

## CHAPTER 1

# UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS WILL NOT ONLY FIRE YOU BUT THEY WILL TELL OTHERS!

*Dissatisfied customers tell an average  
of 10 other people about their bad  
experience. Twelve percent tell  
up to 20 people.*

Every company on the planet talks about rendering dynamite customer service. Some like to refer to their customer service departments as “Customer Care Centers.” Ironically, however, the cuffs often don’t match the collar. Although these organizations espouse the great respect they have for their clients, they build multiple walls around the company to prevent these very customers from getting a fair shake.

While I’m amazed by the hypocritical attitude that seems to pervade much of the corporate world today, I’m not surprised when corporate culture asks customers: “What have you done for me lately?” Their mission statement espouses one thing; their actual *mission* does quite another.

The term “customer satisfaction” may be too subjective and impossible to define. Why? As it is with beauty, it is defined by the buyer, not the seller. Indeed, most corporate cultures couldn’t care less what their buyers think. After all, just look at the way they treat them.

## 2 UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS WILL NOT ONLY FIRE

First, they assume that most customers are trying to find “something for nothing.” Second, they make the client wait on hold for unreasonable periods of time before grandly coming on the phone line to ask how they can “be of help.” Third, they build impossible barriers that the client is forced to navigate to garner any “satisfaction.” Finally, the client must play by *their* rules to get any kind of results. No wonder clients are wary of the empty promise of “customer satisfaction.”

The fact is that keeping customers “satisfied” simply isn’t enough anymore. In fact, if they’re merely satisfied, they often don’t bother to come back—because they don’t like the rules by which they had to play in order to attain this “satisfaction.” And if this is the sorry way most satisfied customers treat you, imagine how ticked off the genuinely *dissatisfied* customer is.

The unhappy customer will tell an average of 10 other people about their bad experience. Twelve percent will tell up to 20 people. To that end, it’s not enough to simply satisfy a customer anymore. Satisfaction is a 3 on a scale of 1 to 10—and it simply won’t do.

You have to promise a lot nowadays, but you have to deliver more. And whatever you do promise, you must *absolutely* deliver.

Case in point: There is a Domino’s Pizza vendor in south Detroit who receives the same phone call every Thursday afternoon from someone ordering a hamburger, mushroom, and onion pizza at 4:30 PM. By 5:00 PM or thereabouts, Domino’s delivers the pizza. At 5:30 PM the same customer calls back and complains that he was unhappy with the pizza, and before 6:00 PM on Thursday afternoon of each week, Domino’s refunds this customer his money.

To be fair, the customer is simply taking advantage of the Domino’s promise. But Domino’s *made* the promise. In fact, Domino’s built its entire company on a promise. In the early days, if they failed to deliver within 30 minutes, you got the pizza for free. Then a huge lawsuit ensued that prompted the chain to alter its promise. However, Domino’s still stands by its product today—and if you don’t like it, you don’t pay.

I asked a Domino’s vendor once what this promise cost his shop over the course of a year. “Maybe around \$200,” he replied. “[But] the

well-publicized stories [on the company] done by *60 Minutes* and other [television shows] . . . have been estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars in free advertising.” Keeping customers happy pays dividends.

It is the customer’s opinion of the bad news, stupid—and it travels faster today than ever before.

### **TAKEAWAY SERVICING AND SELLING TACTICS**

1. Unhappy customers will fire you on the spot because they now have options that will only increase.
2. They won’t just fire you; unhappy clients will personally tell up to 10 people about their bad experience. Twelve percent will tell 20 people.

