



Handling An Unhappy Customer

Anyone who has spent any time in retail or in customer service has likely seen the darker side of human nature when someone forgets their manners and is less than respectful, rude or just not sensible.

Something primal happens to the human psyche when their needs have not been met and they are overwrought and out of patience. Grown humans can revert to the emotional state of the average two year old. Keeping this in mind can be the key to resolving customer issues and keeping or restoring the peace.

Don't Take It Personally

You never know what a person is carrying with them on the inside when they walk into your place. Whatever they perceive to be a point of irritation could just be their personal last straw after a day of things going wrong, not eating on time or being over tired, which means you the staff member ends up being in the path of their boil over. This is not an excuse for poor behavior, of course, but keeping it in mind could help you keep your composure while trying to improve the situation. Just remember that it might not actually have anything to do with you or your business. We have all had bad days and can use that experience to empathize.

If a customer offers criticism of any kind, try to ignore the tone of the message and focus on their ultimate point. It is important to realize that even though you might not like the way they are speaking at least they are telling you what is wrong, when many customers simply will quietly decide not to come back without ever expressing the reason for their dissatisfaction.

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEY THINK IS “WRONG”. If they have a problem, perhaps this has been a problem for another customer as well. So it's important to LISTEN to what their problem is.

Validate

Whether the customer has a legitimate complaint or is just flat out wrong, validating their situation or their state of mind will help lessen their irritation and hopefully get them to calm down a notch. If they are very angry, you can validate this by saying, "Sir, I see that you are upset, I am sorry that this situation has upset you." Once you let them know you understand that they are frustrated, and seem sympathetic, they usually will become willing to work with you on a resolution. You can also thank them for expressing their frustration so you can learn from it. This tells them you are listening. You are empowered to initiate a solution right then and there but if you have hesitation on what might be the right resolution, this is where you rely on your manager for assistance.

Don't Escalate

No matter how hostile the customer is behaving, telling them to calm down will probably further upset them. Validating as described above is the first step of venting their steam.

Do not match their tone of voice. Not only will this escalate the situation to an even more angry exchange it might offend your other customers witnessing the interaction. Keep in mind they will remember how you handled yourself. Never lose your cool. Sometimes repeating back the customer's complaint in a calm tone will signal to them that you understand the problem and want to work to a resolution. Remember it's just a spice shoppe, we aren't selling \$1000 valued items, most issues can be resolved right then and there.

Avoid using the words "I can't" or "we can't." These are negatives. Tell the person you would like to find a resolution and perhaps offer some kind of a good will gesture for their trouble. This does not mean you have to hand them the store, but consider if a fair exchange can be made right then and there, reassure them you'll relay all the issue to the manager who will also be happy to reach out to them if they would like.

Do not tell the customer they are wrong and do not speak condescendingly. It is true the customer may not have any idea what happens behind the scenes at your business (or even what they are talking about) but treat them with respect. Even if you feel they do not deserve it you have to set a good example for your staff and make the situation easier on your other customers. Trying to restore peace as quickly as possible should be your ultimate goal.

Do Not Make Jokes - While this might work in many scenarios, if your customer is truly upset making a joke might not be well received in the moment. It might make them feel as if you are making light of a situation that they consider important.

Stay Professional - Keeping your cool and focusing on resolution is never out of line. You might not be able to please everyone but handling yourself well will keep the respect of everyone around you. Keeping professional sends a strong message to other customers witnessing the issue as well

No Eye Roll - A big no-no. Very disrespectful. Make sure you and your staff keep your facial expressions calm and neutral.

The Customer is Always Right

The old adage holds true but it is not really meant to be taken literally. Anyone who has spent any time in an open-to-the-public business setting knows better! The spirit of this adage is really what is important. The customer in question walked into your shop willing to spend money and support your business. This makes them a valuable commodity. Resolving the customer's issue quickly and to their satisfaction benefits you in the long run. If possible, you can retain a customer - if not possible, you can restore peace, set a good example and hopefully keep your other customers' collective faith in you.

Always know your manager will be there to support you and help you through a situation if you want or need and will step in if you feel the customer exchange can not be resolved with you at the lead. It takes a team to make our Spice World run sooth so always rely on yourself and your team members to help you through a difficult situation like an unhappy customer!

Follow Up With Your Manager

It's important that as soon as possibly, you inform your manager to the issue that took place.

The details of the complaint.

The requests made of the customer.

How you resolved the issue.

IF there are issues still left to be resolved.

If the manager needs to follow up with the customer.

How you felt about the exchange with the customer.

If you thought of any ways to avoid this issue in the future.

If you with you had any resources to help you better deal with this issue.



Week 5/24/21

Pump-UP your average customer sales and your product knowledge!

Each week we will be competing in a fun quiz competition to help boost your knowledge for sales improvement and customer service!

Complete the quiz by Sunday evening and stick in my mail box. The answers and the weeks team leader to be posted on Monday mornings and each month's winner to receive Grand Prize.

***Next to "Upsell Bonus", list an item(s) you might be inspired to suggest to a customer asking that question.*

Have fun! Be Curious! And always look for ways to improve our customer service!

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This week we are just going to review how to handle something that VERY rarely comes up at our shop but it's crucial you know how best to handle a situation, the process for follow up and are comfortable doing so.

- When we meet on June 2nd we will review and we will use Trista and the mold Jam phone call as an example.

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