

Top tips for complaint handling

Good customer service has always been important, now more than ever given the rise of social media and review sites. Quick and effective complaint handling will help you turn customer complainers into brand advocates, helping to increase brand loyalty and your company's reputation.

Every email, call, letter or social media message and the way you handle it is crucial in the process.

Here are our top tips to help you achieve this.

Time is of the essence

Be quick to respond. This should be a priority. Customers become even more frustrated by slow responses, feeling that their complaints are sat ignored in a lonely inbox. Phone customers wherever possible, even if they made contact through a different channel.

Make sure you have planned capacity to handle all complaints, even during peak periods, as quickly as possible and from all communication channels.



Make your customers feel listened to



When responding to unhappy customers, you need to get them into an agreeable frame of mind. Listen to them, do not interrupt and let them blow off steam. In many situations, it's as important to ensure you fully listen to the problem and make sure the customer feels like they've been understood, as it is to resolve the problem.

Make sure you not only acknowledge the facts of the situation but also how it's made them feel.

Exceed expectations

Some complaints cannot be resolved easily, particularly where you cannot undo the problem, but you should always strive to make it up to the customer. This will go a long way into converting complainants into brand advocates.

Going above and beyond makes customers feel important and respected. By exceeding customer expectations even by a small amount, you can make them feel like your most valued customer which leads to repeat business and true brand loyalty.



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Be genuine

Customers can often become more aggravated when complaint handlers are following a script. Empower your team to focus on the customer experience and let them use the opportunity to start a genuine conversation. This builds up trust and helps the customer feel respected and that you are taking their complaint seriously.



Use the opportunity to build brand reputation



When you deal with complaints really well, unhappy customers will turn into delighted customers and become loyal brand advocates. If you exceed expectations, they are more likely to be motivated to tell friends and share their experiences with others, particularly on social media. If customers do share positive experiences, thank them, and use the opportunity to repost.

Manage the wider conversation

With the rise of online reviews and social media, an unhappy customer can reach huge audiences so it's important to act quickly and protect your brand from negative reactions.

Manage the wider conversation and use your interactions with unhappy customers to turn them around and demonstrate excellent customer service to wider audiences and prevent louder and more negative conversations.



Use analysis to continuously improve



Unhappy customers will be brutally honest. By listening and taking detailed notes for analytical purposes, this will give you invaluable insights and feedback which will help your business improve and minimise future complaints.

Root cause analysis will help you understand potentially wider problems and issues. Analysis of how you have handled complaints and outcomes will also help you improve your complaint handling process.

QASSS provides bespoke complaint handling and dispute resolution services to help improve your brand reputation, repeat business and save you time and money. To find out more, call 0330 335 3354 or email Laura Holmes, Service Delivery Manager l.holmes@qasss.co.uk