

HANDLING COMPLAINTS MADE EASIER

The new concept to enter the field of consumer protection is Customer Relation Management (CRM). Manufactures, traders, sellers and service providers spend crores of rupees to train their staff to improve customer relationship. The objective is to create new customers and retain the existing.

Despite efforts by service providers to cater to the needs of consumers, there are lapses and complaints arise.

Most manufactures have a system to deal with consumer complaints. Yet consumers prefer to approach Consumer Forums and use legal means to solve their grievance. Ask any dissatisfied consumer why he doesn't complain to the manufacture, seller or the concerned department in case of Government service. In most cases he would not be aware of a grievance redressal system.

As a result we can find almost all complaints handling system losing their importance. Whether it is trade, industry or service providers, it is essential that a consumer complaint handling system is given importance. When consumers complain, they look for six things. They need to be heard. The seller or the service provider should give patient hearing to the consumers. Replying to consumers' letters is also a form of hearing.

Complaint handling system should be easy to understand. A consumer cannot be expected to furnish loads of information, formats and documents to register a complaint. Even a simple letter explaining the grievance should be sufficient.

When a consumer buys a product, he expects not only value for money but also value as a person. Each consumer should be treated with respect. A grievance handling system can be successful only when, the manufacturer, seller or the service provider has an obligation to explain what went wrong and what is the remedy. Every consumer grievance may not be true or the manufacturer may not be responsible for it. These facts are to be explained to the consumer. In fact most of the grievances get resolved after this explanation. In case the consumer's complaint is proved to be true and the trader or manufacturer is found responsible for the lapse, it is essential that the same is accepted and apologized. An apology at the right time enhances the goodwill of the seller and retains a consumer. Finally any remedial action like a letter, replacement, return, repair or payment of compensation should be as soon as possible.
