



**Customer Service Basics**

**Lesson 4 - Handling Complaints**

# **WORKBOOK**



## Handling Complaints Overview

- Make it Easy for Customers to Complain
- Resolve the Problem
- Cope with Upset and Difficult Customers

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## Complaints

- A complaint is a customer's expression of dissatisfaction with the product they have purchased or the service they received
- Whether the complain is valid or not, from the customer's perspective, a problem exists



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## Why Customers Don't Complain

- They don't want to go through the hassle
- They don't know where to go
- They don't think it will do any good
- They think they will be treated badly
- They feel it's easier to go somewhere else
- They don't want to get the employee in trouble

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## View Complaints as Opportunities

- Improve a product or service
- Develop trust and loyalty
- Solve a small problem before it becomes a crisis
- Promote a positive image when the complaint is handled well
- Educate customers in using the products and services more effectively

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## Five Forbidden Phrases

- When handling a complaint, consider your words carefully. There are certain words and phrases that can create negative images in your customers minds:
  - "I don't know"
  - "We can't do that"
  - "You'll have to \_\_\_\_"
  - "Hang on a second, I'll be right back"
  - "No" (at the beginning of any sentence)

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## Service Recovery

- Recovery involves taking action to resolve a problem to the customer's satisfaction
- There are six steps to service recovery:
  - Apologize
  - Understand the problem
  - Determine the cause
  - Explore possible acceptable solutions
  - Implement the best solution
  - Follow-up



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## Guidelines for Dealing with Difficult Customers

- Remain calm
- Allow the customer to vent to release the anger, frustration, and irritation that could get in the way of finding a solution
- Express empathy to convey that you understand your customer's problem
- Ask close-ended questions to gain control of the situation and get the customer focusing on the problem
- Show confidence

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## Cope with Upset and Difficult Customers

- Good customer service involves getting past a customer's anger, frustration, hurt, or fear, and focusing on facts and solutions rather than negative behavior

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## Handling Complaints Review

- Make it Easy for Customers to Complain
- Resolve the Problem
- Cope with Upset and Difficult Customers

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# Questions and Answers

## Review Questions:

1. True or False: Whether the complaint is valid or not, from the customer's perspective, a problem exists.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. Which of the following is a reason why customers do not complain?
  - A. They don't want to get someone in trouble
  - B. They don't want to go through the hassle
  - C. They don't know where to go
  - D. All of the above are reasons why customers do not complain
3. True or False: Viewing complaints as opportunities prevents you from educating customers.
  - A. True
  - B. False
4. Which is one of the forbidden phrases when providing excellent customer service?
  - A. We can do that
  - B. I don't know
  - C. May I place you on hold?
  - D. I will do this for you
5. True or False: Being passive when a customer is complaining is an acceptable response.
  - A. True
  - B. False

## Answer Key:

1. A

True. A complaint is a gap between what the customer thought should have happened and what actually happened. Since the complaint is based on the customer's thought and perspective, a problem exists regardless of its validity.

2. D

All of the choices given are reasons why customers do not complain, among others.

3. B

False. You have the opportunity to educate customers in using the products and services more effectively when you have the mindset of viewing a complaint as an opportunity.

4. B

Forbidden phrases are those phrases that prevent excellent customer service and include: I don't know, no (at the beginning of a sentence), we can't do that, you'll have to\_\_\_\_, and hang on a second, and I'll be right back.

5. B

False. When dealing with a difficult customer during a complaint, you must respond assertively (not passively) because it requires expressing empathy to convey that you understand your customer's problem, asking close-ended questions to gain control of the situation and get the customer focusing on the problem, and showing confidence.