

Making Lemonade Out Of Lemons

How often have you heard the saying, “No news is good news”? While that may be a statement of truth in some scenarios, when it comes to customer relations, think again.

Statistics tell us that the customers who don’t give us the “bad news” just take their business elsewhere.

Fact: One unhappy customer will tell at least 20 people about his or her displeasure with a business; yet a happy customer only tells eight.

Fact: Fewer than 4% ever tell you they are unhappy—giving you the opportunity to do something about their complaint; the rest just take their business elsewhere.

Fact: It costs five times more to get a new customer than to keep one.

Fact: The source of most customers’ dissatisfaction is their perception of being unappreciated and poorly served.

Wow, what an opportunity! Given these facts, doesn’t it make sense to take the pulse of your customers regularly and encourage your customers to dialogue with you on a regular basis. And, for those who want to complain, seize the opportunity. You see, what he or she is really saying is, “I want to do business with you, but it would be better if...”

Now it’s in your court.

If you treat the complaint as a bother or take it personally, then it may be handled with less sensitivity and professionalism because you are on the defensive. If, however, the complaint or suggestion is seen as a positive by you and your staff, then an opportunity to solve the problem and keep a customer is created.

Complaints are opportunities for you and your company to improve a product, enhance customer loyalty and trust, to solve a problem before it becomes a crisis, and to create a positive experience with the previously unhappy customer to whom you have now responded with a solution and care.

Diffuse the Situation

While this all sounds good in theory, the reality is there is often anger attached to a complaint and the hostile approach of the customer can often derail even the most well-meaning manager.

First you must realize that your role (or that of your staff) is to do three things:

- 1) take charge of the situation.
- 2) help the angry customer calm down and become rationale again.
- 3) solve the problem with the goal being to keep the customer.

Even if you don’t keep the customer, you will likely reduce the amount of negative word-of-mouth marketing. Most important, don’t aggravate the situation by being emotional, patronizing, or defensive. The following techniques may help you handle angry customers without ruining your day.

HANDLING ANGRY CUSTOMERS

- ~ Hear the customer out, listening closely to what she or he says.
- ~ Express empathy—“I am sorry you’re”
- ~ Agree with their frustration—“I can see how frustrating this must be...”
- ~ Share their concern—“I’d feel the same way if this happened to me...”
- ~ Express regret that the situation happened, but don’t take blame or blame someone else.
- ~ Speak in a calm, and soothing voice.
- ~ After the customer vents, ask questions that force the customer to answer in more than two words.
- ~ You may summarize the issue, and then explain your next steps for resolving the situation (such as having a manager contact him/her, sending a gift certificate or replacement, etc.) and get agreement.
- ~ Confirm how he or she prefers to be contacted for follow-up (if appropriate).
- ~ Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention and assure him or her that it is your personal commitment, and that of the entire organization, to provide top-quality products/services and to make customers happy. While it is regrettable that she/he did not experienced such excellence in this case, you appreciate the chance to resolve this for him/her and hope that he or she will remain a customer of your organization.

TLC Makes A Difference...One Caller...One Business At A Time

TLC has nearly eliminated the number of middle-of-the-night emergency calls I receive for resident emergencies. With thousands of residents in our various properties in several states, we give specific instructions to TLC regarding the appropriate contacts for emergency calls and the operators just make it happen-knowing who to call and when. Every morning, we receive an email that lists calls from the night before and the status of each. It tells us what was dispatched for emergency work and then we can triage the other calls for prompt replies and service to keep our residents happy. TLC has certainly made running a property management company much easier and more efficient...as we grow, we just keep adding properties to their list. They are great. -Chuck Snead, Regional Property Manager, Sealy Management Co. Inc.

TID BITS



We're Proud! Once again, The Legacy Connection earned the Award of Excellence from the Association of Teleservices International. **Robin and Deborah** received the award at the association's annual convention in Pittsburgh in June.

CSRs Certified: We are pleased to announce that **Lisa Channell** and **Latasha Thomas** completed the rigorous certification program

this summer. We congratulate them on their dedication to excellence and for volunteering to become certified so TLC can continue to provide nothing but the best service possible for clients and their callers.

On-Call Updates. We recently sent a letter asking clients to send us their on-call personnel lists as soon as they are available, so we can program them into the system in advance to ensure there is no scrambling at the last minute to make sure we reach the right person. Whether you schedule out a day, a week, a month or a year, please send them to us by fax or email. Thanks for making it easier for us to do a good job for you!



TLC SPOTLIGHT

With two great supervisors on staff, it only seems fitting to spotlight both **Amber St. John** and **Amy Haddock**. **Amber**, the evening shift supervisor, has been with TLC for four years, starting her career as an operator and moving up the ranks to supervisor. She not only continues to answer phones and supervise staff, but she sees her role as a liaison between clients and their callers. She prides herself on helping clients, and particularly enjoys when she can solve a problem and turn a negative into a positive. In her spare time, **Amber** enjoys video and computer games. **Amy**, the day-shift supervisor, started as an operator in March 2008. She is responsible for several national accounts and account managers, working with CSRs and customers to ensure everything runs smoothly. In her spare time, this busy mother of two children enjoys time with the family, going to baseball games and swimming, and reading in her quiet moments.



Amber Haddock and Amber St. John

Marketing Moment

Be sure your contact information is in your signature block of all emails. Why make it hard for clients to reach you, when an email just won't do? Use this "real estate" for important announcements, including recent awards or a special event. This is an underutilized marketing tool that doesn't cost a penny. Also be sure your contact phone number is on the bottom of each web page, so people don't have to go to "contact" to easily reach you.

Refer a business that becomes a TLC client by Nov. 15th and receive a \$50 gift certificate to a great restaurant in the area or we will enter you into a drawing for a \$100 credit towards a month of service! Thank you, in advance!



ABOUT US

The Legacy Connection, an award-winning tele-services company formerly called DCAS (Druid City Answering Service), is based in Tuscaloosa and serves clients throughout the country, with a concentration in the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham areas; the company employs more than 25 staff members.

In addition to offering 24/7 emergency and non-emergency answering service solutions, the company handles overflow calls, order taking, dispatch, disaster back-up, and a variety of other tele-service solutions to clients around the US. It offers total and flexible customization of how calls are answered and how the messages are delivered to each client.