

# What Do You Say?

## When Your Guest is Dissatisfied

Whose fault is it, anyway? When a customer comes to us with a complaint or a problem, we naturally want to figure out the whole mystery. Whose fault is it? (OK, to be honest, what we really want to know is that **we** weren't the one to mess up.) Once and for all, here is the only answer you need to know for any such mystery.

## IT DOESN'T MATTER!

It doesn't matter who did what or whether your customer is really right or wrong. Your customer is disappointed. Your guest has a problem and is waiting for you to help. And you have one shot to make things right. So don't waste your time and energy trying to pin blame. Put your energy into finding a solution that is going to make this guest want to come back.

"Easy for you to write," you might be thinking. So what words do you say to an irritated guest standing in front of you giving you that "Don't you mess with me" look across the counter? Here are some ideas that just may help you calm your crabbiest guests and assure them that you want to make things right with them before they walk out the door.

***"It didn't mention onions on the menu and I'm allergic to onions."***

***"I'm really sorry about the inconvenience. Would you like me to ask the chef to prepare this same entree without onions, or would you like to take a look at the menu to choose something else?"***

***“This color is awful. I want to return it.”***

*“I’m sorry that you were unhappy with it. Let me help you find the right shade and we can do an even exchange.”*

***“I have been on hold for half an hour.”***

*“I’m so sorry. What can I do to help you?”*

***“What do you mean, that’s all you have? I called last week! You even gave me a confirmation number.”***

Confirmation numbers, reservations, appointment reminder cards, delivery notifications...they all add up to an added sense of security for your guest that things **will** go smoothly. A promise, if you will. So when things go wrong and a problem surfaces, try to acknowledge how your guest may be feeling, then work to make things better. Talk to your manager if you need to.

Say something like,

*“I’m so sorry this has happened. I’m sure you expected everything to go smoothly and it hasn’t. Give me a minute to try to figure out what we can do for you.”*

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