

Complaint Complacency

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How many upset or dissatisfied guests do you recover each season? Do you have a system that can track guest recovery and retention? Do you feel like you do a good job retaining/recovering dissatisfied guests? Do you value their feedback enough to ask for it and then do you use it to help you improve their experience and your business?

Most parks, of all sizes and types, feel that they do a good job of handling dissatisfied guests. Most parks have a guest services booth that is located on the premises to address problems. They staff the booth with employees who are trained to handle face to face interactions with upset guests. Some parks utilize on site or on line surveys to tap into guest satisfaction. While all of these methods are somewhat effective in taking care of the guest that is onsite, what about the upset guest that has left the property and may not come back?

A TARP research study found that:

- 1 in 27 guests will voice their complaints on site. The other 26 just go home dissatisfied.
- Most Guests will shy away from confrontation with a manager or supervisor.
- On average it costs 5 times more to attract a new guest than to retain a current guest.
- 90% of dissatisfied guests can be recovered if their concern is handled immediately and with genuine concern.



So how do you recover guests effectively? A successful system or solution can be broken down in three ways:

1. Customer feedback contact streams.
2. Technology.
3. People.

Customer feedback contact streams can include guest calls, comment cards, letters, email, web entry, surveys, and in some cases, mystery shop. These streams of data are vital in being able to recover guests. This data, when collected and compared, can show a park where obvious and not so obvious problems lie. When this data is categorized correctly, park management can see specifically what guest issues are most glaring.

Live answer calls, email and web entry are the most valuable guest feedback, because they come “from the heart.” When a guest calls in to a live person, they are essentially trying to help. The majority of customers who take the time to call are actually your most loyal guests, the ones you don’t want to lose. Once they make the call into a live customer service professional, they can be diffused, listened

to and recovered. Their specific comments need to be documented, categorized and reported. Email and web entry are also opportunities for the customers to give feedback. Cards and surveys, while valuable, are generally designed to garner specific responses from guests about their overall experience. Being able to analyze all streams of customer feedback to get a global view of your guests experience will better prepare you to anticipate where the guest experience falls short and how you can fix those areas to recover guests.

Having the right technology to collect the data and to then distribute the data to management is the key to guest recovery. The right guest recovery system will notify management of a problem within seconds after the complaint has been reported. Real time data allows managers to immediately follow up with guests on site, by phone

or email to bring quick and successful resolution and recovery to every incident. The technology should be flexible to grow with the park, robust enough to handle many different guest scenarios, and user friendly to allow guest relations representatives quick, efficient, and accurate input of information. From the data that is input, the system should be able to generate customized reports that show management top issues to be addressed, trending information to determine if

those issues are being addressed, and finally, recovery reports to see just how many guests are being recovered from the improvements that are being made in guest satisfaction.

Last and most obvious is people. Recovering guests is all about how your people address the guest. A quick response with genuine concern and a satisfactory remedy will ultimately be the biggest factor in recovering guests. Training your employees to handle guests with empathy and genuine concern will many times prevent a situation from escalating. Of course, treating your guests the way you want to be treated should always be the rule.

Today’s discretionary dollars only go so far and if your facility is in or around a large metro area, chances are there are plenty of other seasonal activities and events that you are competing with. More often than not, the value of the dollar will be based on the value of the experience, especially when that experience falls short of expectations.

Implementing a proper customer feedback data collection and reporting solution via live answer customer hotlines can recover up to 92% of dissatisfied guests, and save revenue. Look beyond using only surveys and comment cards to recover guests. Interact with your guests and show them that you care about what they have to say.

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