**The Customer is Always Right**

**Especially During the Holidays**

**By Valerie Ziebron**

Wait a minute. Who said that? How can that possibly be true? The truth is, the customer is not always right, but it is absolutely our job to make him or her feel like they are. Failure to do so always results in the loss of a customer, sale and income.

     While most people are kind, generous, and gracious, we all also run into the occasional obnoxious, arrogant, and rude person from time to time. There are also people who have a sense of entitlement, those who feel the world "owes" them. We've all encountered these kinds of people, and during the holiday season, when stress tends to run a little higher, these encounters can happen more frequently.

**So how do you deal with difficult customers, earn their trust and turn them into loyal patrons of your dealership?**

One way is to agree with them, that is, make them right. This doesn't mean they are right, and it doesn't mean you are wrong, although they may be right, and you may be right, or both of you could be wrong. It doesn't matter. They key is to avoid the polarity that can occur when one person feels the need to strongly defend his or her position.

    If someone were to say to you, "You're wrong," and you are like most people, you would probably feel the need to dig your heels in and defend that you are right. Well guess what? The other person is exactly the same way. This kind of situation doesn't lead to a resolution; it leads to frustration, communication breakdown, and ultimately the loss of a sale.

   Remember, you are aiming for the peace, the relationship, the customer for life. You have a choice here. You can be right or have the relationship; you can be right, or make the sale; you can be right, or have the loyal customer. The choice is yours and most of the time, being right isn't really what you're after.

**How do you let someone know they are right?  Tell them.**

    For example, "Mr. Customer, you are right. I absolutely understand your point." When you communicate to a difficult customer that you understand their side, it doesn't have to mean that you agree with them. But it does let them know that you are listening and comprehending their side. This simple statement alleviates the tension while eliminating the need to tell the customer he or she is in the wrong. You simply acknowledged them.

   Here's another approach. "Mr. Customer, I understand how you see that. Would it be OK to take a look at some other things?" Or, "May I show you some other things you may not have seen before?" Or, "Would you be open to taking a look at a different perspective?"

   Rarely will you encounter a customer who is not open to different options. In those instances, the following approach can be effective. "Mr. Customer, I see exactly why you like that boat and motor package. It looks like you made those decisions based on the information you had at the time."

   Once again, you must make it a point to acknowledge their side. Once you have done that, you ask them for permission to show them something new. "Would it be okay if I show you some new information that just may allow you to see something differently?"

   Again, most reasonable people are going to respond to this approach in a positive manner.