

5 Ways to turn negative complaints into profit



There is nothing more frustrating than seeing a customer complaint on social media, especially if that's the first time you hear of their unpleasant experience. Those types of complaints can damage your company's reputation and end up hurting your bottom line. But what if you could take customer complaints and turn those into profit?

By following these 5 easy steps, you'll be able to convert those upset customers into long standing loyal customers that will keep coming back to your business:

Step 1: Ask for feedback often, relay, and respond urgently

If you ask your customer about their experience multiple times during their visit, they are more likely to provide you feedback to help you identify areas of opportunity to improve your service. You may be thinking "but won't multiple check points seem intrusive and take away from their experience"? Not if you find less intrusive and indirect ways to ask for feedback.

Consider including a feedback card at the end of your service, asking the customer on the way out, or using simple [feedback technology](#) to capture feedback quickly across different areas of your business. The more feedback touchpoints you have, the more likely you will get feedback that you can address and the more your customer will think you care about them.

You also need to make sure the feedback is getting to the right hands and in a timely manner for them to be able to take action. Many companies treat their customer feedback as a

“suggestion box”. They let the feedback accumulate over a period of time and then perform an aggregate review from time to time. This can be very damaging for your business! You are forfeiting precious opportunities to show extra appreciation to your greatest fans, or careful attention to those that have not had their expectations met.

Finding a solution that will allow you to identify the extremely positive and negative feedback in real-time and relay that information to the right person to address it will assure that you have more happy customers and more profit.

Step 2: Write and have your staff memorize complaint scripts

You want to be able to control the message to your customer and have it be consistent. Especially during a make or break moment when a customer is unhappy.

Think about what you would say to a customer if they voiced a complaint to you. Now write that down and generalize the script to cover any situation with a customer who has voiced a complaint.

Print out the script onto cards and have your managers and staff memorize it. Make it fun! Take out a bunch of 5 dollar bills and quiz them spontaneously to recite the complaint script. If they get it right, hand out a bill. Word will spread quickly and you'll have your staff fully on script in no time.

Step 3: Empower your managers and staff to make it right

Everyone wants to feel heard and feel like they are getting something. Come up with 3 concessions, each one richer in value, that you would feel comfortable having your staff provide in order to make things right with the upset customer. Communicate to all your managers and staff that they have the authority to offer the concession they feel is appropriate for the situation.

Make sure the highest value concession is something you would be comfortable with your staff giving away. Realize that even if your staff provides the highest level concession when the lowest value one would have pleased the upset customer, that is still less costly to your business than having an upset customer.

Step 4: Follow up after you make it right

Now that your staff is empowered to address customer complaints at the moment of truth, you want to be able to close the loop after the incident. Train your staff to inform their manager of the incident, even if it's resolved, and have your manager follow up with the customer. This will do two things:

- 1) allow the customer to process the incident and the resolution provided
- 2) provide a different point of feedback unbiased from the situation.

This will impress on your customer that your establishment is a place that values their customers and increases their likelihood of returning or better yet informing someone they know about the great experience they had despite the earlier mishap.

Step 5: Celebrate the customer wins

The challenge is your staff will be scared to bring forward to their managers situations that led to a complaint. You need to create an environment where this behavior is not just encouraged but rewarded.

Praise your staff members that bring forward the most resolved issues at your next all hands meeting. Set up contests and make issue resolution a part of your culture. Issues are opportunities to get better as an organization. Bringing them forward should be celebrated. You don't want this to only be true for your customers, but also for your staff as well.

Following these 5 easy steps will not only turn customer complaints into opportunities to improve, it will tell your organization EXACTLY where you need to improve. Complaints are valuable data points, nuggets of truth that are very hard to come by. You'll be able to address exactly where you need to improve as a company and in the process you'll get to convert angry customers that just want to be listened to into strong advocates and repeat customers of your business.

Here's how we can help:

We developed CIELO QR to help our customers easily implement each of these 5 steps and turn customer feedback into profit opportunities. With CIELO QR you can provide your customers a way to provide you feedback from the convenience of their own personal device while they are engaged with your business. This feedback is delivered to your staff in real-time so they can address issues before they become a 1-star review on social media. [Start your free trial today.](#)