

Questions are regularly sent in to us from business owners asking how to handle certain types of customers and what to do in certain situations. Here are a few recent questions that were sent in and our answers to them. At Business Beware we don't sugarcoat things, we tell it like it is.

1. When is the customer not always right?

In my experience the majority of customers are always right. But there has never been one customer that has been right all the time. That would be an implication that a person is perfect and we all know that is just not the case. There is always going to be a customer that just cannot be pleased. There are many customers that a situation can be rectified whether this means you get paid in full or partial. And then there is always the "customonster..."

That customer that could not be pleased if you gave your services away for free. Ever had a customer like this? Cannot be pleased no matter what you do. The habitual complainer. The whiner. The bully. The know-it-all. And last but not least the true customonster... the customer that wants to let you know that the customer is always right. (and sometimes even quotes this to you).

2. We had a customer come in our coffee shop that has been a repeat customer for quite some time but every time he comes in he always has something to say about the coffee. It's too hot, it's too cold, it's old etc. What do you do with someone like this?

My first thought is "why is this customer returning?" Time after time to only be in "his opinion" disappointed by the service and quality of the coffee. If it were me as a consumer I would find a different coffee shops if this were the truth. If I were the business owner and actually tried everything in my power to please this customer without positive results I would ask him to not come back. It's in the best interest for the business, their employees and the customer to not return. In summary, I would say "you're fired."

3. What do you do with a customer that is rude to your employees?

It often makes me wonder why a manager or business owner would take the side of a belligerent customer. One that continuously is confrontational and demeaning to their employees. A customer, someone who you deal with many times or just once that does this is not worth having an employee upset. A happy employee that you work with on a daily and hourly basis is worth much more to your business than that customer. And a happy employee is in the right frame of mind to take care of your good customers better. Your best investment is to fire that bad customer that cannot be pleased and keep your employees happy. The thought of you letting that bad customer go for your employees benefit will do wonders for your business, your employees, yourself and your good customers.

4. I once tried to fire a customer and he said "you can't fire me..."

Remember before you fire a bad customer you have to do everything within reason to please a customer.

I would simply tell them "what do you not understand about 'you're fired'." My definition of "you're fired" is I do not need you as a customer, I do not want you as a customer, do not bother me again and I will not miss you.