

## Customer ?disservice? quickly getting old

by MARK PAVILONS

In commerce, it was once believed that the ?customer was always right.?

To an extent, that holds true today. Of course, customers are not always right, but to ensure good relations, customers are given the benefit of the doubt. They are treated well, to ensure a return visit.

In most cases at retail and fast food outlets, customer complaints are quickly dealt with. I?have witnessed many over the years, but few have ever escalated to full-scale shouting matches.

That's something we all want to avoid.

Face-to-face dealings aside, our world is quickly becoming an AI?wonderland, filled with land mines, glitches and well, idiot bots. We have plenty of that in the human world, why the heck did it spread to the AI community?

Maybe it's their way of getting back at us, by frustrating us to the point of sending us over the edge, into the abyss.

These days, when calling most companies, an automated message will ask a series of questions ?to best address your concerns.? The menu is limited but does cover most issues.

And then we humans are encouraged to take advantage of the automated bot, who can answer most questions quickly and efficiently. Really?

I want to speak to a person, not deal with some software who has never watched Kitchen Nightmares. I?want someone who may have an inkling of knowledge of the product and problem at hand.

One would think that when you call a specific company, say a specific brand of TV, that their reps should know the TVs and functions like the back of their hands. All it takes is maybe an hour of training with an actual TV set and remote in hand in a classroom.

But alas, I?feel most are reading some sort of booklet or script, or typing in the customer's concern, hoping for the correct answer. That's not really service, it's asking a computer for help ? the same aforementioned bots.

I could have done that already, with limited results. And putting me on hold, while you search the database given to you by the company, won't necessarily solve the problem.

I?recently turned on a descriptive audio function on my LG?TV, and couldn't turn it off. Several YouTube videos later, and calls to LG?customer service offered nothing, nada, nichts. I?must have hit a button on the remote, or something. Funny that it's so easy to turn on an unwanted function that turn it off!

I?guess the same holds true with people.

Problem was very frustrating and finally my service provider solved the issue. Go figure.

One would think that armed with a remote that can do almost anything, you can simply command your smart TV to do something. That would be great, right? And yes, I?admit to telling the remote exactly what I thought about it!

I also tried finding my subscriptions to paid streaming channels, but got lost in the on-screen rabbit hole. Maybe it's a ploy to subscribe to our service and we won't let you cancel anytime!

I'm a regular online and over-the-phone customer of Rogers, given their service. Back and forth to various reps. Apparently my phone number, which I have used for more than 10 years, isn't recognized by the automated greeter. And neither is the account number.

Just keep pressing buttons until you get access to a real person. One neat feature, actually, is asking for a call back. They really do, and it's a human being!

Okay, I understand that technology is a tricky thing. But with certain things like TVs, cell phones and the like someone should be versed in troubleshooting. And that means the people have to be trained, and fully understand the product they're talking about.

I know a lot of people who know their iPhone inside and out and can guide me better than some Geniuses.

And I get tired of the constant question, "Well did you try turning it on and off?"

Oh, so that's the universal solution to all troubles, in the world, is it? Just turning the thing off.

Why didn't I think of that? I don't need a manual or technician, just access to an outlet on the wall.

My daughter has had trouble with Etsy for a while, trying to access her account. Etsy basically put it on hold and in order to gain access, we had to give them personal banking information, etc. They said the info didn't match their records. But most online accounts offer a simple and easy way to reset your password, to get back in. Not so with Etsy. And the nightmare continues.

When my daughter and I were out recently, we noticed a funny sign on the seat of a chair. "Keep Chair Here" it read. Okay, but if you move the chair to another spot, does that then become "Here"? Isn't "Here" wherever the chair happens to be? What happens if I do move it "There"? This silly scenario kind of sums up the dealings with customer service types.

One person actually referred to me as "The Customer" even though they had my name. Again, reading from a prepared script? New to the job? Just my luck.

Another tried to convince me they solved my issue, by sending me some video, again from YouTube.

Okay, I'm not the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree, but when I have an issue, I first turn to Google to find a DIY fix or at least an explanation. If that's all customer service centres offer, we're in big trouble.

We are online junkies and since that's the case we need our daily fix. But we also need intervention.

Food for thought.