



EFFECTIVE COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT: A POWERFUL STRATEGY TO INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

Customers are often delighted if a business simply delivers what has been promised. However, they are also increasingly aware of their rights and ready to complain when they perceive that they have received a poor service or experienced a product fault. More and more customers are judging businesses based on their problem solving skills and companies are finding out that their ability to put things right when they go wrong will impact on their reputation in the marketplace.

Turn a negative experience into an opportunity

Customer complaints should be embraced and seen as unsolicited feedback which is always a valuable source of information about your business. You should use this customer feedback as a great opportunity for learning where your business could be improved. Effective complaint management not only increases customer satisfaction and loyalty, but it drives operational improvement and overall performance.

Six steps to an effective complaint management

The successful resolution of customer complaints is driven by the complaint handling skills and expertise within a company's customer service teams. In particular, employees must be able managing the emotional context customers often feel when they complain.

Here are 6 steps to an effective complaint management:

1. **React immediately:** Make sure that everyone who complains on the phone, online or face to face gets a rapid response. If you cannot provide an immediate solution to their problem, let them know that their complaint is heard, taken into account and that you're going to do your best to make things right as soon possible.
2. **Listen and understand:** Let customers speak and express their frustration without taking it personally. Try to get the facts and as many details as needed to really understand the situation and the problem. Use this opportunity to start a genuine conversation and build a trusting relationship with a customer.
3. **Acknowledge the problem:** If your company really made a mistake, acknowledge the problem and take responsibility for helping a customer to solve it.
4. **Offer a solution:** Now that you know all the facts, it's time to offer a helpful solution. Seek to agree on the solution that will resolve the situation to their satisfaction.
5. **Follow-up:** Follow-up to ensure the customer is completely satisfied. Everything up to this point will be for naught if the customer feels that "out of sight is out of mind."
6. **Thank the customer:** No matter how unpleasant the situation was, once the solution is provided, thank the customer for bringing the complaint to your attention and giving your business an opportunity to improve. That is also how you let them feel important and valuable.

**Minimize the reasons for complaints**

Knowing how to handle customer complaints successfully is no doubt essential to your business success. Even more important is whether you learn from those situations and how you use that knowledge to minimize customer complaints in future. Learn from your mistakes, and if necessary, fix processes, re-train staff, and eliminate faults. And be honest with your customers about your products or services in the first place. Don't give them false promises to avoid unrealistic expectations and disappointment.

Surprise your customers

What separates service leaders from the rest is how they respond to customers left dissatisfied by their mistake. Effective complaint management is essential reading for any organization wishing to enhance customer satisfaction, profitability and reputation through superior customer service.

The experts of MFB Resultants can help you design and implement a successful and tailored complaint management strategy for your organization. When you resolve customer complaints successfully, you will better understand their needs, retain them as loyal customers, and enhance your business.

MFB Resultants – We deliver results.