

Small Business Management Toolbox

Coordinate implementation of customer service strategies

Dealing with complaints

When dealing with complaints, keep in mind the following.

- Do use **active** listening.
 - ‘What I think I hear may not necessarily be what you thought you said.’
Give feedback. Let customers know you have heard them by paraphrasing ie repeating what you have heard in your own words.
- Do make notes of the complaint (dot points are good).
- Do use questioning techniques to get facts and dissipate customer anger.
 - Use short, closed questions while the customer is emotional and angry.
 - Use open and probing questions once the situation has settled and can be discussed sensibly.
- Do obtain all relevant details eg name, phone, mobile, order etc.
- Do obtain customer agreement on the complaint solution(s).
- Do remain professional, patient and calm.
- Do thank customers for alerting you to complaints. If they don't tell you they will typically tell others.
- Do follow-up on what you have agreed with the customer.
- Don't take your customers' anger personally.
- Don't lose control of your temper because your customer has.
- Don't give excuses – give alternatives instead.
- Don't just say 'sorry'. Say 'sorry' for a particular inconvenience.
- Don't use negative wording - be positive.
- Don't interrupt as that will only extend the complaint.
- Don't assume – get all the facts, before you act.
- Don't accept liability or responsibility – be sure of the facts.
- Don't say anything that may appear as an attack or accusation.