

1Minute with 1Vision

Lemonade for Thanksgiving

I am considering a different kind of thankfulness, a gratitude attitude for even the most disgruntled donor or customer. Every organization, no matter how well-trained or well-intentioned, will get something wrong. While it may be inevitable, it doesn't have to be final. Why? The Bible isn't the only book that teaches us to treat others how we wish to be treated. But, there may even be a stronger motivator for some...

It costs 6–7 times more to acquire a new customer than retain an existing one! *

Simple economics dictate that it is in your organization's best financial interest to do almost everything you can to salvage the relationship with a dissatisfied client or contact. How do you make lemonade from that lemon? Here are some simple steps:

- ☐ **Act quickly.** Shorten the time between your knowledge of the problem and your response to improve the possibility of a positive outcome; cut the size of the potential problem and reduce the chance that the bad news gets repeated.
- ☐ **Engage personally.** Nothing beats individual contact, especially if it comes from someone with the authority to address the situation. Phone calls are disarmingly effective, since very few go to that trouble these days.
- ☐ **Make a sincere apology or don't do it at all.**
- ☐ **Ask questions.** Bob Tiede, a friend of ours, provides a great service specifically on asking great questions. Check it out at leadingwithquestions.com. As you write your own, consider these.
 - What first drew you to or excited you about our organization?
 - What were your expectations after using our product/donating to us?
 - If we can find a resolution, would you like that?
 - How can we fix this?
- ☐ **Follow up shortly.** Immediate attention with "thanks for your time, input, and insight", plus reiterating the solution can help create lasting resolution.
- ☐ **Document and distribute.** Don't keep this new knowledge to yourself. Share this "case study" with your team and suggest ways to learn from it to make your organization better.

Sincerely,



Blake Conover, President

* Bain and Company