



# 5 C's of Resolving a Customer Issue

It is inevitable that you will eventually have to deal with a problem with your service or product. How you respond can be more damaging than the actual problem. Or, it can almost erase the issue all together. In this day of social media, customers are doing their research before they make a purchase. That research comes from the testimonials and reviews that your customers are providing about you online. Resolving a customer issue correctly can lead to happy customers and positive reviews.

## Response and Resolution

Response and Resolution are the first two of the [3 R's of Customer Service](#). You need to be responsive to your customers' needs and provide resolution to their issues. The 5 C's will not only lead you through the resolution process, they also help you when you are responding to the customer about the issue.

## The 5 C's

The 5 C's are: Customer, Cause, Correction, Clock and Cost. Here is a brief description of each.

### Customer

How is the problem effecting the customer? Think in terms of the physical, mental and financial impact on the customer. Is it costing them money, productivity, etc? How are they reacting? This is the most important thing for two reasons. First, you have to be able to understand how the issue is impacting the customer, and thus be able to empathize with the customer. Second, it allows you to prioritize the issue amongst the other issues.

### Cause

What is broken? It is recommended that you follow this one through to the root cause. You will probably need to be able to answer questions for the customer. Therefore, the more you know, the better you can respond. It is also important to be able to identify if the issue is caused by procedural or material problem. This could help to identify other potential issues with products and services that haven't appeared yet. This will allow you to be **proactive** and **prevent**, or at least minimize, future problems for you customers.

### Correction

How do you fix the root cause? Be sure to spend the time to look for **ALL** possible corrections. There may also be phases or steps involved in the correction. For example, you may be able to provide a temporary fix or work around until a final fix is available. Always refer back to the impact on the customer when considering this item.

## Clock

How long will it take to correct the issue? Some issues may be quick to fix. While others may require considerable effort to create the correction. Also consider how long it will take to implement the correction. This applies to you and the customer. You may need to train staff on the correction, or even hire additional staff. At the same time, consider how soon the customer will be ready to implement the correction.

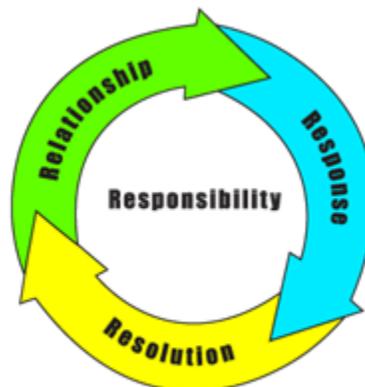
## Cost

How much time, money and effort will it take to fix the issue? When considering cost, think about from your standpoint and the customer. Cost goes beyond the immediate issue. There could be an impact to some other activity, due to priorities or resources. You may have also uncovered additional fixes when you were investigating the cause. You also need to determine if the fix is billable. You will need to be able to share this information with the customer, and may even have to justify the cost.

## Summary

If you use the 5 C's when addressing issues with your customers, you will develop better solutions to the issues. You will also be better prepared when you are talking to the customer. Our motto is: ***When all things are the same...Customer Service is the difference***. Problems with your products or services are inevitable. The way you respond to them will be a key differentiator to help set you apart from your competition.

*To learn how to implement the "5 C's of Resolving a Customer Issue", or to learn more about Ap Rhys Solutions and the "3 R's of Customer Service", please visit our website: [www.aprhyssol.com](http://www.aprhyssol.com). Or, you can contact us at (214) 254-4020 or send us an email at [solutions@aprhyssol.com](mailto:solutions@aprhyssol.com).*



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