

Customer Service

9. Handling complaints

In business, an effective system for handling complaints is critical. Good complaint management can have a positive impact on customers.

Customers are essentially looking for their problem to be:

- easy to report
- acknowledged
- dealt with quickly, sensitively and fairly.

If a customer raises a problem with you and it can be dealt with early, it may prevent it escalating into a formal complaint.

The more times the customer has to contact you about the complaint, and the more times it needs to be escalated to someone higher up in the business, then the more dissatisfied the customer will become.

The management of complaints should include a system of recording them, as this provides a valuable source of information on issues causing problems for customers in general. This in turn allows you to take the necessary action to ensure the source of the problems is identified and prevented from recurring.

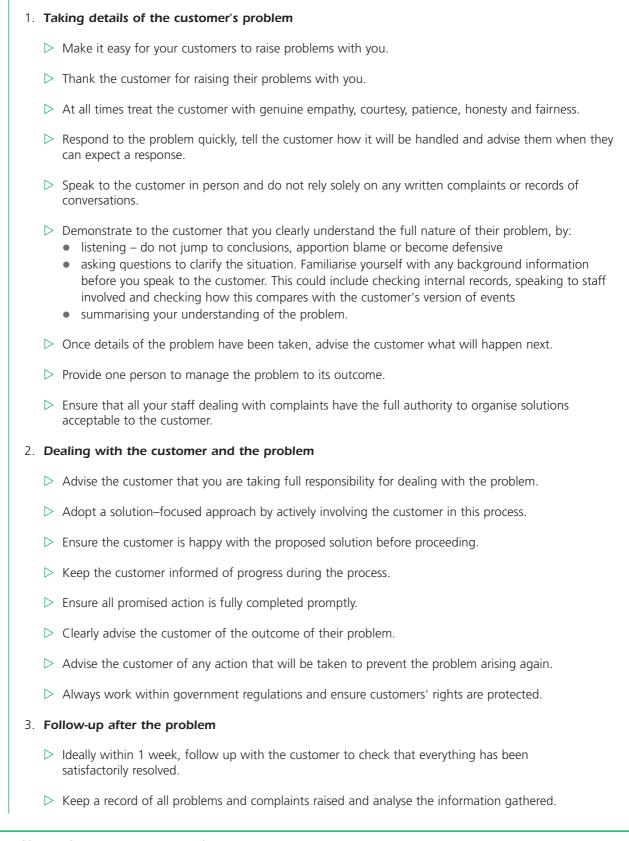
Research has shown that in some cases you can regain, maintain or even increase customer satisfaction by handling complaints well. However, emphasis should still be placed on getting things right the first time. It is certainly less costly, disruptive and risky as a customer retention strategy.

Handling customer complaints involves handling the customer well. It is not just about focusing on the specific problem or complaint. There are three key stages, namely:

- taking details of the customer's problem
- dealing with the customer and the problem
- following up after the problem.

To assist you to handle complaints from customers, follow the checklist on the next page.

Checklist - Handling complaints



Office of Consumer and Business Affairs

Telephone **(08) 8204 9777** Level 4, Chesser House 91-97 Grenfell Street Adelaide SA 5000

Regional Offices

Telephone **131 882** Berri, 30 Kay Avenue SA 5343 Mount Gambier, 11 Helen Street SA 5290 Port Augusta, 9 Mackay Street SA 5700 We also provide services at the following locations:

Naracoorte, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, and Whyalla

May 2006