



Timely Information for Personal Success

Signs it's Time to Say 'Goodbye' to a Customer

By Kate Zabriskie

Goodbye customer! It's nothing personal (at least not usually). Sometimes customers' expectations can't be met, other times customers require an inordinate amount of time, and on rare occasions, a customer's behavior may expose an organization to undue peril. When any of those situations occur, it's best to say "goodbye" and to do so quickly in a way that creates the least amount of resentment on both sides.

❖ **They cause 80% of your problems and don't contribute even close to 80% of your revenue.**

From time to time, any customer could require more energy than others. Those high-demand situations are normal. What isn't normal, however, is the perpetual squeaky wheel that routinely disrupts normal business operations.

Customers who buy very little and cost a lot of time, personnel, or mental energy to service may not be the customers you want to keep—especially if serving them prevents you from taking care of customers or clients who *are* more profitable and easier to help.

❖ **They are abusive to employees.** When management allows customers to abuse employees, it's the same as perpetrating the abuse directly. Do customers swear, yell, demean, or harass your employees? If so, it's time to draw a

line in the sand and let them know what behavior is and isn't acceptable.

If the bad behavior continues, the relationship should stop. *"But she's our best customer. She has a lot of sway."* Maybe so. She's also the poison that potentially exposes the organization to a lawsuit, erodes morale, and negatively affects the culture.

❖ **Their behavior is out of touch with your ethics policies and practices.** You are the company you keep. If you are enabling customers to act in a way that is in disagreement with your organization's

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CLIP-N-SAVE!

Source: Delish

Healthy Recipe: Spinach-Centil Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 carrots, peeled, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 14-ounce can, diced tomatoes
- 10 oz. lentils
- 2 tsp. thyme
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups baby spinach

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

N/A

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat olive oil. Add carrots, celery, and onion and cook until beginning to soften, 5 minutes. Add garlic, cumin, red pepper flakes, and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly, then season with salt and pepper.
- ➋ Add tomatoes, lentils, thyme, and vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover partially, and simmer until lentils are tender and soup has thickened, 20 minutes. (If most of liquid has been absorbed, add in ½ to 1 cup more water.)
- ➌ Stir in spinach and continue cooking until wilted, 2 minutes, then season with salt and pepper.

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Questions and Answers

Office 'Pools' Have Their Place

Q: *What do you think about office "pools"? I'm referring to getting some pre-assigned numbers for the big football game on Sunday. Everyone playing receives them. If your numbers come up – let's say 7 and 3 – which makes 10, and your team wins the game 10-3, you win the pot. I don't like them and think they're a waste of time. What do you think?*

A: Whether you personally like or approve of office gambling is your concern, and it's your business if you want to participate. Or at least it "should be" your concern and yours alone. Does a co-worker still bug you about your lack of willingness to "ante up"? If so, you have a right to complain.

You certainly make a point about the potential waste of time. Just how much time do office pools take up in your office? If it's just a friendly little wager that takes, say, 15 minutes out of your day on a Friday, a day many people aren't as productive anyway, most likely no harm done. For sports enthusiasts, office pools can be a fun distraction from usual routines.

Now, if a colleague is coming around 2-3 times a week to gamble about the newest game, then I'd say your office has a problem. But most likely not otherwise. ■

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values, it may be time to say goodbye. When someone or an organization exposes you to unneeded risk, it's prudent to disassociate yourself and your organization from them pronto.

❖ **They expose you to unneeded financial risk.** If you spend more time chasing payments than performing work, it's time to consider a new payment plan at a minimum or a permanent breakup if that step doesn't solve the problem.

Just as it doesn't make sense to stay involved with someone who exposes you to ethical and legal risks, an organization that puts your pocketbook on the line is probably best avoided.

❖ **You're no longer a good fit.** Sometimes people and organizations grow apart. Nobody has done anything wrong; the two parties are just in different places and it's time to say goodbye.

Summary

No matter the reason, prolonging a relationship that isn't working does no one any favors. It's usually not fun to say "goodbye," but once you do, you'll have more time to say "hello" to customers who should conduct business with you. ■

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