

SERVICE RECOVERY PLAN

poor communication often impacts on customer service:

PLAN for complaints: be ready. No one is perfect so despite your service offering and plans for excellence, there may be occasion where you can identify the potential for things to go wrong, or standards to slip so be aware of them.

PRESERVE the existing relationship with your customer, not your profit. Make the customer happy NOW. Do this by handling all complaints with a positive attitude.

RESOLVE all complaints quickly. If you know there's going to be a delay, acknowledge it and inform the customer that you're making it your priority. The longer you make them wait, the less responsive they are likely to be.

Always **BE PROFESSIONAL & COURTEOUS**. Even when a customer is not. Complaints are often hostile because they are so emotive and the anticipation is that of resistance so disarm the emotionally charged customer with courtesy.

TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY - even if it's not your fault. Apologise for the inconvenience and inform them what caused the problem. Much of the frustration from complaints is due to the customer not knowing what is going on. Inform the customer know what you intend to do about it and never blame anyone else. The focus should be on what has happened to the customer and what is going to be done about it, not on shifting blame.

COMPENSATE the customer for their inconvenience in a suitable way that would appease them. Solve the problem and reward them for highlighting the problem. Make them remember the special attention you give them rather than the problem they had in the first place.

FOLLOW UP every complaint. After solving the problem, make a point of checking with the customer about a week later that they are still satisfied. If they are happy, give them a little extra something - make them special: an extra discount or a bonus item.

PREVENT similar complaints by identifying what went wrong. A complaint really is essential feedback identifying a weakness. Complaints will lose you business from the customer involved and everyone who listens to their story. Don't let that happen.

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