

TEAMWORK

MAKES THE DREAM WORK How to Keep New Customers Happy By Darryl Turner

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It is inevitable that some files are simply going to go down in flames instead of closing on time with no issues. There is no way to make sure that all files close without a hitch, however there is a way to radically minimize the number that have issues and upset customers.

Sales in this business can be very, very difficult. In fact, it can be downright “ridiculously hard”!!!

So, when this fact is present, which it is, we tend to see our new customer as our prize. And, why not?... That’s what they are!

The first thing we need to do is to accept where most customer complaints come from. And, in fact, where they don’t.

Our studies show that over 95% of all customer complaints come from only two categories:

- 1: Co-Op Agents
- 2: New Customers on their first few transactions

This means that only 1 out of 20 customer complaints come from well established directing clients.

Let’s look at why this is by taking a walk through the traditional sales rep’s process (not our process) followed on a daily basis.

First, they identify a Realtor that they really want business from. That particular agent happens to not be a co-op agent so they proceed to pursue them in a traditional “make them like me” manner. And, sometimes they actually do...like them, that is.

Think about the principle of expectations. In other words, everyone has them. And, in order to get anyone to make a change, those expectations must exceed what they already have or think they have.

If you end up getting someone to try your company and to send a transaction, that means only one thing; they have expectations that say “I better try this. It sounds like escrow

heaven”. Otherwise they would never try the company or escrow officer / closer.

Now that you have your new open order, you tell your escrow officer this amazing and grand news. And, for some reason, they are not as excited about this new customer as you are. Why? To you the new customer is a victory and to the escrow officer / closer, they are more work.

Let’s make the situation worse for just a moment. All escrow officers /closers have clients who have done business with them for a long time and are the bread and butter of their desk and they possess very strong relationships with them.

So, because of how they subconsciously see your new customer and how they consciously see their existing good customers, your new order now becomes unintentionally de-prioritized. That’s right, the gap between what they expect and what they receive just became larger; much larger!

Inevitably, the new customer is going to feel it. Why wouldn’t they as they are not experiencing the “Escrow Heaven” that they were promised. In fact, now it is the opposite.

The customer now picks up the phone and calls the escrow officer to voice their opinion, right? WRONG! They call you because you are one who made the promises, and likely the only one they have had “any” real conversations with.

Now, in a panic, you begin to scramble trying to find ways to keep the customer from walking. So, you tell them something ridiculous like “it won’t happen again”. Every salesperson is guilty of this one. But, think about it, how can you guarantee that?

The result of those types of comments actually make the situation worse. The very over-promising that created the situation in the first place is now at work again promising something that you have no way in the world of assuring anyone.

The only person who can actually communicate their way to a healthy conclusion is the escrow officer / closer. But, since they don’t feel as though they did anything wrong (which they might not have) they simply don’t want to make that call.

Thus, you now feel that if you do not over promise again, the customer will walk. So, you take that path.

As I stated above, 95% of all complaints come from those who do not have a relationship with the escrow officer or closer. Taking that into consideration, the solution is pretty simple. We MUST connect the new customers relationally with the escrow officer faster than we typically do.

So, the following are the recommended steps to take to stand the best chance of making things work the way they should when on-boarding new customers.

1: Whenever you receive your first order from a new customer, make sure you do an effective review of their preferences. This becomes the most important information that you can acquire.

In fact, by asking questions, the customer subconsciously re-enters the realm of more reasonable expectations. It isn't the cure-all, but a very strong and necessary start.

2: Let the new customer know why you are asking the questions. It is because you want to make sure that their experience with the company and escrow officer / closer is stellar.

3: Let the customer know that you are going to go over their file preferences with the escrow officer / closer.

4: After you go over the preferences with the escrow officer / closer, have them call the new customer and say something like

"This is _____. I am your escrow officer / closer on your file and I wanted to call you to thank you for the opportunity to work together with you on this file. I also wanted to let you know that (rep name) and I have gone over your preferences together and before I put them into the escrow file, I wanted to call to see if there is anything additional that you thought of after they left that you would like me to add to the list".

5: Do everything you can to make sure this call takes place, because this is where the magic happens. What is the magic? It is the escrow officer / closer and the new customer connecting "in the beginning of the file" conversationally. Remember, 95% of complaints come from situations where they have not connected like this or even had a single conversation besides "I need things" conversations, which they most usually defer to email for that. So, in other words, they have never actually spoken. (This is why they call THE REP when they have a complaint. The rep is the one who has had the previous conversations with them, including the ones where escrow heaven was promised).

As a pilot, we have written checklists for everything. We leave nothing to memory, natural tendencies or luck. It doesn't matter how many hours we have or how many successful take-offs and landings (that number should match) we have, a checklist is paramount.



Do you have an on-boarding checklist? Does it include the simple steps above? Do you follow a written plan every time you bring a new customer on for their first order? If you do not, don't blame the escrow officer / closer. You are the PIC (Pilot In Command)

- 1: You over-promise to get a chance.
- 2: The escrow officer / closer now has more work.
- 3: The expectations of your new customer are high. (Otherwise they would have never opened the order)
- 4: Your escrow officer / closer has not had a healthy conversation with them.
- 5: You don't know what their actual expectations are with you OR where they normally do business. In other words, it's all guessing from there.
- 6: The new file becomes unintentionally de-prioritized.
- 7: The gap between what the customer has been promised and what they receive is now suddenly wider.
- 8: Something goes wrong.
- 9: The new customer calls the only person they have a relationship with, you...the rep.
- 10: You then panic, get upset with your escrow officer and then...you make it worse. You say "I WILL TAKE CARE OF IT" and likely even assure them that "THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN".

I cannot guarantee that having a checklist, that you actually follow, when on-boarding a new customer will solve 100% of the issues, but I do have a guarantee for you. I will guarantee that in cases where a co-op agent or someone in their first or second directed transaction goes south, if you pull out your checklist you WILL find empty unchecked boxes. In other words, missed critical steps of on-boarding.

The problem is real, it is also very simple. On-boarding is 100% different than retaining a good customer who has a relationship with the escrow officer / closer already. If it is not treated 100% differently, you will have these issues.

Now that you know the problem, you can be the solution. *Develop an on-boarding checklist and follow it 100% of the time.

*For a "Free" New Customer On-Boarding Checklist, email your request to info@DarrylTurner.com today.