

The 10 Golden Rules for Complaint Resolution

When faced with a complaint, most of us naturally move into a fact-finding mode and we're focused on resolving the issue. These behaviors are good problem-solving techniques, indeed, but we can more effectively regain customer goodwill by first creating rapport and building trust. The **10 Golden Rules for Complaint Resolution** positions customer service professionals to resolve problems and maintain loyalty by combining winning human relations skills with focused problem solving. Presented here are the field-tested and proven 10 Golden Rules for Complaint Resolution.

1. Express appreciation for the feedback

Customer feedback adds value to organizations: Customers are giving you a second chance to satisfy them and they're giving you feedback that can help you make business improvements. Express your appreciation for this valuable contribution by saying, *"Thank you for taking the time to tell us about this. We appreciate customers who let us know when things aren't right."* Many customers will be shocked. All will remember you with goodwill.

2. Show empathy

Empathy can be a powerful tool used to disarm an angry customer and show that you genuinely care about the inconvenience the customer has experienced. Not to be confused with sympathy, empathy is Identification with and

understanding of the customer's situation and feelings. You can express empathy by saying something similar to, *"It must have been very frustrating for you have waited 5 days for your order and for that I am sorry."*

3. Apologize.

An apology goes a long way to disarm an angry customer. Keep in mind the fact that customers expect an apology whether the error is their own or the fault of the company. Always apologize and be sure your tone and facial expression send the same message.

4. Have a sense of urgency

Let the customer know resolving the problem is as important to you as it is to them. You can demonstrate a sense of urgency

by focusing on the problem at hand and letting the customer see/know resolving the problem is a priority to you.

The first 4 rules of the 10 Golden Rules will help you create rapport and build trust with unhappy customers, foundational steps for the problem solving that begins with rule number 5. When customer service professionals begin complaint resolution using the above rules, customers are more open to listening, and the established rapport gives way to win win resolution.

5. Ask for necessary information

Notice that asking for information is step 5, not step 1. We defer asking for necessary information until after we have established rapport and began to build trust with the customer. This helps us avoid the perception that our questioning is an interview or an interrogation positioned to prove the customer wrong.

6. Assure the customer

Your customer may have the fear that their problem can't be solved or that you can't solve their problem. You can reduce anxiety by assuring the customer that together you'll get to the bottom of this. Say something *similar to*, "*I understand exactly what*

happened and we'll get this taken care of right away."

7. Tell the customer what you're going to do

This is especially important if you must put the customer on hold or if the resolution will take some time. For example, "*I'll need to pull a copy of your agreement and speak with the location manager. I expect this to take about 30 minutes. As soon as I've spoken with the location manager, I'll give you a call back with an answer.*"

8. Solve the problem

Follow-up and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

9. Ask, "Have we resolved the problem to your satisfaction?"

Our idea of a resolution may not necessarily be the customer's idea of a satisfactory resolution. Ask your customer if you've met expectations. If the answer is no, continue talking with the customer until you're sure you've met expectations or until you've offered a reasonable explanation for why you weren't able to satisfy them.

10. Investigate the problem and work to cut it at its root

This is the preventative step of complaint management. Research the problem to determine the root-cause and take proactive steps to eliminate the problem. Typically, this is the role of management or a special task force put in place specifically to find creative solutions to customer-impacting problems.

Most of our clients report that the ten Golden Rules dramatically reduces talk time because every point employees need to make is clearly lined out in a way that is practical, easy-to-implement, and extremely effective.

Begin using the 10 Golden Rules with your very next encounter with an unhappy customer and I guarantee you will quickly find that restoring customer confidence in the company and completely regaining goodwill quickly after every service mishap.

Take the next step in turning complaints into profits

Consider bringing our flagship seminar, *Beyond WOW Complaint Resolution*, to your company. This critically acclaimed training is available as an e-Learning program and traditional classroom training. *Beyond WOW Complaint Resolution* can make your customer service representatives more effective in communicating with unhappy customers than ever

before. The results of this seminar are dramatic and immediately visible.

In this special training customer service representatives learn to deal with difficult customers with diplomacy and tact, say “no” without causing resentment, respond to negotiation ploys, avoid damaging admissions, and resolve problems without giving away the store.

You get measurable results from this training...immediately. Most of our clients report the following results after taking the seminar:

- Increased confidence in dealing with difficult customers
- Measurable reductions in the amount of money spent to resolve problems
- A greater sense of pride in customer service work and improved job satisfaction
- Ability to control calls more effectively
- Ability to negotiate resolutions that balance the interests of both the customer and the company
- Reduction in calls escalated to supervisors

Explore the *Beyond WOW Complaint Resolution* Video Course more fully right [here](#). Or, take a quick test drive of a video module [right now](#).

About the Author

Myra Golden is one of the service industry's most prominent trainers and a highly regarded business growth strategist. Organizations hire Myra and her team to help them increase profits through building, recovering and strengthening customer relationships. She can be reached at 866-873-8419 or www.myragolden.com.