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Customer Complaints: Love Those Lemons to Improve Customer Experience

by Lynn Hunsaker

Negative customer feedback is a lot like biting into a lemon — the bitterness is hard to love — unless you give the lemon a good squeeze and some sugar, and transform it into refreshing and healthy lemonade. You're only as strong as your weakest link, so those lemons — complaints and low survey ratings — are indeed essential ingredients to improving customer experiences.

To squeeze your voice of the customer lemons into useful juice, you'll want to:

1. make it easy for customers to give you early warnings of their dissatisfaction
2. strive to see the whole picture of the customers' experience
3. analyze root causes



To add sugar, you'll want to put a positive spin on your your new-found knowledge of dissatisfiers and their root causes. After all, what better warnings could you have for ways to manage and nurture your weakest links? Working on the root causes of dissatisfiers is the best way of:

- migrating ambivalent and at-risk customers into a reliable source of profit
- preventing your brand fans from stumbling upon your weak areas and becoming disillusioned
- building brand equity by delivering on your brand promise company-wide

The average American company loses half its customers within five years. How can your company achieve sustained growth with image-building alone? By addressing the customer group giving you "lemon feedback" you can turn negative word-of-mouth trends to sustainable competitive advantages with a ripple effect on your entire customer base. This internal branding effort aligns what's going on inside the company with what's being promised to customers.

It adds customer experience substance to your value proposition.

On a hot day, a cool drink of lemonade is just the thing to re-energize. Similarly, in the heat of competition, lemonade is just what the doctor ordered to provide a compelling customer experience with your brand.

Find out how to customize these tips to your situation; contact the author lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz.