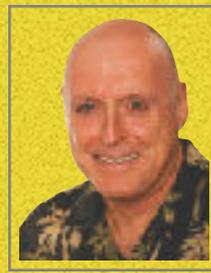


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 979 Is the Customer Always Right?

You've almost certainly heard the phrase, "The customer is always right. The intent is fine, but the line itself is wrong. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll get to that next, on The Extra Point.

"The customer is always right." I sat down and began to think about that phrase one day, and wondered who the author of it was trying to impress.

Was he/she sending a message to employees, that customers were all-powerful, and they should give in to any and every request or even demand made by a customer?

Was the message for the customer, to make them feel emboldened, so they would make greater requests and demands upon service personnel?

Was it just a line to repeat out loud, and to use in advertising, to make the company appear as if they care more about customers? Let's break some of this down.

The term "the customer is always right" can't be attributed to any one individual. However, historians have said it was promoted by the owners of some of America's largest department stores in the late 1800s, such as Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, and Marshall Field in Chicago.

Another takeoff on this was used at about the same time, by Cesar Ritz, the founder of the Ritz hotel chain, then the most lavish and exclusive hotel property anywhere, and he said: "The customer is never wrong."

Anyone who has ever dealt with customers is well aware that neither of those statements is correct. Customers are frequently wrong.

Customers are human. They get confused, forget details, sometimes they lie, and once in a while, a customer may also be abusive to employees.

In the age of social media, when they don't get what they want, even if they don't deserve it, some will post their complaints in an effort to embarrass a company.

Sometimes, a customer is right. Sometimes, a customer is not right.

However, we won't let a customer treat a team member in a rude or other inappropriate way. We'll understand that anybody can have a bad day and bark at an employee. We can excuse that, and get between the employee and the customer, to work things out.

We won't embarrass our worker by criticizing them in front of a customer. We'll take care of the transaction, then have a private conversation later to reinforce our customer approach as needed, or thank them for their professionalism if they handled things correctly.

If a customer is particularly abusive, we may even invite them to take their future business elsewhere.

The customer pays the bills.  
The customer is always respected.  
The customer always deserves our best effort.  
The customer should expect outstanding service.  
The customer is not always right.

Customers are always appreciated. We'll do all that we can to make their experience with us special, and to make them want to work with us again.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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