

Video Contest Rewards Funny Tales Of Customer Service

(NAPSA)—Whether you think the customer is always right or that vendors can't always be wrong, a new contest gives you a chance to cash in on a frustrating, funny or bizarre customer service story.

The event, real or fictitious, could have been caused by miscommunication, poor technology or virtually anything else. To enter, you simply create a video showcasing your "I can't believe this is happening" moment and submit it for a chance to win \$5,000.

Video entries, up to four minutes in length, can be based on real or fictitious scenarios that showcase a humorous and entertaining interaction between a caller and a customer service representative/call center agent, telemarketer or automated voice system. Whether they deal with rude agents, over-the-top customer requests or poorly implemented communications technology, all submissions are welcome, from customers and customer service reps alike.

The contest, called "Outrageous Interactions," is sponsored by Interactive Intelligence, a top 10 ranked provider of call center software designed to improve customer service. In addition to the \$5,000 grand prize, the company is also offering monthly prizes, such as merchandise and tech gadgets, to those submitting videos throughout the contest.

"Everyone, without exception, has had a wacky, weird, or frustrating experience with a call center agent or poorly implemented call center system," said Interactive Intelligence senior vice president of worldwide marketing, Joe Staples. "So everyone can relate to this contest. Through these video submissions, we look forward to a dynamic and entertaining exchange, highlighting the most outrageous facets of both sides of the customer service experience."



A new video contest could help you make your last customer service experience pay off.

For rules and sample video submissions, visit the Web site www.oivideocontest.com. The site also has information on a possible bonus prize for early-bird submissions.

Entrants will be asked to submit their videos via a free YouTube upload service. Videos will be screened by the company and then reposted on its contest site for public viewing.

Near the end of the contest, all qualifying video submissions will be judged by a panel of industry experts to produce a short list of finalists. The short list will be voted on "people's choice" style, with the winner selected by popular vote.

Don't think you're the video-producer type? You can still visit the Web site, www.oivideocontest.com, to be entertained by the videos as they are posted.

In the meantime, here are a few tips for getting the most out of your next customer service experience:

Zero Is Your Best Friend

Automated menus can be confusing and a challenge to get the information you need. Very often pressing zero will enable you to get directly to a live agent and on your way to faster resolution.

Make Reasonable Requests

Demanding the whole farm the minute an agent takes your call will get you nowhere quickly. "I demand you charter a plane and

fly me to my destination" simply isn't going to happen, and you're going to be left with nothing. Instead, ask for something that is attainable. By stepping through your request one item at a time, the agent can deal with your issue in a more effective manner.

Don't Accept "No"

"No" doesn't resolve issues, but sometimes a call center agent isn't authorized to say anything other than that. When "no" is unacceptable, negotiate with the agent; have him or her tell you what the next actionable step should be toward a resolution. If the agent still can't help you, ask to speak to a supervisor. Keep respectfully escalating until you reach someone with the authority to help you. You'll be surprised how far you get.

Know What Your Recourse Is

Many organizations are regulated or influenced by other agencies, oversight groups, or boards that track industry complaints. If you feel that you've escalated your reasonable request but no satisfactory resolution has been reached, let the call center manager know that you plan to write a letter of complaint to the appropriate regulatory agency (you'll need to be specific). You'll often find the call center more amenable to correcting the problem.

Reward Good Service

If you get good service and appreciate it, say so...to the agent and, if possible, to the person's supervisor. Or take it a step further and put your sentiments in an e-mail or letter. Agents and supervisors in a call center view positive feedback from a customer when they've done a good job as key to their continued success.

For more information about the contest, visit the Web site www.oivideocontest.com or e-mail interactionvideo@inin.com.