

Title:

The Cruel Truth: One Received Complaint = 8 Unhappy Customers

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493

Summary:

This just doesn't sound fair does it? That one unhappy customer, who complains to you about your business, actually represents 7 others. Well it's all centered on good old human nature. You see, as psychologists will tell us, we humans walk the earth with a general expectation of having things occur normally. Pessimists aside, we generally expect to buy what we need, and be provided with the level of service we have grown accustomed to receiving.

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Article Body:

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This just doesn't sound fair does it? That one unhappy customer, who complains to you about your business, actually represents 7 others. So why is this so? Well it's all centered on good old human nature. You see, as psychologists will tell us, we humans walk the earth with a general expectation of having things occur normally. Pessimists aside, we generally expect to buy what we need, and be provided with the level of service we have grown accustomed to receiving.

So when your business does just that, (performs well and satisfies its customers), people are just that - satisfied. They don't leap with joy, they don't run up to you and give you a big hug - they simply go on their way, and may well use your business again.

Similarly, when a customers expectations of your product or service ARE NOT fulfilled, they don't all come angrily knocking on your office door, or dashing off terse letters to you. In fact 7 out of 8 of them you'll never even know about, and you'll never see again. They know you have competitors out there, so they'll simply use them instead.

To compound this problem, a happy customer needs much more motivation than an unhappy one, to spread the word. So the unhappy customer who took the time to identify themselves + the other seven who didn't, are all out there busily

trashing your business!

Goodness, this sounds like a nightmare doesn't it! Well yes, it is undoubtedly a threat. So how can you transform this threat into an opportunity? Like this: The one in eight unhappy customers, that take the time to voice their complaint are actually a blessing in disguise. You see not only do they give you the opportunity to convert them into happy customers, their grievances can, (over time), give you an invaluable insight into what in your business needs fixing.

For example, say you sell light fixtures. You are proud of the fact that your range and prices are unparalleled in the industry. You spend 3 days of each week on the road liaising with your contacts, and your 2 remaining days in your store revolve mainly around administration.

You take the time however to set up a register of complaints received - sorted into categories. You examine this, and see no mention of price or quality, but what you do see points to a different problem. Complaint after complaint refers to customer/staff interaction. Things like: 'I asked for the lamp to be gift wrapped, but Mary said she couldn't do it', or 'I wanted to pay \$50 by EFT and the rest in cash, but Bill said I wasn't allowed'. And remember, if you have 10 written complaints, that represents 80 disgruntled customers!

Would this give you the motivation to spend a lot more time out on the floor of your shop, assisting customers and training your staff? You bet it would.