway, I'm calling about a game I bought from you. It sucks and I want my money back.

Customer support: I'm sorry to hear that. Do you have your receipt? We accept returns on used items up to thirty days after—

Customer: I bought it new and I want my money back.

Customer support: I'm sorry sir, but we don't accept returns on new games if they've been opened.

Customer: That's some way to treat your customers! I want a refund!

Customer support: I'm sorry, sir, but I cannot offer you a refund. What I can offer you is a coupon for a used game, so you can find a title that better suits your needs, pay less, and have the ability to return the game if you don't like it. Additionally, I should mention that we do accept trade-ins, and you can receive some money for the game you purchased.

Customer: You do? Why didn't you tell me that? And what's this coupon?

Customer support: The coupon is good for five dollars off any used game priced nine dollars or higher.

Customer: Alright, I guess that'll work. Email it to me, alright?

Customer support: I'd be happy to.

The trick to resolving serious customer complaints is to remain calm and respectful in the face of likely ridiculous demands. Additionally, one must find a way to work around these complaints, as their solutions aren't as clear-cut as those of traditional order issues. Resolving serious customer complaints is challenging, but true business aficionados can pull it off.

## Did you understand the text?

### 1) What is a "serious" customer complaint?

- a) A normal order issue
- b) An issue that a customer has with a business's competitors
- c) A complaint that requires ample effort and careful maneuvering to successfully resolve
- d) None of the above

### 2) What type of issue is commonly focused on by customers with serious complaints?

- a) One related to shipping
- b) One related to product damage
- c) One related to pricing
- d) One related to complaining for the sake of doing so; something frivolous

### 3) What's the best way to address customers with serious complaints?

- a) It's best to not address them
- b) Angrily
- c) In a way that discourages them from doing business with your company in the future
- d) Calmly and coolly

### 4) How can a serious complaint be resolved?

- a) With a full refund
- b) With a replacement part or helpful information
- c) With a discount or other perk
- d) All of the above

### 5) Positively resolving serious complaints can lead to:

- a) Larger profit margins and an optimal business reputation
- b) Wasted company time
- c) Valuable customer service experience
- d) 1 and 3