

Small Business Management Toolbox

Coordinate implementation of customer service strategies

Complaints

When customers complain over the phone there are several actions you can take.

Clarify and confirm your customer's needs

Be polite: use 'please', 'thank you' and the customer's name liberally. A likely dialogue might go like this.

'May I have your name please? thank you.'

'And your company (if appropriate)?thank you.'

'What is the product/service in question please?'

(Repeat back to the customer.)

'When did you order/receive it (customer name)?'

'What exactly is the complaint you have (customer name)?'

'I'll need to write the issues down in point form. Could you help me by going through them one by one please?'(Repeat each issue back to the customer for accuracy.)

Summarise the issues at the end and obtain the customer's agreement that you have everything.

Provide appropriate feedback, information and advice

Provide feedback that you have understood the complaint regularly during the phone conversation.

Confirm customer, product/service and complaint details.

Explain to the customer that, in order to help, you need factual details that you can follow-up. Provide information and advice.

Once you have all details of customers' complaints let them know exactly what action you intend to take and in what time span, eg '(customer name) I will now direct your complaint to (appropriate person or department). They will have the answers.'

'I will call you by (select a suitable time) is that alright with you (customer name)?
Thank you.'

Record details of the interaction

Record all appropriate customer and product/service transaction details, ie customer and company name, contact and account number details, order number etc.

Complaint details need to be in point form, covering the issues only.

Complete any follow-up action necessary

Obtain the customer's agreement to follow-up action you intend to take.

Follow-up with customers in exactly the way you agreed, ie if you agreed to ring them by a certain time then ring. You must keep faith with the customer, even if you have not resolved their complaint.