Title:
The ABCs of Customer Recovery

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Summary:
This week I present 26 little ideas to help you respond to complaints and
difficult customers with much more ease….the ABC's of Customer Recovery.

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Article Body:
This week I present 26 little ideas to help you respond to complaints and
difficult customers with much more ease….the ABC's of Customer Recovery.

A ct as if every lost customer's sales come out of your paycheck.

Believe the best of customers. Don't make the mistake of assuming most
customers are out to simply get something for nothing. The truth is, less than
1% of customers contact companies with ulterior motives in mind.

C ommunicate with diplomacy and tact when you final answer is "no" and
when explaining company policy.

D on't tell a customer she is wrong. Telling a customer they are wrong
never makes them want to agree with you. It only pushes them more forcefully
into their original position. <p>

E mpathize with unhappy customers and allow this empathy to season your
responses.

F ind a way to say "yes" to customers. Instead of saying "no" or telling
the customer what you can't do, think critically about what you actually can do.

G ive a token item such a coupon as a concrete form of apology.

H ave a sense of urgency. Demonstrate with your words and speed of
response that getting to the bottom of the problem is just as important to you
as it is to your customer.

I nvolve customers in the problem resolution process. Sometimes it's very helpful to simply ask, "How do you see us resolving this?"

Jot down the customer's name and details of the problem they are describing so you don't have to ask the customer to repeat information.

K eep customers apprised of your timetable and progress toward resolving their problems.

L isten with the intent to truly understand your customer, not with the intent to interrupt, reply, or correct.

M onitor your customer service calls to ensure your tone is friendly, helpful and willing.

N egotiate resolutions that balance both the interests of your company and your customer.

Open the door with unhappy customers with open-ended questions. Make your questions demonstrate a sincere interest in better understanding the customer's problem or experience.

P ut yourself in the customer's shoes. How would you feel if the exact same problem happened to you?

Q uickly apologize. Apologize both when the company is at fault and even when the customer is responsible for the error. An apology goes a long way in creating calm, diffusing anger and regaining goodwill.

R ecognize that the issue is not the issue. The way the issue is handled becomes the real issue.

S ay "no" diplomatically and without causing resentment. The best way to do this is to start out by telling the customer what you can do.

T hank customers for their feedback.

U p-Service your customers by suggesting products or services that enhance the value of their current purchase.

View the customer as the reason for your work---not as an interruption to your work.

W OW customers.

Ex amine the root cause of problems and work to eliminating problems at the root.

Y ou are the company to each customer. Never underestimate your power to influence the customer's future buying decisions.

Zero in on the customer's needs and wants.