



Your Customer is Your Paycheck!

by Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

Comments from a closed account survey: *“The final straw came when we went to pull money out of the ATM. It was closed for repairs. We went to a second ATM for ABC Bank. It was also shut down. We finally went to another bank’s ATM and were charged the fee of \$1.50. It was 9:30 p.m. at night. We didn’t feel like we should have to keep driving around.*

When we arrived home, we called the 800 (customer service) number and told them both ATM machines in this particular part of the city were not working, and we felt we should not be charged the fee from ABC Bank for using another bank. We were told they would notify the problems of the ATM in order to get them fixed, but we needed to contact the branch in order to reverse the charges of using another ATM. Next morning, we called the branch. I believe I spoke to so-and-so who said they would not reverse the charges. I explained that we had gone to another ABC Bank ATM and it was not in service either. She then told us, ‘There are other ATMs in the area.’ I told her they were not that close. She said that did not matter.

I then called the 800 number to complain about this matter. They told me there was nothing they could do. Both women were not nice or helpful. In fact, they acted put out for having to take my complaint. It made me feel we were not valued as customers. I now bank with a company who meets these needs. I feel ABC Bank does a poor job of customer service and have advised others of this. I’ll never bank with your company again.”

This bank gave up a customer for a \$1.50 fee reversal when it was the bank’s fault that two of their ATM’s were closed for repairs. Three different people were contacted by the customer and all three blamed the customer for the problem. How easy and inexpensive it would have been for any of those employees to simply reverse the charges and save the customer.

Here’s what you need to know about a bank’s “we don’t care” attitude: customers get angry. Jeffrey Gitomer, author of the book *Customer Satisfaction is Worthless, Customer Loyalty is Priceless*, discovered from research that:

- If you have a customer who leaves angry, 91 percent of them will never return.
- And 96 percent won’t tell you the real reason they left.

To me, this high percent isn’t surprising. In all the training that I have done for banks, I have read many closed account surveys – those little cards that get sent out and returned

when a customer closes their account. Most surveys have no comments on them – the customers just don't want to bother telling you why they left your bank. Here's the critical part of the research:

- 80 percent of angry customers will do business with you again IF their problem is handled quickly and to their complete satisfaction.

Our natural tendency as human beings if we have someone standing in front of us or calling us on the phone who says, "I've got a problem," is to think, "Oh no, not another angry customer! You know how many I've already had today? I don't get paid enough. Where's the manager?" We can't help but think, "Oh, I just don't want to deal with this person." We want to plug our ears and pass that person on to someone else to handle the problem.

You need to change your perspective right now! The next time you have a customer who says, "I've got a complaint" or "I have a problem," I want you to think in your head, "Great! I'm going to solve this problem and they're going to be back." That's what you need to be thinking and acting on! You must be committed to saving your customers!

Customer service is about keeping the customer's money in your bank, not the on-going boom and bust of replacing lost customers with new customers. Keep in mind that customers are your paycheck.

Excerpted from Patti's book, Banking Secrets for Customer Loyalty: Handling Customer Problems, Destination Publications, 2002. Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.