



STRATEGIES FOR Success

*Did you ever
wish your
customers
would stop
complaining?
Then be careful
what you wish
for!*

When Complaints Arise . . .

Some businesses don't really treat customer complaints as opportunities. They adopt, in effect, an attitude of "why bother—they're lost anyway."

But this is not true—research has shown that winning a disgruntled customer over is far easier than replacing them. It is certainly less expensive—and at the very least minimizes bad reports being circulated to other existing and potential customers.

Some businesses persist in failing to use a proactive approach to problems. In so doing, they miss an important opportunity to build customer loyalty and valuable goodwill. When things go wrong, customers are most sensitive about how they are treated, most likely to share their experiences with friends and associates, and are more likely to make lasting decisions about whether to bring their future business back to a company, or to its competition.

Here's what you can do minimize customer complaints:

- Set up a telephone hotline to provide immediate assistance.
- Give staff the power to take prompt and significant actions for your customers.

- Run surveys to keep track of changing expectations. Find out what customers are buying now, and what they want in the future.
- Provide easy-to-use "comment cards" at all points of customer contact. Insert them in outgoing mail. Show your appreciation for responses, and reply quickly.
- Become a customer of your best competitors. Seek out what they do better or differently than you do. Make appropriate improvements in your business operations.
- Use targeted mystery shoppers to evaluate your own operations.
- Hold "focus group" meetings of your customers to help evaluate what you're doing wrong – and right.

Suggestions such as these DO have impact—so why don't more businesses apply them? Actually the most successful ones usually do. Companies that fail are those not comfortable subjecting themselves to criticism and the possibility of remediable errors. False pride, in such cases, does indeed precede a fall.

To learn more how we can help you with your business, consult your Fiducial Business Services representative.

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