

Introduction

"Business has had it so easy for 1,000 years because customer complaints have all been in private. Now they're not, yet we're not doing anything different," says Jay Baer, author of *Hug Your Haters* (Penguin Publishing, 2016), a primer for satisfying unhappy clients. "We're using a 1995 playbook to solve a 2016 customer problem."

Credit: <http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/profit/fyi/041516-fyi-ontopic-2995014.html>

On customer expectations

According to a Bain survey, 80 percent of companies say they deliver superior customer service. But only 8 percent of their customers agree. That discrepancy is because the best companies in the world are training your customers what to expect. The Ritz-Carltons. The Zappos. It's not about you being better at customer service than the other plumber, software company, or whoever your competition is.

On the basics

A third of all customer complaints are ignored, and most of those are online where everybody can see you ignoring your customer. Your approach should be to answer those complaints, to acknowledge the customer's right to communicate, and to try to provide a solution to their problem if you can. In some cases it's too late, but just proving that you're there is better than nothing.

On criticism

The most overrated thing in business is praise. It makes you feel good but doesn't tell you anything, because in almost every case, you already know what you're good at. What teaches you important lessons is negative feedback and criticism. That's the petri dish for improvement.

On crazies

A lot of the cesspool of what's online happens because people believe they're anonymous. So respond to everybody—unless it is clearly spam or something that would presumably involve law enforcement. By answering and showing you're a real person, you can prevent more people from trying to get away with bad behavior.

Win Big with Customers



On technology

Social listening and social response software are super important, whether it's Oracle Social or anything along those lines. What many big companies have now is legacy software that manages telephone and email, and separate software to handle things such as social media and online reviews. Those two software packages do not talk, which is why, if you call somebody and then you go on Facebook, it's a different person, a different circumstance. It's like dealing with a different company. So the unification of data between offline and online is massively important. As that starts to unfold globally, it's going to be a real boon to the consumer..

On budget

Globally, we spend US\$500 billion a year on marketing and US\$9 billion a year on customer service. That doesn't make any sense at all, because customer retention pays geometric dividends. So take a little money out of some other budget—maybe it's marketing, maybe it's lunch—and increase your customer service budget so you can answer everybody.

