



Steps to Rescue a “Drowning” Customer

STEP ONE:

Remain calm. It may seem that a customer who is angry or upset is taking their emotions out on you. Remember that they are angry at the situation, not necessarily the person. Don’t take it personally – put on your problem-solving hat and get ready to jump in! This is your opportunity to turn a drowning customer into one that will return to do business again. Try using the phrase “thank you for taking the time to let us know that something is wrong...”

STEP TWO:

Call out to them. Encourage them to tell you what is wrong. Stop and actively listen to what they are saying. Take notes to help you remember what they said so you can throw out the appropriate aid later. Try using the phrase “would you mind telling me what happened so I can help...”

STEP THREE:

Remain ready. Tell them you are here to help. Empathize with their right to be upset but don’t blame others for the situation. Paraphrase what they have told you to confirm understanding. Try using the phrases “I can understand how you feel...” “I can empathize with your situation”, “what I hear you saying is...”

STEP FOUR:

Throw out an assistive carry. At this point you want to keep them stabilized so *reinforce* that you understand their problem and *reassure* them that you are prepared to take care of the situation for them. Try using the phrase “I understand your problem/concern and will personally take care of it for you”.

STEP FIVE:

Coach them back to safety. A successful rescue is going to take the cooperation of both parties to find a win-win solution. Try using the phrases “I would like us to find a solution that will meet your needs”, “what could I do to meet your needs”, “what I will do is...”

STEP SIX:

Follow up. You have performed a rescue but your role is not complete until you are sure of satisfaction. Do what you said you would do and then contact your customer to ensure he/she is still satisfied. This is your chance to again thank the customer for the opportunity to solve their problem.

Statistics indicate that 50-75% of customers who complain to you will do business with you again if you resolve their complaint – the number increases to 95% if you act quickly and to their complete satisfaction.

