



Customer Service When You're the Customer



Effective Actions

We constantly deal with companies that make mistakes. It is human to mess up once in a while. However, even with technology helping companies keep things straight, the common denominator is always human participation within the computerized system.

Whenever something goes wrong such as getting charged extra or not receiving the right product and expected level of service, we have an opportunity to get what we want or make things worse.

Customers can do themselves a big favor by practicing some customer service skills of their own when trying to resolve a problem.

1. Take a deep breath before drafting that scathing e-mail or dialing the phone. This will help develop a patient mindset to focus on fixing the problem instead of fighting the system.
2. Act friendly toward the customer service representative. Most of the time, CSR's had absolutely nothing to do with the mistake, nor do they have authority to change company policy. Speaking in a friendly tone helps keep the interaction calm and helpful from both sides.
3. Before calling, try to think of different ways to explain your issue. This kind of flexibility can help when dealing with complex problems, language barriers or rigid systems.
4. Work the system. If there is a specific chain of command or procedure the company must follow, do it. Customers are much more successful adapting to a company's way of doing things than trying to rewrite the rules. Also, working with the system might result in extra benefits as well as problem resolution.

Only as a last resort:

1. If you have tried everything and still are not satisfied, you can pull rank and talk to a manager or someone in authority.
2. If you are still angry, save your rage for a letter to the company president. These types of letters are usually sent to special departments who handle them as a top priority.