

Skills 360 – How to Get Good Customer Service (Part 2)

Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time you had to complain to a company? What happened?
2. Do you think you are good at complaining and getting solutions when you are not happy with a product or service?
3. What do you think you should avoid doing when complaining?

Vocabulary

Good money: if you spend “good money” on something, it means you paid a lot for it; “We’re spending good money on these workshops, so I’d like to see some really positive outcomes.”

To ring up: to call someone on the telephone, informally; “Jane, could you ring up our website guys and ask them about those changes to the homepage?”

Interaction: the activity of talking with other people; “For quality control, many companies record every interaction between customers and tech support.”

Outcome: the final result; “The negotiations took a long time, but we were very pleased with the outcome.”

Attitude: how someone thinks or feels, as shown in how they behave; “We’re looking for young people with a positive attitude to help with marketing.”

Approach: a way of thinking about or doing something; “I’ve learned to take a gentle approach when giving Randall feedback because he’s so sensitive.”

To plant: when we “plant” something, such as a tree or flower, it grows from a seed; when we “plant” an idea or attitude, we are trying to encourage other people to think about or accept this idea; “I’m going to plant the idea of a staff retreat and see what the boss thinks about it.”

Constructive: useful or helpful, especially for advice and criticism; “Performance reviews should include constructive feedback on how employees can improve their work.”

Grumpy: not happy and unpleasant, often for no exact reason; “It’s not unusual for employees to arrive at work on Monday morning feeling a bit grumpy.”

To brighten: to make happier; “Hearing Gwen say nice things about me really brightened my mood.”

To reward: to give someone something good in exchange for work or other positive activity; “Management decided to reward the employees with an extra day off.”

Resistance: opposition or refusal to accept something; "The union offered a lot of resistance to the change in work schedules."

Dos and don'ts: instructions or rules about what people should and shouldn't do in a situation; "Today I'd like to go over some basic do's and don'ts that you should remember during a job interview."

To exaggerate: to make something seem bigger, worse, better, or somehow more extreme than it really is; "Ted was just exaggerating when he said being transferred is the worst thing that has ever happened to him."

Credibility: a person's quality of being believable and trusted; "A good leader understands that just one bad decision can seriously damage his credibility."

To highlight: to put special attention on or emphasize something; "During a job interview, you should highlight the skills and qualities that make you different from everyone else."

To remedy: to solve a problem or correct a situation; "The delivery driver promised to remedy the incorrect shipment as quickly as possible."

To state: to say, especially formally; "I would like to state very clearly for everyone that we cannot accept any delays on this project."

In mind: if you have something in mind, then you have a clear idea of what you want or plan to do; "Dave has several companies in mind as potential employers after graduating from his MBA program."

To propose: to suggest a plan or idea for people to think about, talk about, or negotiate; "I'd like to propose that we lease new computers rather than buying them outright."

To push: to suggest strongly or to force a plan or idea; "Finance is pushing us hard to find ways to cut costs."

Grouchy: in a bad mood; "Our bookkeeper gets grouchy whenever we submit our expense reports late and without all the receipts."

Compassionate: understanding and caring about someone's situation; "The new CEO has shown she's very compassionate towards employees who want to take parental leave."

To escalate: to increase in seriousness, level, or importance; "Our client is waiting for his design, so we need to escalate this project to the top of the priority list."

To document: to write down or record what happens; "Susan carefully documented the problems with her co-worker before talking to HR."

To deny: to refuse a request or not let someone have something; "When Tom denied my request for a raise, I started looking for another job."

To recount: to explain what happened; "I'd like to start the meeting by recounting an interesting encounter I had with one of our customers."

To recap: to summarize or repeat the general idea of something; "All right everyone, before you leave, let's just recap what we learned today."

Transcript

Welcome back to the Skills 360 podcast. I'm your host Tim Simmons, and today I want to help you *get* good customer service. More specifically, we're going to learn how to complain properly and get a good solution.

It all starts with a problem. You buy a product and it doesn't work right. Or you buy a service and you are not served well. You get frustrated. You paid **good money** but you're not getting what you expected. It's time to complain. So you go back to the store or you **ring up** a customer service line. This **interaction** could end with more frustration or it could end with satisfaction, depending on the **outcome**. So how can you get a good outcome?

The first thing is **attitude**. Always begin with a polite **approach**. Don't assume that you're going to get bad service. If you plant an apple tree, you'll get apples. And if you **plant** a positive and **constructive** attitude, you'll get positive, constructive solutions. Customer service reps deal with a lot of **grumpy** people, and you might just **brighten** their day by being nice. And they might **reward** you for it. Now, your feeling might change. You might feel less positive or friendly if you encounter **resistance**, but you should always remain polite and professional.

Okay, when it comes to describing your problem, there are a few important **dos and don'ts**. First, explain the problem clearly, including any details that might help the person figure out what went wrong. *Don't exaggerate* or become emotional. That will only damage your **credibility**. So it's good to say something like "I have turned the machine on and off 5 times and each time I get the error code E44." That's clear and detailed. *Don't* say "I've turned the stupid machine on a thousand times and it just won't work."

Next, you need to **highlight** your dissatisfaction and that your problem needs to be **remedied**. In other words, you need to tell the person you are not satisfied and that you need a solution. This might mean communicating your frustration, but you should do it by **stating** that you're frustrated rather than *showing* your frustration. That could sound something like this: "This situation is very frustrating to me, and I need a solution."

Now let's talk about solutions. Sometimes you start the conversation with a solution **in mind**. You have already decided what will make you satisfied. In this case, you should **propose** it directly. If you want a refund, say "I would like a refund." Notice that we are still being polite and professional.

But sometimes you don't have a specific solution in mind and you would like the company to give you one. In this case, let them offer something. If you're happy with the solution, great. But if you're not, you need to say so. Often a customer service agent will start with the solution that is easiest or cheapest for the company. And you won't get anything more unless you ask for it.

Sometimes you don't get the solution you ask for and you're not satisfied with what is being offered, not matter how hard – and politely – you **push**. What can you do then?

Well, you can try talking to someone *else*. That could mean calling back at another time. You may find that you get a different attitude, and different solutions, from different customer service agents. One may be ***grouchy*** and unhelpful, while another may be nice and ***compassionate***.

Talking to someone else could also mean ***escalating*** the call. When you escalate, you go higher up. That is, you can tell the person that you'd like to talk to their manager, or boss, or whoever is in a higher position. You'll likely have to repeat your explanation but you might just get a better response. And sometimes you have to keep escalating until you find someone who can really help you.

Here's an important reminder: as you go through the process of complaining and trying to find a solution, ***document*** everything. When you talk to a person, write down his or her name and when you called. Write down the details of the call, including what solutions you were offered and what you were ***denied***. This can help if you want to talk to the same person again, or if you have to ***recount*** the details of your customer service adventure to another person in the company.

Now let's ***recap***. Start with a polite and professional attitude, explain your problem clearly, and ask directly for the solution you want, if you have one. If you let them offer a solution, keep pushing politely until you are satisfied. Talk to someone else if you need to. And write everything down.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the ***myBEOonline.com*** website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript.

So long. And see you again soon!

Review

1. In his advice about attitude, Tim emphasizes that you should always remain...
 - A ... constructive and grumpy
 - B ... friendly and bright
 - C ... polite and professional
 - D ... positive and resistant

2. What does Tim say you should avoid when describing your problem?
 - A Highlighting your dissatisfaction
 - B Exaggerating
 - C Asking for a solution
 - D Including details

3. Which of the following sentences demonstrates the approach that Tim recommends?
 - A This is ridiculous. The headset seems to be broken. What's going on?
 - B I've tried connecting the headset to two different computers but I don't get any sound. This is very frustrating and I need a working headset right away.
 - C So, I've had lots of headsets before, and I thought this one would be good, but it kind of doesn't work. Why?
 - D I'm extremely disappointed. I'm never buying something from you guys again. What are you going to do?

4. What does Tim say you should do if you don't like the first solution offered by a customer service agent?
 - A Ask for a cheaper or simpler solution.
 - B Ask to speak with the person's boss.
 - C Hang up.
 - D Push for a better solution.

5. Tim talks about "escalating" your call or complaint. What does this mean?
 - A Talking to a person in a higher position.
 - B Talking to a different customer service agent.
 - C Asking for a full refund.
 - D Writing a formal letter.

6. According to Tim: "As you go through the process of complaining and trying to find a solution, _____ everything."

Review Answers

1. In his advice about attitude, Tim emphasizes that you should always remain...

C ... polite and professional

2. What does Tim say you should avoid when describing your problem?

B Exaggerating

3. Which of the following sentences demonstrates the approach that Tim recommends?

B I've tried connecting the headset to two different computers but I don't get any sound. This is very frustrating and I need a working headset right away.

4. What does Tim say you should do if you don't like the first solution offered by a customer service agent?

D Push for a better solution.

5. Tim talks about "escalating" your call or complaint. What does this mean?

A Talking to a person in a higher position.

6. According to Tim: "As you go through the process of complaining and trying to find a solution, **document** everything."

Online Practice

Click the "Launch" button to open the **online practice**:

