

Don't Use That Tone of Voice on Me!

By Judith Filek—President
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There are a lot of reasons why I hate calling Customer Support. It doesn't matter what company. The issues remain the same. If I had a wish list, these are the things I would like to see changed- immediately!

The first thing that bugs me is long waits with a message saying, "Your call is valuable to us. The approximate wait time is 22 minutes." If I was a valued customer, the wait time would be minimal. Worse yet is the recorded message that says, "All of our representatives are currently taking calls, please contact our website at..." There is no option to speak to a live person, apparently ever.

When I do make contact with a rep, I need to be able to understand the person. If the person speaks too quickly or if the person has an accent that makes me focus on what they just said versus what they are currently saying, I get seriously frustrated. It certainly seems to be the responsibility of the call center to insure that everyone on the phone can be understood-all the time, not just when someone is watching them. People like me take notes. We write things down. Speaking too quickly or in a manner that I can't follow makes me hang up and redial or worse yet, just give up.

Reps who can't answer my questions waste my time. My expectation is that the rep will know the particulars about their product or service without having to place me on hold or connect me to someone else. Answers like, "I don't think it is possible" or "I am not really sure about that" simply are not acceptable. Could somebody please educate these people! Would it be too much for them to learn one or two new products each month? Would it be too much for supervisors to quiz their reps periodically on product knowledge?

I don't like reps with an attitude either. Hey, sometimes I am upset, and there may be a good reason for it. Telling me, "Don't take it out on me" or "Just calm down," only adds to my annoyance. How about taking ownership? If a shipment was late, broken or incomplete, it may have cost me money or

jeopardized my relationship with a client. A sincere apology goes a long way with me. An artificial one gets my dander up. In a recent interaction with a support center, a rep said, "Hey that is just the way it is. Take it or leave it!" You can imagine what I did.

My final pet peeve is the rep who sounds bored and disinterested. Granted I may be the 40th caller of the day, but I like to feel that the rep on the other end of the line likes his or her job and likes people. From the initial "hello," I want to feel that the rep cares and is interested in resolving my issue. The good reps always sound friendly.

It shouldn't be a crapshoot to get a good rep on the phone. Basic customer service skills are more essential today than ever before. Please, please, please take the time to hire good people and train them well.

Question: *We're interested in your reaction to this article. [click here](#) – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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