

# SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING Customer Complaints



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BONVENON  
ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ!

GHINI VINISHI  
BIENVENIUS  
BIENVENIDA  
SALAMAT DATANG  
WILLKOMMEN

BONVENON  
TERE TULEMAST  
WOEZOR  
SIYANAMKELANONKE  
ENNIDOS

TALITALI FIEFLA  
BENVNUWE  
CROESO  
TERE TULOMAST  
BITAEMO  
XUSHKELBSIZ  
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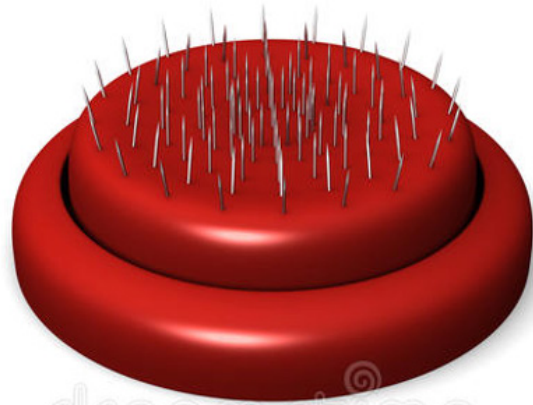
BON BINI  
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MAAYONG PAG-ABOT  
DEGEMER MAT  
SIYANAMKELANONKE  
WELLKUMMA  
AHLA W SAHLA  
MIRÈ SE VJEN  
VELKOMMEN  
MALIPAYENG PAG-ABOT

# Course Overview

-  *Customer complaints ~ what is a customer complaint?*
-  *The benefits of complaint handling*
-  *Key skills for handling customer complaints*
-  *Model for handling complaints*
-  *Dealing with difficult or angry customers*
-  *Achieving a win/win outcome for you and the customer*
-  *Course review & feedback*

# Customer Complaints



dreamstime.

***Press Button  
To File Complaint***



# WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

## *The general definition of a complaint:*

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, made by a customer to an organisation about its product or service where a response or resolution is explicitly expected.”

Ref: The Office of the Ombudsman



# WHY DO CUSTOMERS COMPLAIN?

- The customer expectations have not been met!
- To release their frustration and anger
- Help you improve your product or service
- Concern for other customers using your product or service



# WHY **DON'T** CUSTOMERS COMPLAIN?

The time and effort involved; it's not worth it

They think no one is concerned about their problem

Customer personality type (not assertive)

The customer doesn't know where to go

Afraid of retribution or being penalised



*Only 5% of unhappy customers complain. The rest don't...*

# SOME COMPLAINT STATISTICS

- Of the 95% that don't complain, 91% will never return
- 1 unhappy customer tells 8-10 people about their experience
- 20% of your unhappy customers will tell 20 people
- It takes 12 positive experiences to fix 1 negative incident
- 7 out of 10 people will do business with you again if you resolve the complaint to their satisfaction.

***A happy customer will tell at least six other people***

# PSRA COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

- When is PSRA required to investigate?
- Appeals
- Power of Authority's Inspectors
- Sanctions
- Statutory Contraventions
- New SI means issues previously declined for investigation now can now be investigated e.g. delay in transferring deposit, delay in replying to client, false advertising etc. Detail covered another course.



# WHAT ARE MOST COMMON COMPLAINTS?

- Long waiting times and delays
- Product or service unavailable or not as specified
- Wrong or incorrect information
- Unresponsiveness
- Poor customer service or attitude
- Overpricing / bad value for money
- Lack of follow up

# WHAT ARE MOST COMMON PSRA COMPLAINTS?

- Service Provision
- Retention of money by Property Service Provider
- Ethical conduct
- Fees or outlays
- Mis-information supplied to customer
- Letter of engagement absent or deficient

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

- “You aren’t delivering what you promised”
- “You are never available”
- “You don’t listen”
- “You don’t understand how emotional house buying/selling is”
- “You just don’t care”
- “You’re estimate was way off”
- “You are too pushy”



# CUSTOMER COMPLAINT BEHAVIOURS

- Lack of grace, social skills or communication skills
- Very emotional (stress, bad day?)
- Harsh
- Nervous
- Rudeness
- Unreasonable



*Recognise and expect customer complaint behaviours*

# CUSTOMER COMPLAINT TRIGGERS

## *Non-verbal triggers (you should avoid)*

- ➡ ***Tone of voice:*** sarcastic, condescending, disbelieving
- ➡ ***Body language:*** looking away, looking at your watch, smirking, scoffing, rolling your eyes, drumming your fingers, invading personal space
- ➡ ***Other triggers:*** Long wait times (waiting to speak to a manager, long hold times, etc), hanging up on customers, passing the buck





# CUSTOMER COMPLAINT TRIGGERS

*Verbal triggers (you should avoid):*

- “You’re wrong”
- “That’s the policy ... I can’t do that”
- “No way ... Not gonna happen ... That's impossible”
- “That’s not my job”
- “I don’t know...”
- “I’m going to have to end this conversation ...  
You must leave the building”



# CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS



"Ok, how about this motto: 'If you are unhappy for any reason, we will feel really bad'."

# Benefits of Complaint Handling



# BENEFITS OF HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- Free feedback from the customer about improvement areas
- It's an opportunity to have honest discussion with the customer
- A complaint allows you to rectify any product & service failures
- Involving the customer in solutions increases trust
- Chance to successfully retain the customer
- Build long-term customer relationship



# Key Skills for Handling Complaints





# COMMUNICATION

## *The fundamental principles:*

- Treat customer complaints with respect
- There is a reason why they complain
- Engage with them, find out what and why
- Make a genuine effort to help them (to win them over)
- Build trust – a real commitment to trustworthiness



# COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN



Lost in translation;  
how the listener interprets words



Too much or too little information



Attention span; difference between  
listening and hearing

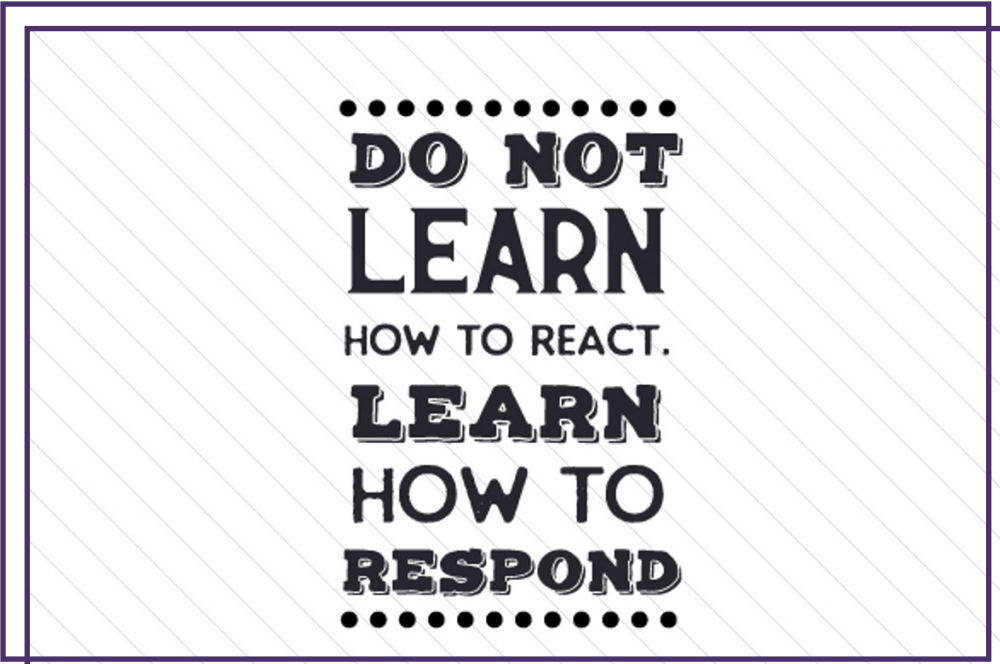


Under pressure; stress, tight  
deadlines, you're behind on target



# BUILD RAPPORT & VERBAL HANDSHAKE

- ▶ Instil the human touch and connect on a personal level (where Covid restrictions allow)
- ▶ Remain respectful of the customer
- ▶ Acknowledge the situation and focus on actionable steps



.....  
**DO NOT**  
**LEARN**  
HOW TO REACT.  
**LEARN**  
HOW TO  
**RESPOND**  
.....

# CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION TO MAINTAIN CONTROL

- Problem oriented (not person oriented)
- Descriptive (not evaluative )
- Specific (not global)
- Conjunctive (not disjunctive)
- Owned (not disowned)
- Listening (not one-way message delivery)



***Communication is more productive when it's constructive!***

# USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE

## Not:

“If we adopt this plan...”

“Let’s contemplate doing...”

“You need to...”

“Did you...”

“Tell me more...”

## Try:

“When we adopt this plan...”

“Let’s agree to do...”

“I like to propose to you ...”

“Have you thought about...”

“Can you give me an example...”

*Highlight success rather than failure to move people in a positive direction*



# CUSTOMER SERVICE



“Someone calling themselves  
a customer says they want  
something called service.”

# WHAT ARE THE CUSTOMER'S REAL NEEDS WHEN THEY COMPLAIN?

## *1. Needs relating to the complaint & problem itself (objective):*

*“The product or service is not as expected”*

- Want their concern dealt with quickly, fairly, properly
- Need to be given what they have been denied (plus an apology)
- Immediate action to be taken to rectify and resolve the problem

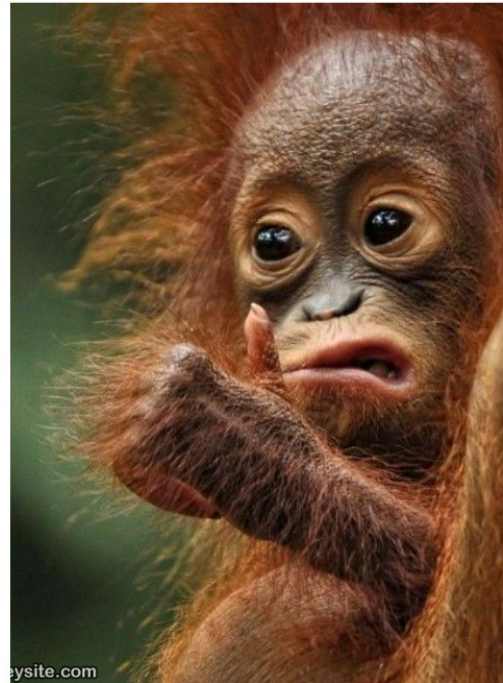
## *2. Needs relating to the individual & person (subjective):*

*“I am disappointed and you don't value my loyalty”*








- Want to be heard
- Need to be understood
- To be respected



# HOW ARE THESE GUYS FEELING...?



# How NOT to handle Complaints

-  Ignore the complaint
-  Become defensive
-  Get angry, annoyed or upset
-  Don't believe or blame the customer
-  Complaint is a hindrance – wish for it to go away
-  Be concerned about the loss of the deal or trade
-  Fear for damage to your personal reputation

# USE THE 'L.E.A.R.N.' METHOD

*Step-by-step model for customer complaint handling:*

- Listen carefully
- Empathize and Understand the situation
- Apologise and Acknowledge
- Resolve the issue
- Now act immediately

*Manage the issue, not the person*

# LISTEN CAREFULLY

## Ask

Ask open questions to acknowledge and appreciate the customer's concerns, issues, expectations, needs

## Listen

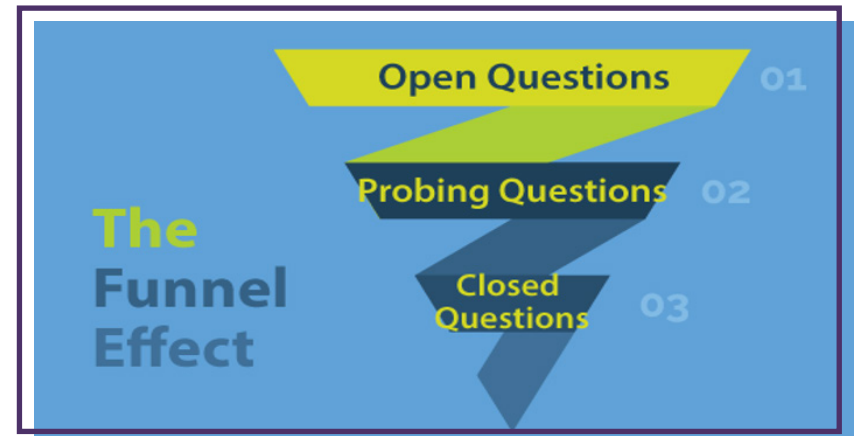
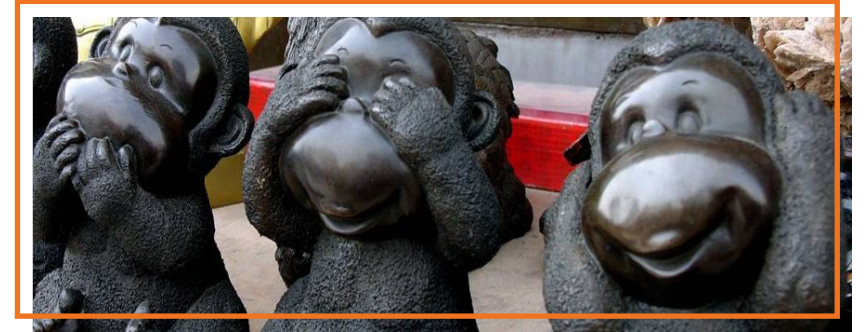
Listen carefully

## Summarise

Continuously summarise

## Tool

Question funnel



*If you don't understand the problem, you can't solve it*

# EMPATHISE & UNDERSTAND

- Empathise with your client's situation
- Understand what difficulty this may have caused for customer;
- Empathise with customer's situation
- Tools:
  - repeat last 3-5 words back to them (+ inflection up)
  - "I understand you are upset and I would feel upset too..."
  - Create empathy with "It sounds like...". "It seems like..."

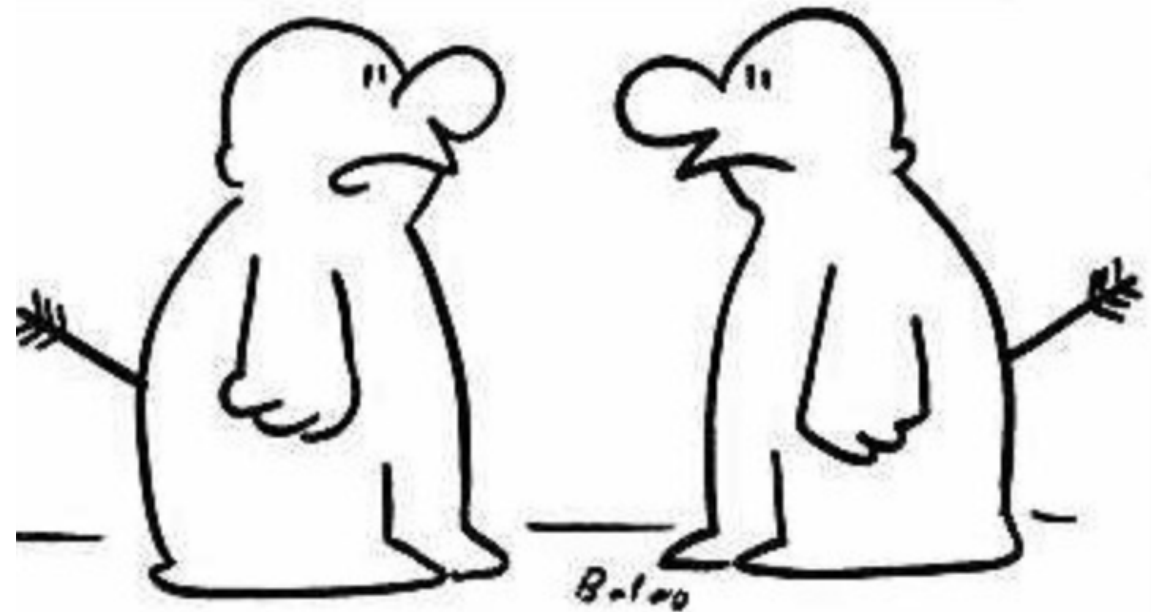
*Put yourself in your customer's shoes*



# EXPRESSING EMPATHY TO CUSTOMER

## *Empathic phrases*

- “I can see why you feel that way”
- “I see what you mean”
- “That must be very upsetting”
- “I understand how frustrating this must be for you”
- “I’m sorry about this”



"I know exactly how you feel."



# APOLOGISE AND ACKNOWLEDGE

- Apologise to the customer for the situation
- It's not personal; don't attribute responsibility to the customer
- Thank the customer for the opportunity to help them
- Tools:
  - "I'm sorry that you have experienced ..."
  - "I apologize for what happened / for wasting your time"

*It's not personal; don't take things personally*

# ALWAYS REMEMBER PERSPECTIVE!

Stakeholders



Users



# RESOLUTION

- Identify, negotiate and agree a satisfactory win/win solution with the customer
- Involve the customer in shaping the solution helps to get acceptance
- Be flexible, creative and ensure ongoing communication
- First Call Resolution = customer satisfaction
- Tools:
  - “What can I do on behalf of the company to...”
  - “What do you feel would be fair?”



*“Thank you for the opportunity to help you”*

# NOW ACT! IMMEDIATELY!

- Deliver the agreed solution speedily in shortest possible timeframe
- Keep the customer informed
- Follow up to ensure customer is satisfied with outcome
- Deliver customer service
- Tool:
  - “Please let me know,  
is there **anything else** I can do for you?”



*Go the extra mile*

# Dealing with Difficult Customers



# WHAT MAKES SOMEONE 'DIFFICULT'?

## *Their stuff*

Their history, personal mythology, perceptions, biases, experiences, psychosocial development/history








## *My stuff*

My history, personal mythology, perceptions, biases, experiences, psychosocial history/development

## *Our stuff*

Our shared history, relational patterns of interaction, established patterns of behaviour, expectations etc.

# SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE A DIFFICULT PERSON

-  You have made few connections
-  Your self-worth at work is low.
-  You feel left out.
-  You feel like you complain a lot
-  You are easily angered.
-  You are paranoid that everyone is out to get you
-  It was brought up on your performance review

# DEFUSE DIFFICULT CUSTOMER RESPONSES

*Most difficult situations can be avoided, “if” planned properly*

- ❑ Be Self Aware
- ❑ Be Calm
- ❑ Don't ignore the complaint
- ❑ Understand the customer's intentions
- ❑ Address it professionally (D.A.S.H)
- ❑ Manage customer's emotions





# DASH






*DASH - 4 step tool to defuse any situation*

- Defuse – control yourself first, keep voice low, calm
- Analyse – gain full understanding of situation (L.E.A.R.N.)
- Self-talk – remind and coach yourself to stay in control
- Handle it – handle the situation and move on (learnings?)





*(Gay Linn Williamson, Psychologist)*



# TECHNIQUES TO DEFUSE ANGER AND EXTREME BEHAVIOUR

-  Apologise; let them know you understand they are upset
-  Keep voice low, remain calm and avoid aggressive body language
-  Ask customer if you have done something personally to offend him or her
-  Let them know that it is not possible to address their complaint until they change their behaviour (stop cursing, stop shouting)
-  Breathe....(calm you down, calm down your body language)

# TECHNIQUES TO DEFUSE ANGER AND EXTREME BEHAVIOUR

-  “I want to help resolve this issue but I need you to calm down”
-  “I cannot help you if you are screaming and yelling”
-  “I will not help you if you continue to make abusive (personal) remarks to either myself or anybody else”
-  “Nobody here wants things to get that far, so lets talk about this”

**SMILE!**

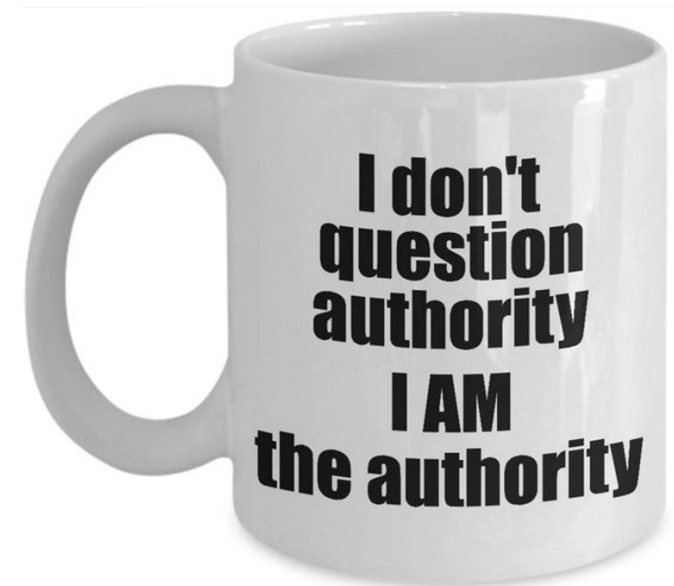


# Achieving the Win/Win outcome



# BE CLEAR ON THE AUTHORITY YOU HAVE

- If you have the authority, act immediately!
- If you need to defer to a manager, give a timeline for response
- “Would it be ok for me to contact you tomorrow before 11am, Ms Jones?”



# ESCALATING OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

- Escalate complaints through a defined complaint management process
- Escalate to a higher authority for resolution as required
- Get some perspective from others



# USE A COMPLAINT TO RE-SHAPE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- ❑ Let the customer know what the final decision or solution is
- ❑ Apologise for making the customer wait for the decision
- ❑ Present the solution you have decided to offer
- ❑ Make commitments and agree the way forward
- ❑ Honour promises and keep your word
- ❑ Follow up!



**Follow Us**



# CAN YOU ENCOURAGE COMPLAINTS?

## *Make complaining easy:*

- ❑ Be available
- ❑ Encourage customers to complain:  
“How was everything?”
- ❑ Address any issues and take action  
to resolve them
- ❑ Prove to the customer that their complaint  
was worth their time
- ❑ Thank the customer for their feedback –  
they just helped you to make your business better



# TIPS! DEALING SUCCESSFULLY WITH CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

- ✓ Identify opportunity in every situation
- ✓ Never act surprised at situations
- ✓ Don't make yourself a target
- ✓ Always watch out for hot buttons
- ✓ Never say no, give options
- ✓ Provide an alternative
- ✓ Stay in charge, sometimes indirectly
- ✓ Demonstrate staff unity
- ✓ Document, report and follow up!



# Review & Feedback



The image features a title card with the words "The End" in a white, elegant script font. The text is centered within a series of three concentric circles. The innermost circle is a solid black, while the two outer circles are a dark gray, creating a layered effect. The entire composition is set against a solid purple background.

*The End*