

# For Managers And Small Business Owners

## I'm a manager and often have to deal with customers referred to me by my staff. What can I say to angry customers who have been sent to me?

### Being the Boss: Dealing with Customers Referred to You by Employees

You can help your employees deal with difficult customers by encouraging them to refer problems to you. Often that can reduce the total time spent resolving issues, since customers tend to respond more positively to those who they feel have more status and power—such as the owner.

Here are some phrases to use with customers whom your employees have referred to you.

- *Hello, Mrs.White. John, the cashier you spoke to, tells me you're having difficulties assembling your new treadmill.*
- *I know it's frustrating to have to repeat yourself, but I want to make sure I understand your problem and help you solve it quickly.*
- *So sorry to have sent you to so many people, Mr. Black. Your situation is a rare one for us, and we want to provide you with our best service.*
- *Rosanna has asked me to help you, Mrs.Green, because I'm the resident expert with your type of problem. Let's see what we can do to help you.*
- *Mr. Jones, your problem is more complicated than I can help you with. Let me pass you to someone with the expertise that you need.*
- *This particular product has caused many problems for our customers. May I connect you to someone who will get some information from you so that we can refund you the full price of your purchase?*
- *I'm the owner of the business, and the buck stops here, so if there's anything we can do to help, I'm the one to speak to.*

### The Guiding Principles For Managers And Business Owners

When you are faced with an abusive or insulting customer, it is absolutely critical that you not respond directly to any insults (especially baiting), that you show empathy and understanding, and that you continue to refocus the customer on solving the particular problem.

That said, you need to be firm about what customer behavior is acceptable, what is unacceptable, and how you expect customers to treat you and your employees.

If you have employees, help them learn how you expect them to handle difficult customer situations and when they can approach you to help out (such as by referring a customer to you). Let them know what they can and cannot do in tough situations.

View problem customer situations as opportunities to win over the customer. How you react to problems or errors can place you above your competitors in the minds of your customers.

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