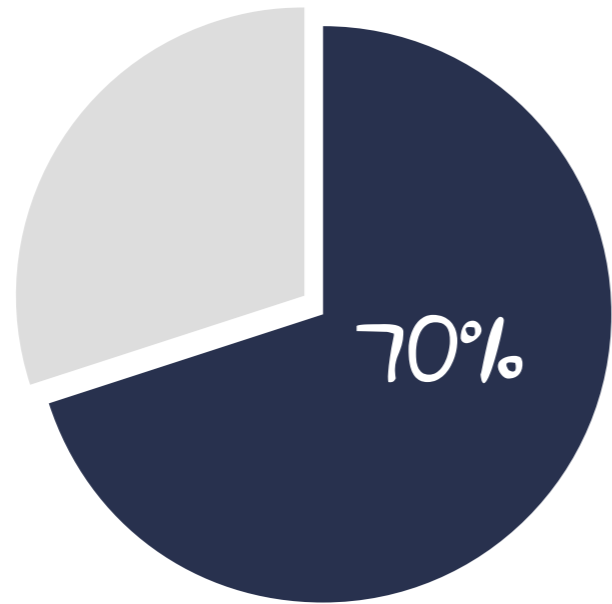


CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

TURNING NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

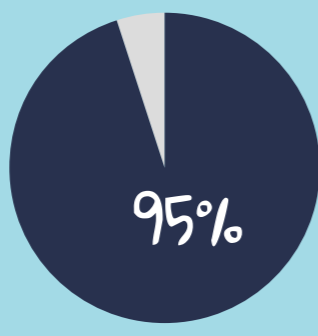
In the modern business world, no matter what role you perform, you need the skills to effectively handle customer complaints. Customers can be internal as well as external to the business, so we all deal with customers in one way or another.



RESOLVE A COMPLAINT IN THE CUSTOMER'S FAVOUR AND THEY WILL DO BUSINESS WITH YOU AGAIN 70% OF THE TIME

FOR EVERY CUSTOMER WHO BOTHERS TO COMPLAIN, 26 OTHER CUSTOMERS REMAIN SILENT.

WORRYINGLY, **95% OF CUSTOMERS** WHO HAVE HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE ARE LIKELY TO TELL SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT IT.



IF YOU TRY TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS **WITHOUT A PLAN OR STRUCTURE** YOU'RE TAKING A HUGE RISK. HANDLING COMPLAINTS WITH A STRUCTURED PLAN IS A MUCH BETTER IDEA.



Having a system means that you can control the situation and lead it towards an outcome which is favourable to you. We will now look at a system for handling complaints which does exactly that. It is easy to remember and works for many workplace situations and scenarios.

THE FOUR STEP PLAN IS CALLED THE LAST COMPLAINT PLAN.

It is called the last complaint plan because the letters LAST are an acronym for the steps you must go through in order to handle and control the complaint...

LISTEN

APOLOGISE

SOLUTION

THANK THEM

LISTEN

When a customer is dissatisfied their immediate need is for someone to listen to their complaint. When listening to a customer's complaint it's important not to interrupt. Make notes on the detail of the complaint and give them visual or verbal cues that you're paying attention. It is really important that you empathise with their point of view.

TAKEAWAY

"Put yourself in the customer's shoes - if you had a problem, you would want someone to listen to you"

APOLOGISE

The next thing you must always do is apologise. That's right, even if you don't agree with the customer you must apologise. Regardless of the situation, you need to apologise so that the customer understands you are sorry they have been made to feel the way they do.

Sometimes a simple apology could be all it takes to resolve a customer's complaint. An apology is a great weapon for dealing with a particularly irate customer. The words "I'm sorry" will have a calming impact.

TAKEAWAY

"An apology is the superglue of life, it can repair just about anything"

SOLUTION

Your target must always be to resolve the customer complaint. Ideally you want to offer a solution which is a win win scenario. This is achieved by turning the complaint into an opportunity and striving for a positive outcome.

A simple way to do this is to ask the customer for suggestions of what they believe would be a good solution. What would they expect you to do to put the situation right and make them happy? This has to be communicated carefully to avoid sounding like you're helpless to offer a solution.

TAKEAWAY

"Be solution-focused by involving the customer in this process"

THANK THEM

Never underestimate the power of gratitude.

The modern business world, with its wheels spinning at speed, can sometimes forget the importance of old time courtesies. But saying "thank you" can be a competitive advantage. On the successful resolution of the customer complaint, you should thank the customer for bringing the issue to your attention.

You should use this experience to make a lasting change to the businesses processes and procedures to prevent this from happening again. Think of it as a post complaint review. Why was the customer unhappy and what can you do to prevent another customer having the same negative customer experience?

TAKEAWAY

"Consider yourself lucky that the customer is prepared to give up their time and money to let you know they have a problem, instead of just walking away - a complaint is a gift so make sure you thank them for it"