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## 5 SIMPLE TIPS FOR DEALING WITH NASTY CUSTOMERS

If you've been in business very long, you've likely heard it all! You know, the irate customer who is going to sue you over the nineteen dollar product that they claim is bogus; the one that's going to "shut your business down" because they conjure up in their minds that you might have breached your privacy policy, or the one that takes complete advantage of your money-back guaranty. My favorite has to be the one that calls and screams vulgarities into the phone for apparently no reason.

It doesn't happen often, but if you're going to be in business, you will run across some nut cases from time to time. Some can be diffused, some can't. That's just the way things go in business.

There are some simple techniques for dealing with irate customers without burning yourself an ulcer over them and without telling them you hope they get cancer and die!

Here are some tips you may find useful...

### 1. Don't take it personal

There is one thing that almost all nasty customers have in common. They try to attack you on a personal level. Name calling is not unusual. When you take it personal, you are likely to get into a yelling match with the customer which resolves nothing and only stands to make things worse. Try to diffuse the situation – kill the anger with kindness so to speak. If that doesn't work, ask them to contact you again once they have calmed down and are willing to speak reasonably. Refuse to speak with a customer in an irate state. You don't have to put up with abuse ever.

### 2. Don't overdo the "customer is always right" concept

In customer service training you will always hear that the customer is always right. While that is true to some extent, sometimes they are just flat wrong. You should always try to accommodate a customer within reason, but do not allow that concept to go too far.

### 3. Realize it isn't always your problem

Sometimes people just have a bad day and are looking for someone to take it out on. A hateful, ugly customer is often one of these people. If you listen to their ranting and raving, then respond kindly telling them you understand their frustration and you want to work with them to come to a resolution, you will often diffuse the anger and uncover the rational human being beneath it.

### 4. Don't fall for fear invoking bluffs

In customer service some business people tend to do anything to avoid the potential harm of a threat even if it means losing money or giving in to irrational demands. When you are threatened, consider the validity of the threat. Do you really think someone is going to pay thousands of dollars in attorney fees to sue you over a low dollar transaction? Likely not. Again, do what you can to accommodate within reason but don't give in to unsubstantiated threats.

### 5. Be prepared to decide whether or not a customer relationship is worth salvaging

You've heard it said that one happy customer tells one person about your business while an unhappy customer will tell 10 or more. Undoubtedly, word of mouth can be the best or the worst exposure for your business. This is the very basis of the "the customer is always right" concept. Of course it is best to salvage a customer relationship if you can, but again, do so within reason.

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