

RV EXECUTIVE TODAY

JANUARY 2021

Online Training & Resources

*for Front of the House
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**GO WHERE
THE ROAD
TAKES YOU.
AND THEN
SOME.**



**GET OFF
THE COUCH
AND INTO THE
DRIVER'S
SEAT.**



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How to Handle A Customer with Buyer's Remorse: *Part One*

By Tom Kline

"The only difference between an ordeal and an adventure is your attitude," according to a recent, popular internet meme I encountered. I agree.

The RV industry is flooded with first-time buyers. Year-over-year sales have skyrocketed, and dealers are holding the line on profitability on each unit. The conventional wisdom for sellers has been: if one customer doesn't buy the unit at a certain price, then there is another one who will. However, every coin has two sides. Let's explore what happens when the shiny, new RV customer comes back and complains. If the customers are bold, then they may tell you they want to "return" the unit.

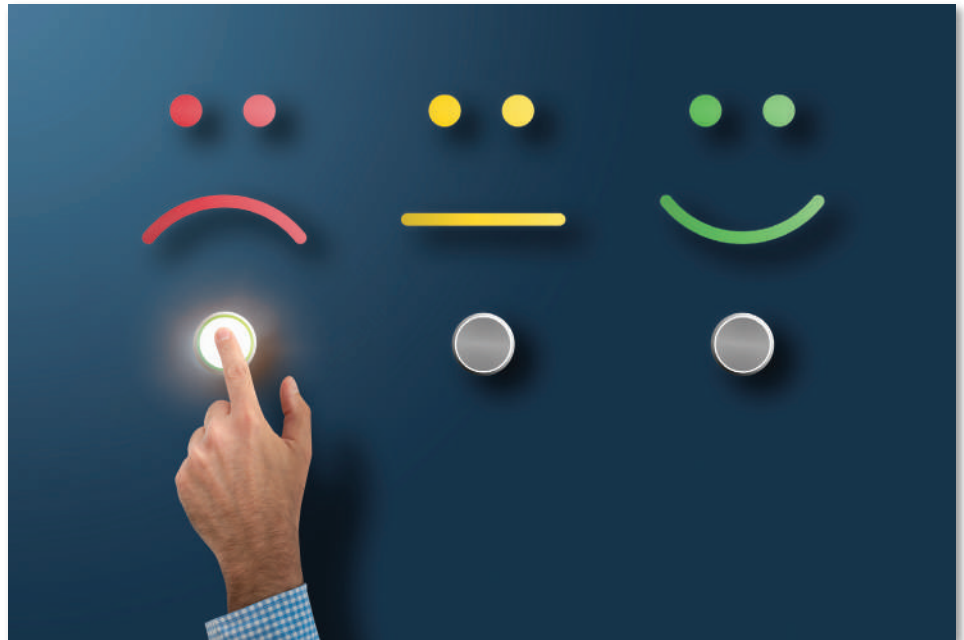
The customer with buyer's remorse may not complain to you at all, you may instead hear it from a lawyer or regulator (Motor Vehicle Dealer Board, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, state Attorney General's Office, state Consumer Affairs Division, Better Business Bureau, etc.).

Alternatively, there are some customers who will find something wrong with the unit and use that as a wedge to try and leverage you into some bigger action. This type of customer won't come right out and tell you they want out of the unit, but rather will start a campaign and send you emails and letters and phone calls demanding you fix the problem. This campaign may start with an Internet posting complaining about the dealership. Ultimately, the customer will get frustrated and finally ask you to buy back the unit. **This is where opportunity begins.**

Consider having a "buy back" team at the store. This team should include hand-picked veterans who understand how to handle a customer.

Treat the customer using the Golden Rule, "do unto others as you would have done unto you." Always proceed as you would want to be treated in the same situation.

Over my 30 years, I have crafted a three-step model to manage these situations. I will detail the first step here as well as what not to do. My next article will address Steps 2 and 3.



Schedule a meeting and make it formal. Do not have these conversations on the telephone. The customer should have to invest in this mutually shared experience, which will require effort on the part of the customer. Invite the customer to come see you at the dealership.

The First Meeting:

- **Listen** to the customer's story first.
- **Take notes**, writing down everything the customer tells you. Sometimes, this can take more than an hour - invest the time. At the end, show the customer your pages and pages of notes. Then tell the buyer you are going to read them back and you want them to let you know if you missed anything. Then, read the notes and paraphrase what you have been told. The net result is the customer will feel heard, which is part of the "disarming process." These steps are meant to show you were listening and the customer was heard. Do not skip any of this.
- While you are taking notes, **nod** and say things such as, "I understand."
- **Label the customer's feelings.** If they have a terrible tale of woe, use phrases like:
 - "That must have been frustrating."*
 - "That must have been hard."*
 - "That sounds really aggravating."*
 - "I wouldn't want to go through that either."*
- **Do not feel the need to create a solution** during the first meeting. In fact, even though you can often solve the problem by snapping your fingers, if you choose this shortcut, the customer will often decline the solution. This is because they are not yet emotionally invested in the process.
- At the first meeting, **set a time** for the second meeting and let the customer know that you are going to do some homework in between meetings. Setting multiple meetings and being prepared shows you care, and you want to help.
- **Set expectations** before the end of the first meeting and let the customer know that you may not have any solutions by the end of the second meeting. Reassure the customer that they are valuable and important to you and that you are going to work on their issues.
- **Do not be defensive.** This will have a negative effect and the customer will feel you are trying to defend the dealership.

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"Try practicing these items with team members. It may be hard to eliminate bad habits."

- **Be truthful.** Half-truths will get you nowhere. When you add half-truths and are evasive to this situation, you are going to get yourself and the dealership into trouble. Quickly correct any errors, or omissions, that another employee may have said, or a false perception that a customer has. If you set the customer straight and tell them the real deal, they (almost always) can deal with the circumstances.
- **Be realistic.**
- **Assure the customer** that you are going to work toward a satisfactory resolution.
- **Be true to your word.**
- **Do not over-promise.**
- **Emphasize that you want the customer comfortable and happy.**
- **Follow-up properly and call back** when you said you would - this builds trust.

Further first meeting tips:

How to Listen:

- **Be quiet** and let them talk.
- **Try to find common interests.** Use the same bonding methods you use when selling.
- **Be relaxed.**
- **Nod**, as appropriate.
- **Body language** - don't cross your arms or your legs. Be open with your body language.
- The customer is going to tell you how to run your business. Do not take the bait here. **Be patient and stay calm** as, "everyone else is an expert."
- **Tell the customer that their problem is "Important."**
- **Repeat: "I want to help you," multiple times.**

Try practicing these items with team members. It may be hard to eliminate bad habits.

Here's How to Irritate a Customer - Guaranteed

- Not listening.
- Failure to set expectations.
- Bragging about your lifestyle, how much money you have, your personal experiences.
- Be inefficient.
- Be insensitive.
- Break promises.
- Pretend it's not your fault.
- Ignore the customer's issues.
- Use the words, "I'm sorry you feel that way."

In Part 2, I will show you how to conclude the complaint.

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