

The Beauty of Bellyachers

As a verb, “bellyache” means to complain about simple matters that are not taken care of, like for a customer needing service. Many times “bellyaching” is a sign, a way of asking for a solution to a mishap or bad service.

I know, as a business person you can see them coming from a mile away. It’s the determined look; they *have* to bring a problem to your attention. To this customer, the problem has been eating away at them, and they will not be happy until you have gone above and beyond to take care of what probably shouldn’t have happened in the first place.

Customers have a voice, and if they’re not happy, they can use that voice to complain to get what they want.

I have been such a promoter of “bellyachers” ...The ones who go out of their way to make sure things are done properly. The ones who make sure the person behind them in line does not have to experience bad service. The ones who take a few minutes to show how to earn their business.

The average person can take a problem viral in an hour, so thousands hear about that problem within a single day. The average person also has 130+ friends on Facebook and numerous connections on LinkedIn, Instagram, and more. They’ve got *venting* down pat and they’ve got an audience, but that does nothing to solve the problem.

Here’s some highly effective advice for the complainer (bellyacher):

Go straight to the top. Remember, the person that greets you at the door or counter is the lowest on the totem pole. They have no authority, likely no skills in handling problems for the company. All they are capable of doing is letting you know that they will get someone else to handle your problem.

Don’t be a jerk. You are dealing with real people with real feelings. When you want to complain, the

emotion generally attached to that complaint is anger. Remember, anger just breeds more anger, plus nobody wants to help someone acting like a jerk.

Ask a lot of questions. Get your contact person on your side. Often times you can move forward in your quest for a solution by asking what they would do if in your position. Or you can also ask (politely) what kind of resolution is fair, and how he or she thinks this problem can best be solved.



What does it take to get action on a complaint? I tell every company to:

Create a Service Recovery Process. Too many executives think employees are born with good customer service skills. It’s important to develop a process that allows employees some latitude in serving the customer that also includes specifically defined steps that must be followed in providing service recovery. Doing so requires decision making and rule breaking - exactly what the employee has been conditioned against. Workers have been taught that it’s not their job to alter the routine. Even if they’d like to help the customer, they are frustrated by the fact that they’re not able to do it. Worse yet, they don’t know how.

*Act Quickly...*The employee at the point of contact best implements service recovery. Avoid moving problems and complaints up the chain of command.

Take Responsibility... Don't place blame, make excuses, or lie to cover a mistake. Sincerely apologize and thank the customer for pointing out the problem.

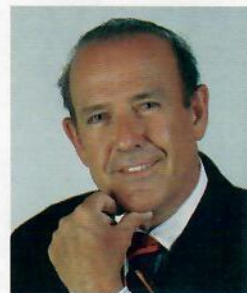
Be Empowered... Give those who work with customers the authority to do whatever it takes to ensure customer loyalty.

Compensate... Give the customer something of value. Every organization has something of value it can give to a customer who has experienced a problem.

I tell every customer that they have the right to a good experience, a quality product, and top of the line customer service. I also tell everyone that it's their responsibility to let the appropriate channels know when there is an issue. You deserve quality and top-notch performance.

About the Author:

John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment, and customer service in the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.



"So to all you bellyachers out there, keep it up and let us know what the problem is so we can fix it." ~John Tschohl

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