

Difficult Customers Increase Your Profits

By Naseem Mariam

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ABSTRACT: Customers are very savvy and have ready access to information. They now are more aware of their rights and are willing to demand excellence. In this context, we should take a positive view of our difficult and demanding customers and learn from them.

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~~~~~ SIDEBAR ~~~~~  
FREE email course: Better Customer Relationships
Happy Customers Guarantee Your Financial Success
15 Steps to Better CRM (<mailto:crm@sendfree.com>)

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Customers are very savvy and have ready access to information. They now are more aware of their rights and are willing to demand excellence. In this context, we should take a positive view of our difficult and demanding customers and learn from them.

1. Raise your level of professionalism when dealing with stress inducing customers
  - a) Separate personalities from issues
  - b) Deal with the customers on a individual basis depending on their type: demanding, difficult to please, complaining

c) Demanding: Asking for urgently or peremptorily; Claiming as just or due

d) Difficult: Hard to do or accomplish; demanding considerable effort or skill; arduous; Hard to please, satisfy, or manage; Hard to persuade or convince; stubborn

e) Complaining: Never complains - too submissive, Aggressive and loud complainer, whiner - always wallowing in self-pity & blaming others

f) Read my article "Risk Management Reduces Project Fires"

## 2. Positively handle difficult and demanding customers

a) Difficult customers challenge your firm to raise the "bar of excellence." Clearing that bar will strengthen your firm's competitive position and ensure its long-term success.

b) Remember the 4 Personality types of Amiables (Amiables are relation-ship oriented. They are warm, nurturing individual who place priority on friendships, cooperative behavior, and being accepted by others), Analytics (Analytics are thought oriented. They are logical people who enjoy problem solving), Expressive (Expressives are socially-oriented. They are playful, fun loving, and spontaneous. They are energetic, enthusiastic people who enjoy being the center of attention.) and Drivers (Drivers are action-oriented. They are decisive, pragmatic, and efficient. They know what they want, where they are going, and how to get results.)

c) Amiables tend to use personal opinions in arriving at decisions and want guarantees of minimal risk. Analytics use data, systematic approaches, and reflection to arrive at decisions. Expressives rely on the opinions of others whom they consider important or successful for decision making. Drivers prefer brief reading material, working alone or directing others. Drivers base their decisions on key facts; they prefer to make their own decisions. They are risk takers.

## 3. Build mutual accountability between you and your customers

a) Negotiate interests, needs, and solutions

b) Read my article "Customer-centric Business Strategies"

## 4. Turn difficult customer interactions into win-win outcomes

a) Resolve conflicts productively

b) Refrain from giving in to customer anger and demands

c) Questions to ask & how to ask them

d) Maintaining your composure and integrity during heated situations

e) Read my article "5 Steps to Better Manage Your Customers' Expectations"

The good thing about difficult and demanding customers is that once you satisfy them, they will be loyal to you for life. In the process you would also have spruced up your operations a lot to match their expectations. This in turn will help you provide better quality products or services.

#### Related Reading

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1. "Risk Management Reduces Project Fires"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/project-risk-management-fires.html>

2. "Customer-centric Business Strategies"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/crm-customer-centric.html>

3. "5 Steps to Better Manage Your Customers' Expectations"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/crm-expectations-management.html>

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About the author

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Naseem Mariam is the editor of "Management that Soars" eNewsletter & author of "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace". Her writings draw life from her 18 years experience as software Project Manager. Let her guide you towards Faster All Round Success and a Stress Free, Joyous Life. Her free ebook and Newsletter tell You How. Subscribe with <mailto:projectdioxide@sendfree.com> Visit her at <http://www.123projectmanagement.com>

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