

MASTERING MARKETING



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Ho, Ho, Ho—Handling Crabby Customers this Holiday Season

Unreasonable customers are always a pain, but they're especially prevalent and stressful during the holiday shopping rush. To help you cope with difficult shoppers this holiday season, consider these seven tips from customer-service experts.



REMEMBER: THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT

Acknowledge that the customer is upset and ask them to tell you the problem. Listen carefully, and if you think it will help, rephrase their complaint to make it clear that you understood what they said. Sometimes an unhappy customer just wants to be heard.

The old "customer is always right" philosophy may still be the best approach for dealing with obnoxious shoppers. Customer service experts have long said that a happy customer tells one or two friends, while an unhappy customer tells several—or in the age of social media, hundreds of his closest strangers. And these statistics can be magnified by the emotions related to holiday shopping.



APOLOGIZE SINCERELY

"I'm so sorry" are three short words that mean a lot, and are not used often enough.

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3 TRAIN EMPLOYEES TO COPE WITH PROBLEM CUSTOMERS

Have solutions already in mind and train your staff on how and when to offer them. If you can make an upset customer feel special and prioritized it will go a long way towards curbing any bad attitude they might have about purchasing from you again. Possible solutions include replacement of the item, a discount this time or next, or a complimentary item or gift card.



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4 KNOW WHEN TO CALL FOR HELP

Almost everyone is familiar with the phrase, “I want to speak to your manager”. Encourage your staff to handle problems as they can. But, if the customer is getting out of hand, be it yelling or inappropriate language, be sure a manager is there to help step in and take the customer aside to resolve the problem.



5 KNOW WHAT NOT TO DO

There is nothing worst than throwing rudeness back in a customer’s face, It can only lead to more disputes and a manager will definitely have to get involved. Also no tweeting, posting, or picture sharing to social media about the situation. It makes your business look unprofessional.



6 DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

Remember, the customer is not angry with you, they are displeased with the performance of your product or the quality of the service you provide. Your personal feelings are beside the point.



7 AS A LAST RESORT, BE WILLING TO LOSE THE CUSTOMER AND THE SALE

If you offer your best plan for resolving a problem and the customer is still being difficult, it's okay to part company and refund the purchase price.