**How to stop customer complaints before they happen**

Let’s face it. No matter how well-run your business is, you can’t please everybody. There will always be someone who expects the impossible. While preventing 100% of complaints is a task beyond even the most hard-working business owner, there are a number of things you can do that will greatly reduce the amount of misunderstandings and unsatisfied customers you deal with.

Here are a few tips on how to prevent complaints before they even happen.  
  
**Communicate clearly with your customers**

Miscommunication is a prime cause of complaints. You want to give your customers as much information as possible, so that there are no misunderstandings. This includes the more obvious things like **prices of goods and services,** but also wherever possible things like **delivery times**, **reviews and testimonials** of your goods and your business, and your **business hours** – if you’re going to be taking a few days off then that information should be crystal clear on your website.

Put yourself in the position of a person buying a Christmas present for a loved one. If they find the perfect product on your site and pay for it at once, only to find out *afterwards* that increased holiday sales have delayed shipping times, they’re likely to complain.

Sites that don’t give that information up-front are creating a recipe for disaster in terms of unhappy customers. Apart from the initial headache of dealing with an upset buyer and refunding their money, there’s a possibility of that person badmouthing your business to others, having a knock-on effect that could easily be avoided. Marketing research shows that [it takes 12 positive customer experiences to make up for one negative one](https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2015/10/13/customer-experience-is-the-future-of-marketing/#5db1e046193d), so don’t underestimate the importance of keeping people happy.

**Provide great customer service**

Another aspect of communication is establishing clear and direct ways for your customers to contact you. Your site should have a phone number and an email listed, and you should be available as much as possible to deal with inquiries. Nobody likes to be kept waiting! Larger businesses should consider having a live chat option as well.

We’ve talked before about [the best way to handle customer service](https://www.xsellco.com/resources/customer-support-mantra/). Nothing is more frustrating to a customer when they have a hard time reaching the person they’re trying to do business with. If that process isn’t made easy for them, the ones who don’t leave to buy elsewhere will be potentially ill-informed.

Not all customers are easy to deal with, and some business owners tend to shy away from the customer service side of things. They might act differently if they knew the facts - an American Express survey in 2011 found that [78% of consumers had cancelled an intended transaction due to poor customer service!](https://www.helpscout.net/75-customer-service-facts-quotes-statistics/) Don’t give your customers a reason not to do business with you. Yes, it’s a little extra work, but taking care of these details now can save you money and win customer trust and loyalty in the long run, and that’s what running a good online business is all about.

Ok, so you’re letting your customers know exactly what they can expect when they buy from you – the only thing left to do is live up to those standards. What’s the best way to do that?

**Quality Control**

If you can tell your customers exactly what to expect from you and follow through on those promises, you’re going to eliminate the vast majority of customer complaints with those steps alone. Practice strict quality control of your goods and services and nobody will be able to fault your business.   
  
Yes, this means ensuring your goods arrive in one piece, but it’s not all about the condition of your products. Check and double check that they are exactly *as advertised* in order to prevent complaints. Confirm that you’re listing the correct colours and fabric of the clothing, technical specifications of your electronics – nobody likes to feel mislead. Do the photos on your site match the products they’re advertising? Things like this can really damage customer loyalty. According to various surveys, getting a new customer can be anywhere from [5 to 25 times more expensive](https://hbr.org/2014/10/the-value-of-keeping-the-right-customers) than hanging on to a current one, so make sure you’re providing a good, straightforward service and that your products are what the customer expects.

If you can manage to take care of these three things – clear information, great customer service and strict quality control – your business will be head and shoulders above a great many competitors. Your customers will recognize honesty and quality when they see it, you’ll eliminate the main causes of complaints, and you can reap the benefits of having happy customers who will keep coming back to you time and time again, satisfied with their experience and placing their faith in your business.