



# TriOpus Group

Shaping your company's talent



2005

This month:

## THE GIFT OF COMPLAINTS

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If you took a survey of all your customers and asked them whether they would complain to you if they had a problem, a full 50% would say no. Many people don't want the attention, don't want to be labeled "complainers", and/or think that complaining does no good. The truth of the matter is that most people expect glitches in the service that they get from you – and how you handle their concerns will make the difference between earning their loyalty and seeing the backside of them. It makes sense to encourage and value complaints from the 50% who make the effort to give them, as complaints are gifts to be cherished. You have been given an opportunity to retain business and learn from the feedback. Those 50% who don't complain to you are the customers to fear, not the ones who are actually speaking up! As the Brown & Williamson Tobacco Ad says, "I won't complain. I just won't come back." If a customer takes the time and effort to complain, be sure your staff sees it for the gift that it is...



*is your organization open to the gift of complaints?*



*Customer complaints are the schoolbooks from which we learn.*

*- Author Unknown*



triopus group's tamara kerr, designer of our monthly newsletter (among other important tasks), will be taking some time off beginning next week to work on another project – delivering and caring for her first baby! for all our clients who deal with tamara directly, please feel free to contact david colman (403-609-3020) david@triopusgroup.com or marguerite alston (403-239-6393) marguerite@triopusgroup.com. tamara will return to work september 1<sup>st</sup> ... your monthly newsletter will continue to come to you as usual...

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How would you feel if half of your customers who were unhappy with your products or services never told you how they felt, complained about you to everyone else, and then began dealing with your competition? Not too good, I'll bet. Well guess what. Half of your unhappy customers do exactly that.

I've stopped going to a restaurant that used to be a favorite of mine. And they don't know that I'm not coming back. No, there is nothing wrong with the food, but the service got so bad that I just gave up on them.

So why do so many unhappy customers fail to tell the companies involved? It's a good question that's begging an answer. Personally, I do know that I will take the time to express my feelings if I generally like an organization that I want to succeed, if they've usually treated me well. If it's an organization that consistently is unimpressive or, even worse, bad I tend to just go to the competition.

But ask yourself this. How do you and your company react when a client takes the effort to complain and let you know how they feel about the way they have been treated? Do you take it as a personal attack? Do you think of the client as a nuisance and a whiner? Do you try and justify the bad experience with excuses or reasons that the customer really doesn't care about? Do you blame other departments or employees for the mistakes? Whether or not you do any of those things, we've all had them done to us, haven't we? And our reaction as a customer when it does happen to us? We don't care; it's not our problem.

On the other hand, do you ever look upon these complaints as a gift, free research, and an opportunity to continually improve? Not only are complaints exactly that, they are also a last chance to turn a very unhappy customer into a loyal one. Recently, I was very unhappy with a computer purchase. I just didn't like the computer and felt that the store had perhaps mislead me about a few of its' capabilities. Even though my complaint came well outside the thirty-day exchange period, the store gave me a full credit towards any other computer. I went from being very unhappy to very pleased within minutes.

Here are a couple of tips for the next time you receive a complaint:

- ♥ Acknowledge that the client is upset
- ♥ Listen attentively to what they have to say
- ♥ Restate your understanding of their issues
- ♥ Never blame a colleague or excuse the organization but take ownership of the problem
- ♥ Resolve the issue quickly
- ♥ Thank them for taking the time to come to you – Remember, a complaint is a gift
- ♥ Follow up with the client to make sure they are happy



Do these things, and you can turn an unhappy client into a loyal one. Ignore these steps, and next time the client will complain to everyone else but you.