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**Tips for Getting Good Customer Service**

**By June Campbell**

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The electronic product you bought online five minutes ago doesn't work properly and you're gonna fire away an email letting that \*\$&\$#\* company know just what you think of their stinking service.

Sound familiar? If so, consider this:

Yes, there are dishonest merchants on the web and yes, some merchants offer dismally poor customer service. Nevertheless, it's a mistake to paint everybody with the same brush. Many of the merchants that operate online businesses are legitimate and are interested in turning you into a satisfied customer. However, in your role of consumer you have to give them a fighting chance.

Before you fire off that email, consider the following;

\* Have you provided the merchant with a description of what happened when you tried to use the product? Saying "It doesn't work" provides so little information that the merchant has no idea what is happening and cannot advise you. What exactly did you do? What specifically happened? Did you receive any error messages? What were they?

\* Is there any chance that the problem stems from your own lack of computer skills? Do you know how to use an online shopping cart, how to download files, how to work with various file formats or how to install software? While many online merchants are willing to help you as much as possible, they are not responsible for teaching you basic computer skills. Moreover, many may be less than patient after being blamed for a problem that is not of their making.

\* Have you given the merchant the information needed to trace your order? If your email simply reads, "I can't open the file I bought from you," the merchant doesn't

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know who you are and what you are talking about. It makes sense to provide your name as it appeared on the credit card, the name of the product that you bought, the email address that you used when you made the purchase and the date when the purchase occurred. The merchant needs this identifying information so he or she can trace the records.

\* If you have not received any information about your order after making the purchase, check to ensure that you provided your correct email address without typos. Many systems are set up to send email information automatically when you make a purchase. If you used the incorrect email address, this information will not reach you. Other delays in email delivery can be caused by an assortment of Internet glitches that are beyond the control of the merchant. Wait for a couple of hours before deciding there is a problem.

\* Did you read the system requirements on the web site before making the purchase? For example, if the web site stipulated that the product runs on Windows 98 and higher, then the file truly won't work on your iMAC or on Windows 3.x. Or if the web site says you must have Acrobat Reader installed, then, the file really will not open on your system until you have downloaded and installed Acrobat Reader.

\* If you are asking for a refund, did you send the merchant the receipt or other information confirming that you actually made the purchase? After all, you couldn't walk into a store and demand a refund without proof of purchase. It's no different on the Web.

\* Is your message unnecessarily rude, crude and hostile? Keep in mind that the person at the other end is a human being and does not enjoy being the recipient of abusive email any more than you do. You increase your chances of solving the problem if you send a courteous email that explains the problem adequately.

\* And here is one last thought to keep in mind. B2B (business – to – business) transactions account for the highest number of online sales. If you are reading this article, it is likely that you have a business Internet presence. Doesn't it make sense to give the other merchant the same benefit of the doubt that you hope your customers will give you?

June Campbell's writing has appeared in several international publications. Visit her on the Web for a FREE newsletter, FREE gifts, articles, guides for proposal writing, business plan development and more. (<http://www.nightcats.com>)

### **Customer Service Training Tips**

**By LeeAnna**

Good customer service is the best way to keep customers coming back to your business. super stores that have hundreds of employee's, these companies do not give their workers enough incentive to be

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customer friendly, and they don't seem to insist their employees use the customer training tips that are provided during their training. Businesses always supply new employees with their own customer service training tips in the beginning but they seem to forget them after being employed for awhile. Maybe stores and businesses should make their employees go through a refresher course and re-learn the customer service training tips that were given to them in the beginning. Training your employees in the art of customer service can be the least expensive improvement you can do. Make sure your employees have good people skills and that they enjoy working with people. One nasty person with a bad attitude can ruin a small business faster than a hold-up. Here are some customer service training tips that may help your employees.

Some customers are just plain difficult. They are always complaining, they are picky, know-it-alls, faultfinders, constant complainers, unreasonable, demanding. There's no way you can avoid them so you have to learn to deal with them. Angry people cannot rationalize because they are so wrapped up in the emotion of anger that anything you say gets filtered through their emotion. Rationalizing, problem solving, listening, and negotiating are all left-brain activities and your angry customer is stuck in the right side of the brain, and therefore cannot be expected to rationalize with you. Here are a few more customer service training tips.

Believe it or not the best way to diffuse a situation with an angry customer may be cleared up with two little words. "I'm sorry." Recent research shows that more than 50% of customers who have voiced a complaint never get an apology. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that most people just want to be acknowledged, and when they get ignored and treated like they don't matter and their opinion means nothing. One of the better customer service training tips I found is saying "I'm sorry," can make all the difference in the world.

I don't believe in the saying the "customer is always right." No their not always right, and there are those that make themselves feel superior by belittling others. Being courteous to customers does not mean you have to accept abuse from them. Nobody deserves to be treated badly, but unfortunately there are those who go out of their way to do so. Saying things like, "Thank you for letting me know that you're unhappy with..." will usually calm even the meanest customers and the nicer you continue to be with them, the calmer they get, this is a very good customer service training tip. Try it a few times it really works. There's also another saying that goes: "You don't have to show up to every fight you're invited to."

Leeanna is an expert author who writes for customer service training tips



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