



### Customer Complaints

Every once in a while you'll get a complaint from a customer. How do you react?

If a customer makes a complaint, they're actually giving you the perfect opportunity to show them that you care about your customers and a chance to totally satisfy them. By doing this, you are not only likely to keep the custom of someone who was about to desert you in favour of a competitor, but they are likely to be so impressed, they will recommend you to their friends.



As Marilyn Suttle, a Success Coach commented, "Thank your customer for complaining and mean it. Most will never bother to complain. They'll just walk away."

So how do you go about handling that complaint? Here are a few pointers...

**Listen** – Your customer isn't attacking you personally, so don't get all defensive – listen very carefully to what they say and make sure you get all the details.

**Repeat the complaint back** – Sounds odd, but it proves to your customer that you were listening. Speak to them in a friendly, empathetic manner.

**Apologise** – tell your customer you're sorry this has happened – don't blame anyone else for the mistake, just say you're sorry.

**Ask questions** – show you care, ask questions so you fully understand their problem – the more information you have, the more you can understand where they're coming from.

**Identify the problem and solve it** – is it just a matter of someone messing up an order or is it a functional problem with a product?

**Ask the customer what they would like you to do** – give them some options, such as refund or replace the item. Customers like to feel they are involved in the solution...it might be something a bit more technical and they may come up with a great idea that you can use in the future.

**Follow up** – once the problem has been resolved, leave it a couple of weeks and then follow up with the customer – ask them if everything ok and maybe offer them a 10% discount off their next order. This shows them you really care – you didn't just deal with the complaint on the day, but you thought about them after the event. This goes a very long way to making your customer feel valued.



Valued customers give you repeat business and recommend you to friends and family. Dealing with complaints in a calm, empathetic manner helps to turn a challenge into something constructive.

**How have you dealt with customer complaints? I'd love to hear what you did...**

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### USEFUL FRENCH VOCABULARY BUSINESS

- agio (m) - bank charge
- assurance (f) - insurance
- assurance-vie (f) - life insurance
- assuré - insured
- s'assurer - verb - to take out insurance
- bancaire - banking
- banque (f) - bank
- bénéfice (m) - a profit
- cash-flow (m) - cashflow
- chiffres de ventes - sales figures
- compte de pertes et profits - profit and loss account
- dépôt (m) - deposit
- impôt (m) - tax
- frais généraux (mpl) - overheads
- gérer - to manage
- perte (f) - a loss
- prélèvement (m) - direct debit
- prêt personnel (m) - personal loan
- prévision des ventes - sales forecast
- publicité (f) - advertising
- récrimination (f) - a complaint
- reçu (m) - receipt
- rejeter un chèque - verb - to bounce a cheque
- relevé de compte (m) - bank statement
- solde (f) - account balance
- taxe foncière (f) - property tax
- taxe habitation (f) - habitation tax

