



## GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

### **DEFINITION:**

A **customer complaint** is a customer's expression of dissatisfaction with an organization or a function of the organization, where one more of the following conditions may exist.

1. The organization committed itself to meet a customer's need and did not meet that need
2. The customer **believes** the organization committed itself to meet a need and did not meet that need
3. The customer feels a competitor can better meet the need.

### **NOTE:**

A typical business hears from a very small percentage (i.e., 5 to 15%) of its **dissatisfied** customers. The majority just quietly goes away, and most of that majority will never come back. That represents a potentially huge financial loss for companies who do not know how to treat customers. It also presents a tremendous opportunity and financial gain for companies that do know how to treat their customers!!

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. Assign responsibilities within your company for all customer interfaces.
2. Define methods for handling customer complaints or feedback.
3. Ensure the methods include an immediately acknowledgement of customer complaints or feedback.
4. Provide your customer with regular status reports of actions taken and plans to correct any deficiencies or complaints.
5. Solicit your customer's perception of the resolution of their complaint.
6. Use each complaint to make improvements within your company. Apply lessons learned to similar products, services or processes.
7. Pro-actively pursue your customer's concerns in order to prevent them from becoming complaints (periodic meetings, website forms, surveys, etc.).