Dealing with complaints

When dealing with complaints, keep in mind the following.

- Do use active listening.
  - ‘What I think I hear may not necessarily be what you thought you said.’
  - Give feedback. Let customers know you have heard them by paraphrasing ie repeating what you have heard in your own words.

- Do make notes of the complaint (dot points are good).

- Do use questioning techniques to get facts and dissipate customer anger.
  - Use short, closed questions while the customer is emotional and angry.
  - Use open and probing questions once the situation has settled and can be discussed sensibly.

- Do obtain all relevant details eg name, phone, mobile, order etc.

- Do obtain customer agreement on the complaint solution(s).

- Do remain professional, patient and calm.

- Do thank customers for alerting you to complaints. If they don’t tell you they will typically tell others.

- Do follow-up on what you have agreed with the customer.

- Don’t take your customers’ anger personally.

- Don’t lose control of your temper because your customer has.

- Don’t give excuses – give alternatives instead.

- Don’t just say ‘sorry’. Say ‘sorry’ for a particular inconvenience.

- Don’t use negative wording - be positive.

- Don’t interrupt as that will only extend the complaint.

- Don’t assume – get all the facts, before you act.

- Don’t accept liability or responsibility – be sure of the facts.

- Don’t say anything that may appear as an attack or accusation.