

Chapter 7:

Problem Solving

From time to time you need to deal with problems. In providing quality service, problems most likely present themselves as complaints.

Customers are dissatisfied with some aspect of service. Sometimes they even become angry. Often you find yourself in a difficult situation. But, don't let problems get the best of you. Look upon them as an opportunity to deliver exceptional service.

Ninety-six percent of customers never bother to complain at all. They don't think it will do any good. Instead, they put up with bad service only as long as they have to and avoid doing business with the organization in the future. However, they tell others about the bad service they received, and the reputation of that business suffers.

How do you deal with complaints? First, realize the complaint is a request for help and not a reflection on you personally. Focus on the customer to show a courteous and helpful attitude. This also helps you maintain your composure. By acting on the problem instead of reacting, you remain in control of the situation.



Next, listen carefully to deal with feelings and ask questions to clarify details. Then empathize to show your concern and understanding of the problem. Identify the exact nature of the problem by restating what you have heard. Take responsibility for the problem by apologizing for the inconvenience or oversight.

Finally, the most important step to dealing with complaints is solving the problem. Ask the customer what he or she feels needs to be done to correct the situation. Offer solutions that meet the needs of the customer or find someone who can.

When dealing with angry customers, here are some points to keep in mind:

- Don't challenge the customer
- Don't wander from the specific problem
- Don't participate in fault-finding
- Don't let personal feelings get in the way

Exceptional service is especially important in dealing with complaints. Remember not to take the situation personally. Then you are free to remain objective and committed to solving the toughest complaints.





Points to Remember

- Put customer complaints into perspective.
- A complaint is a request for help.
- Stay focused on the customer and maintain your composure.
- Use problem-solving skills to solve the problem.
- Remain objective and committed to solving the problem.

E xercise Seven

Question 1: Why is it so important to handle problem situations and solve them?

Question 2: In your job, what options can you use to solve problems?

Question 3: What tactics should you avoid in dealing with angry customers?

Question 4: Why is it important to apologize for a problem, even if you are not personally to blame?
