

# Your Business Matters!

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THINKING

STARTING

GROWING

EXITING

## DO YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS?

When people have a problem with something, they tell someone about it. In fact, research shows that people are likely to tell 8 - 10 people about it. However, fewer than 1 in 20 people who have a complaint will complain to the company itself. Every small business needs to consider complaints as opportunities for improvement – understand the link between complaint resolution and customer loyalty.

You may wish to consider some of the following points in designing a Complaint Resolution Process for your business:

- Encourage Customer Feedback and make it easy: Issue a policy statement that says your company embraces complaints, views them as opportunities for improvement and then make it happen.
- Ask Questions: Clarify the concern. Give the customer a chance to fully explain their concern and allow them to expand on their issue and feelings. Be sure to confirm your full understanding of the situation.
- Take Responsibility: Take ownership of the

situation – do not pass off the problem to another person or have the customer contact anyone else.

- Attempt to Solve the Problem Immediately: If possible, solve the issue immediately. Empower your employees. If this is not possible, provide the client with an anticipated timeline and provide ongoing feedback during the process until the problem has been totally rectified.
- Compensate, don't just apologize: Consider exceeding your Customer's expectation by not only fixing the problem, but also providing an extra, thereby demonstrating their value to you. ie Thank you card with gift certificate to their favourite restaurant.
- Follow Up: After the problem has been resolved, make sure to contact the customer a few days later to assure them that their complaint has allowed you to remedy an issue which will lead to better future performance.
- Document: Use an internal system to



develop a database of complaints. You may discover a trend in issues that allows you to eliminate future issues.

Customers will forgive and remain loyal to companies' mistakes as long as the company demonstrates acceptance of the mistake, treats the customer with respect and dignity and rectifies the situation. Research shows that disgruntled customers who were treated well during the complaint resolution process became more loyal to the company than customers who did not experience problems!

For more information, resources & helpful tips visit: **Business Resource Centre** 519-756-4269 [www.businessresourcecentre.ca](http://www.businessresourcecentre.ca)  
**Royal Bank Business Centre** 519-758-2500 [www.rbcroyalbank.com](http://www.rbcroyalbank.com)