

Rethinking complaints

1. Keeping the customer satisfied

Customer satisfaction in UK business is rising. The 2021 survey by Institute of Customer Service reported a score of 60.2 out of 100 for complaints handling, up from 58.8 in 2020 – and the highest score for more than ten years. But complaints are also rising with 14.9% of customers reporting a problem with a provider, up from 13.6% pre-pandemic.

Service and complaint handling needs to keep on improving if it is to meet consumer expectations.

14.9%

of customers reporting a problem with a provider

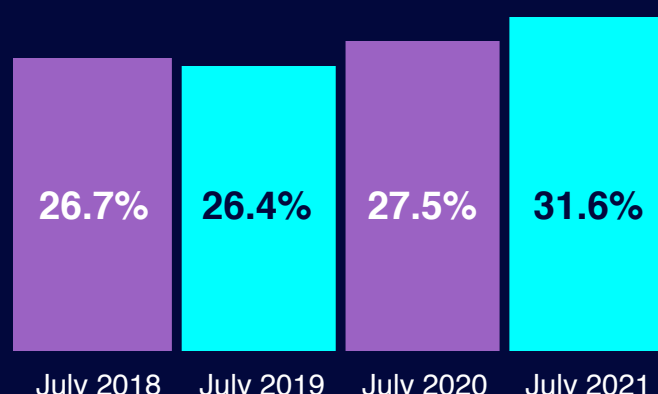
2. Adding value with complaint handling

Complaint handling is the biggest single factor in consumer satisfaction. Companies that handle complaints effectively get the biggest boost to satisfaction. Those that get it wrong suffer the most.

Service commands a premium. One in three consumers report they are willing to pay more for excellent service, up from one in four in 2018.

Complaint handling is not an add-on. High quality complaints handling adds value to your business.

Preference for excellent service, even if it costs more



3.

The Human Touch

Consumers are increasingly using online channels, but most still want to combine this with human interaction.

They want three things to improve:

14.4%

To speak to the right person

13.2%

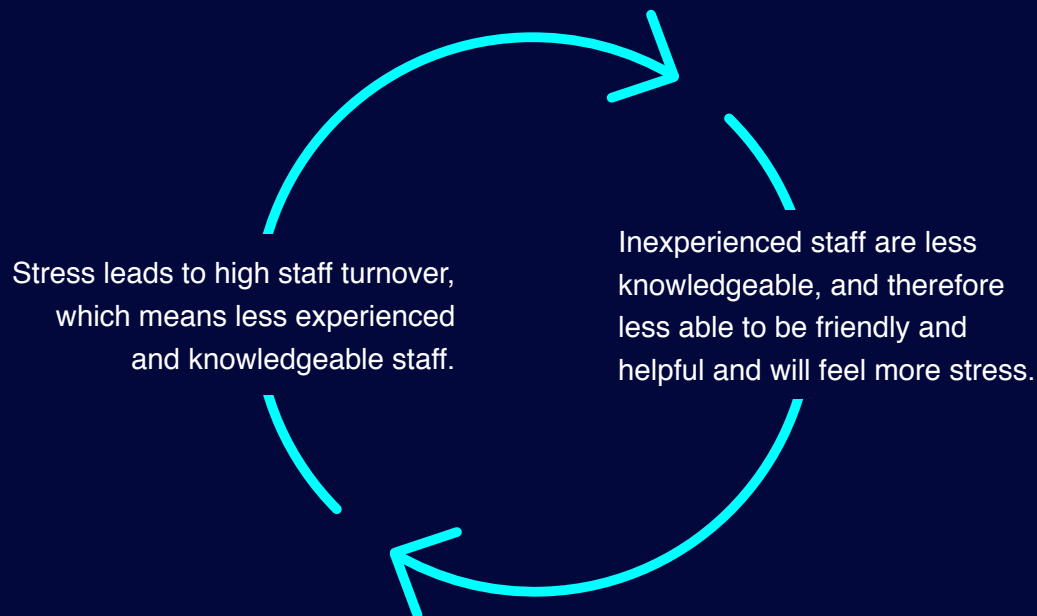
To speak to helpful and friendly staff

11.9%

To speak to knowledgeable staff

4. Getting it wrong – a vicious circle

Weak complaints handling damages satisfaction and retention – not just for customers. Stress and mental health are a widespread problem in complaint handling. Dissatisfied and stressed staff leads to high employee churn. Call centre staff turnover is around 26% compared to just 15% across all types of employment. Staff turnover costs between £6,000 and £9,000 per employee.



5. Getting it right

The Institute of Customers Service's top three recommendations to business are:

One

In the context of Covid-19, organisational purpose is even more critical to success.

Two

Combining the best of digital and human interactions to design experiences around customer needs.

Three

Developing a blend of digital, interpersonal, and customer experience skills.

Technology can never replace the human touch, but it can help improve human interactions by providing complaints handlers with the tools to do their jobs most effectively and giving complaints executives the tools to study and analyse those interactions for improved results.

The result is happy, confident teams who are loyal to the team and happy, confident customers, who are loyal to your company.