

# A Secure Word



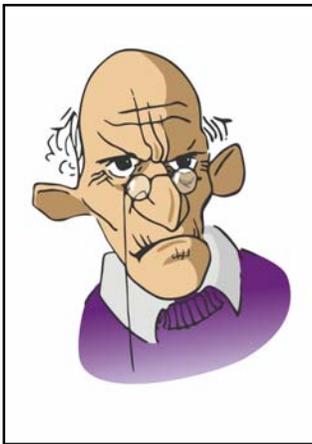
by Alarm Monitoring Services, Inc.

Issue #4

CUSTOMER SERVICE

## Are You a Grumpy Old Man?

by Dera DeRoche, CFO



Don't you love the movies, *Grumpy Old Men* and *Grumpier Old Men*? These movies are wonderful. We can all appreciate them because we all know a grumpy old man or someone very similar. We all laugh at the fact that the grumpy old man will say what he wants to say, when he wants to say it. And well, sometimes it comes out loud enough that everyone can hear him, whether they should or not.

When I was younger, I couldn't understand my Grandfather's grumpy old man state of mind. You know what I mean...being impatient while standing in a line, being cranky while having to wait for an agent on the phone and grumbling under his breath at the cost of coffee. Don't get me wrong, he was a wonderful Grandfather. He loved his grandchildren and was always willing to stop and talk about his time that he served as a Marine in Okinawa. There was always a hot meal for us and a terrific pecan pie when we went to visit. He made the best pies!

The older I get, the more I am aware that I'm becoming my Grandfather, a grumpy old man!

I am totally impatient with waiting in a line when there are employees behind the counter who are ignoring me, the customer. You know the ones I'm talking about. They are the ones who are having a conversation amongst themselves, or on the phone with another customer, or acting like they are busy, when they are not. My personal favorite is waiting in line while they are sending text messages and ignoring us, the customers in line. Whether at a fast food restaurant chain, at the post office or at a doctor's office, these employees should be taught good customer service skills. The customer, who drove to the door, walked into the office, and is standing at the counter is important and should be handled first. I have a novel idea, what about having two teams of employees helping customers. Team One would help the customers who brave the weather and show up at the door, then Team Two could handle those who just couldn't come to the office and decided to call. I believe good customer services skills can be taught.

I am really impatient with the person who answers the phone – again you know the one I'm talking about – the one whom by the tone of her voice, clearly states, "I don't like my job." She can't answer your question and has an attitude like you are interrupting her day.

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## Are You a Grumpy Old Man?

Big companies have a script for employees to read. This script doesn't help to resolve my issue and the employee with an attitude doesn't help the situation. The miserable nasty attitude of this customer service agent just makes me cranky.

I am also beginning to grumble about the cost of everything. Years ago I laughed when my Grandfather would say, "Coffee cost a nickel when I was younger. One dollar for a cup of coffee is too much money!" I understand this conversation much better now. My son laughs when I tell him water was free when I was younger. We drank it from the garden hose outside. And soft drinks were 50 cents a few years ago. I recently went to a convention; the cost of a Coke from the vending machine was \$3.50. That's way too much money!

The older I get, the more I understand my Grandfather's grumpy old man mentality. He wasn't really grumpy, he was just tired of poor customer service and he called it out as he saw it. Waiting in line for 20 minutes when there are just two people ahead of you at the post office is unacceptable. Walking up to the counter at a fast food restaurant and having the person behind the counter look at you without saying a word and then help the kid who walks up behind you, is unacceptable. Waiting 47 minutes (listening to "we appreciate your business, all of our agents are busy please hold") then getting an agent with a miserable attitude is unacceptable. Calling for assistance because the website is not working only to be put on hold while listening to "your call is very important to us, (obviously not) all of our agents are helping others, for faster service, please check out our website [www.xxxx.com](http://www.xxxx.com)" is unacceptable. Paying \$3.50 for a drink from a vending machine at a convention center because there is no other place to purchase a drink within a mile, is unacceptable.

We grumpy old men expect great customer service because for years, that's what we gave to our customers. We are paying for a product or service with our hard earned money and we want it timely and without a nasty attitude. And most importantly, we want it at a fair price.

The more I think about it, I'm proud to be a Grumpy Old Man!

So if you don't understand or can't appreciate this article, talk to your Grandfather.



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