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The Frustrated Customer (Case Study)



It had been one of those long, aggravating days—the kind where the nerves of everyone in the company were on edge. At least it’s almost over, thought Carlos, the customer service representative for Ace Windows and Doors. Just as he reached for his coat, his phone rang.

“I’ve tried for half an hour, and I can’t get your Model SD 92 storm door to lock properly,” said the frustrated customer. Carlos knew this complaint and knew instantly the caller hadn’t even cracked the owner’s manual.

“Listen,” said Carlos, “I’ll just bet anything you haven’t read the instructions that came with the door. If you had, you could have avoided this call. We make quality products. We stand by them, but give us a break. I’ll tell you how to lock the door—but next time, please read the manual!”

DISCUSSION

- How well did Carlos represent his company? What was the likely effect on the customer?
- How might Carlos have responded differently?
- What measured, gracious response could Carlos have given? How might the customer have reacted—presently and in the future?

REFERENCES

- A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1 NIV).
- Do to others as you would have them do to you (Luke 6:31 NIV).

BEST PRACTICES

Customer complaints can be viewed as either aggravations or opportunities. A challenge for senior business leaders is to build and sustain a culture rooted in passionate service to others, especially customers. In fact, top companies regularly survey clients to know where they are doing well, and how they can improve. They are very proactive in understanding and solving complaints, viewing them as

opportunities to learn, make adjustments and win friends, some of whom will become their most loyal and enthusiastic ambassadors.

This case is an illustration of the Proverbs' teaching on guarding the tongue, Proverbs 15:1. Click [here](#) to go (or return) to this passage.

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