CUSTOMER SERVICE THAT BRINGS PEOPLE BACK

How to turn first-time buyers into regulars, handle complaints well, and make loyalty your cheapest marketing.

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AT A GLANCE

- Keeping a customer usually costs **far less** than winning a new one.
- Great service is **reliable, fast and personal**. Customers remember how you made them feel.
- A complaint handled well can create a **more loyal** customer than one who never had a problem.

Why it matters

Repeat customers and referrals are the backbone of most small businesses. They also raise your customer lifetime value, which investors and lenders look at. See **M-09 Unit Economics: What Each Customer Is Worth**.

The basics

1. **Be reliable.** Do what you said, when you said.
2. **Be fast.** Reply to messages within a few hours during business hours.
3. **Be personal.** Use names, remember preferences, and say thank you.
4. **Make it easy.** Simple booking, clear prices, easy returns.
5. **Follow up.** Check in after the sale.

Handling complaints: LAST

Step	What to do
Listen	Let them explain fully, without interrupting.
Apologize	"I'm sorry this happened." You're apologizing for their experience.
Solve	Offer a fix: redo, replace, refund or credit. Ask what would make it right.
Thank	Thank them for telling you. Then fix the cause so it doesn't happen again.

> EXAMPLE
>
> A client's sofa was stained during one of **Rosa's** cleanings. Rosa called the same day, apologized, paid for professional upholstery cleaning, and gave a free visit. She also added a step to her team's checklist about chemicals on fabric. The client left a 5-star review describing how the problem was handled, and referred two neighbors.

Building loyalty

- **Loyalty rewards**: a free item after 10 purchases, or points
- **Memberships and subscriptions**: regular service at a set price
- **Personal touches**: birthday messages, handwritten notes, remembering usual orders
- **Ask for feedback**: short surveys or a quick text after each visit
- **Thank regulars publicly**, with permission

Track it

- **Repeat customer rate**: what share of customers buy again?
- **Reviews and ratings** over time
- **Complaints**: how many, about what, and how fast you solve them

Common mistakes

- **Slow or no replies.**
- **Arguing with customers.**
- **Fixing the complaint but not the cause.**
- **Treating regulars the same as strangers.**

Your checklist

- ☐ Set a reply-time goal for messages
- ☐ Train everyone on the LAST steps
- ☐ Choose one loyalty idea to start
- ☐ Track your repeat customer rate
- ☐ Review complaints monthly and fix causes

Where to go next

- **L-04 Getting Found Locally: Google, Maps and Reviews**
- **M-09 Unit Economics: What Each Customer Is Worth**
- **O-05 Managing Your First Team**

IMPORTANT

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