

By Bill Guertin

The 800-Pound Gorilla

How To Demand (and Receive!) Better Customer Service

Everyone has received poor customer service at one time or another. Whether by accident or on purpose, it's never pleasant and always frustrating.

What can you do about improving it?

The power in today's society is moving more and more to the consumer. We have more choices than ever before. We have more options for the same products and services, and that means lower prices and generally better availability.

And we can choose to buy or not to buy from a place that considers service second-rate.

"Yeah, yeah, Bill. I hear you. So we should just avoid those places, and the problem may or may not go away. How can we actually get these people who are in the business of servicing to actually SERVE us?"

Here's a formula for change that I'd like to suggest to each B2B reader. If everyone does this at least once, we'll start a real revolution in our community.

Four easy steps. Check it out:

What To Do If You're On the Receiving End Of A Bad Customer Service Experience:

1. **Remain Cool.** If you flip out, chances are you're going to cause more damage than the original incident, and the offending party won't be able to learn the correct behavior.
2. **Smile and ask for the employee's name.** Read their name badge or ask for their first and last name, and write it down on a piece of paper in front of them. Note the date and time as well. Sometimes this act alone will elicit an apology and additional corrective action from the offender to earn your repeat business.
3. **Ask for their supervisor's name.** If the employee at fault won't cooperate, ask a co-worker. If no one will rat out their friend, ask for their names too.
4. **Ask to see the supervisor.** If they're unavailable, call them as soon as possible after the incident. Describe the situation, using exact details. Let him or her know if it has affected your decision to go back to their business again.

If we as consumers don't take action, service will continue to deteriorate, we'll continue to accept it, and we'll all be worse off in the long run.

Don't just sit there and complain to your neighbor across the fence; do something about it. Nothing will change unless consumers like us demand better.

When you perform this 4-step procedure, I'd be interested in hearing your results. E-mail me at bill@The800PoundGorilla.com and I'll print selected stories in a future column.

Let's start a movement. A movement to improve our community one customer at a time.

And if you happen to be one of those less-than-acceptable employees, let this article be your first warning: you are about to be watched like you've never been watched before. Please don't take that as a threat. It's not. We know you've got it in you to deliver top-notch customer service. We just need to experience it from you.

Our community is being judged by the service we give. What kind of ambassador will you be?

We'll be watching.

Bill Guertin, Chief Enthusiasm Officer of The 800-Pound Gorilla, works with companies of all sizes to improve their sales, marketing, service skills, and profitability.