

# **Bad Customers**

(A guide to customer etiquette)

Written by a retail worker



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## Introduction

As you may have figured out, this book is about “sucky” customers. Don’t know what qualifies as a sucky customer? Read on. If you’re offended, well that means you yourself are a sucky customer and I probably don’t care if you’re offended. If you’re not offended and find yourself laughing, kudos to you!

The problem today is, too many people are spoiled and have no respect for the workers of any establishment. Too many people go by the lie “the customer is always right” and think they can get away with anything because they truly believe the world “owes them something.”

To these people, I’d like to hand out a big dose of reality.

No, the customer is not always right; if the customer were always right, everything would be free, and no business would *stay* in business.

The world does not owe you anything.

You are no more privileged than I.

You need retail workers just as much as *they* need you. Of course it's true that a company needs its customers to stay in business. But unless you can grow all your own food, make all your own clothes, fart out your own transportation (and provide whatever source of energy it needs), and are entirely self-providing where you don't need to shop anywhere, you need us as well.

### **What makes me qualified to write such a book?**

I used to work part time at a very popular dollar store where we used to get all kinds of sucky customers.

Whenever I had a bad day, I would make notes of the irritating things people did. I also knew of a website where workers could go to vent about their bad customer experiences. I compared my notes to their complaints and used the most common complaints to fill the pages in the book; I didn't want to just gripe about everything that bothered *me* because I knew my personal dislike for the general population would interfere with the quality of the book. If I compared my complaints with other people, and used the ones that *most* retail workers have about

customers, then I would know it's not just me being bitchy, and I could tell people that, should they ever ask.

If you want to know more about what irritates me specifically that may not be in this book, please visit my website:

<http://badcustomersbook.webs.com/>

## **Have Fun**

As serious as the irritation is that comes from sucky customers, and even though this book's main purpose is to educate, it's also to entertain. So please, *have fun*.

If you stumble across a word that is in **bold** type and you don't know its definition, please consult the "dictionary" in the back of the book.

And remember, the next time I tell you "it's against company policy" get over it and move on; you "ain't" special.





Cut out the following sign and post it in your store...!

dare ya.

# **Epic Rules of Our Store**

**Violators will be bitch-slapped & thrown out**

- 1. The customer is *not* always right.**
- 2. Keep your off-key "singing" to yourself  
(this ain't American Idol)**
- 3. Control your demon spawn.**
- 4. We are *not* a bank.**
- 5. Do not yell at us to get our attention  
("Excuse me, Mr./Ms." works just swell)**
- 6. Closing time means *closing time*.**
- 7. Don't put your crap on the counter  
unless you're ready to check out.**
- 8. Say "please" and "thank you."**
- 9. We are not a dating service, please  
leave the cashiers alone (you're scaring them)**
- 10. Wait your turn; you are not more  
"speshul" than the others.**



Let's start with the most common bad customer: the rude one. People these days are bred with an attitude. Whenever something doesn't go their way, the first thing they do is get an attitude. The following are examples of rude behavior:

## **Rude**

The most common of "sucky" customers

First and foremost, all shoppers must remember this: We work here; you don't. We know the "rules" better than anyone. If an employee tells you something cannot be done, or the store does not carry a certain product you're looking for, take her word for it unless she gives you a reason to be suspicious.

If she seems new and you're a bit skeptical as to whether or not she knows what she's talking about, then by all means, ask someone else. But if that second person tells you the same thing, accept it and move on.

Don't get mad.

Don't get bossy.

Don't throw out the "So and So let me do it last week" card. If "So and So" did indeed let you do it last week, he was probably a moron or likes to bend the rules and it will be *his* butt on fire. But do not expect every employee to put their necks on the line and risk losing their job for you. You are not **speshul**. You are not worth losing a job over.

Accept and move on.

*Accept and move on.*

Repeat this, remember it when you're shopping, and you will be well on your way to becoming a decent customer.

### **Bank Cards**

Oh, the bank cards. In my experience, they've caused the most problems in retail. Because bank cards equal money, and when they fail at the register, they bring on embarrassment which very quickly evolves into anger and somehow, the problem is *always* the cashier's fault.

Because you not having any money in your account is definitely not your fault...right.

We used to get someone every day at my store. Sometimes the incidents were mild and only consisted of a sigh and an eyeroll. Other times the customer became enraged and threw a nice little two-year old fit.

To those of you who “throw fits”—yelling, throwing out accusations, telling the cashier she’s “stupid,” or literally throwing something—I would like to take a moment to say:

You’re doing nothing but making yourself look like an ass. People behind you don’t think you’re badass, they don’t think you’re cool, and they certainly aren’t impressed. They’re thinking you’re a douche rocket who needs a swift kick in the arse.

Just remember something about any card (bank cards; food cards; gift cards, etc.): *every store is different*. They have different policies, different machines, and different ways of accepting and handling the card. Never assume the checkout process is the same at store A as it is at store B when you’re using a card.

For example, at the store I used to work at we only accepted Visa and Discover cards as debit and credit. MasterCard we only accepted as a debit—you could *never* use a MasterCard credit card.

Those were the only three cards we accepted, which brought on confusion and a lot of transaction cancels because people didn't know our policies and didn't have any other form of payment on them so they had to leave their crap behind and go somewhere else or hunt down an ATM.

If it's your first time in a store, read every little pop-up instruction on the card machine. Just because that last little window is asking if you want cash back at one store doesn't mean it's the same question at another store.

At my store, the machine would go through the options and then at the end ask for you to approve the amount. So many people just flew right through it because they thought it was asking if they wanted cash back. They would end up hitting "no" and that would cancel the whole payment and we'd have to start over.

And somehow, this is usually "the cashier's fault."

I almost always got an eyeroll when this happened and I would have to tell my customer to slide his or her card again.

Yup, it's *my* fault you don't read.

The following is my most memorable bank card incident. After this incident, I called my boss to let him know what had happened and that I might be getting a customer complaint on me, and I was so fuming when I was talking to him that I was shaking and crying tears of RAGE! *Rage tears!* Those are powerful tears, let me tell ya....

### **Credit or Debit?**

Doesn't matter beyotch; your card won't work.

It was a few weeks before Christmas. Every retail worker hates that time of year anyway because it's always busy and we're always dealing with added stress, pressure from bosses, and angry customers.

This particular night had been going pretty well. Until **She-bitch** arrived, that is.

I was the **MOD** so I was in the back of the store doing something manager-like when my cashier paged me. I got halfway to the register when my cashier met me to let me know that the problem involved a woman and a bank card she was trying to use.

Easy. I could usually figure those out.

I got to the register and politely asked the woman to slide her card through the machine again so I could see what it was saying. She did and my cashier and I got this message on our computer screen:

*Visa tender not allowed.*

I had never seen this message before. Usually if the card could not be used it said *invalid card type*.

“Did you try using it as a debit?” I asked both the woman and my cashier.

“It’s not a debit card,” the woman said in a “duh” voice. I ignored that part.

“Yes,” my cashier replies, “and it said ‘invalid card’ when we did it that way.”

“Hmm,” I said.

I wasn't sure what to do, and considering the fact that computers despised me, I decided to *not* try and guess. I called my boss and asked him if he knew what it meant. He was just as stumped as I was.

In order to get a clue he asked me, "Well, what's she trying to buy?"

I started reading off the computer screen to him, and halfway through I realized what the problem *might* have been.

I saw the woman was purchasing an ATT phone card. Our store had recently come out with a new policy about phone cards: they could *only* be purchased with cash.

I told my boss this and he got the light bulb-over-the head tone of voice and goes, "You're right! That's what it is."

So I hung up with him and told the woman she'd have to pay with cash or take off the phone card because of the store's policy. I very politely informed her of this.

"That's stupid," she said and rolled her eyes and sighed dramatically. "Wal-Mart lets me do it."

I smiled at her, still trying to be polite.

“It is stupid,” I agreed. “But that’s Wal-Mart’s policy, not ours.”

She glared at me a little but said nothing else.

“Do you want to just take the phone card off then?” I asked.

“Yes!” said Mrs. Grumpy Pants.

I took the phone card off the transaction and she slid her card again. We got the same message:

*Visa tender not allowed.*

I shook my head, confused. “It’s still saying it.”

Her eyes started bulging and the bit of pudge on her cheeks started wiggling with how fast and angrily she said the following:

“Well I *know* nothing’s wrong with my card. I just spent 500 dollars at Wal-Mart with it!”

Even though I thought she was being a rotten brat, I was still polite to her. I understood she was frustrated; I would have been too. But I would *not* have taken it out on the employees.

“Maybe that’s what’s wrong with the card,” I offered nicely. “Some banks put a limit on how much you can spend with a card in a day-”

“My bank *doesn’t* limit me,” she interrupted through clenched teeth.

Whoa, easy lady! I was only suggesting the limit because it's a security precaution some banks enforce. They put a daily spending limit on the card in case your card has been jacked by some dishonest bum who's trying to steal your money (how *dare* they try to protect you!). All you gotta do is call the bank and approve the transaction.

How did I know this? I had had this happen with another customer before (a much nicer customer). His card wasn't working so he called his bank right there in front of me. They told him this and he approved the transaction and *voilà!* it worked! No problem. No hassles! Hakuna Matata!

But I couldn't tell this woman this because she kept interrupting me and insisting the problem was on our end, and not a daily spending limit on her part. For some reason, suggesting her bank put a limit on her card was offensive and insulting. Bad lowly retail worker! Bad!

The woman just stood there, looking at me like there was some magic button I could push that would force the computer to accept her card.

"I'm sorry, it's not going to let you use it," I said.

(by the way, it was near closing time and there were only a few people in the store, and only *one* person in line behind her—hardly enough for “embarrassing moment of the century”; this info will come in handy soon)

The woman *whips* out her cell phone and starts talking to someone on the other end.

“It’s not letting me use my f\*\*\*ing card!” she hissed into the phone, slamming her wallet back into her purse. She kept dropping the F bomb on whomever she was talking to.

She left, still hissing into the phone, without another word to me or my cashier. I canceled the whole transaction so my cashier could move onto the next person in line.

I thought it was over.

Ten minutes later I received a phone call. It was a woman and she was using the sweetest, most patronizing voice imaginable.

“I was just in there and tried to buy some things with my card, but it wasn’t letting me use it. What was it saying? Was it saying my card was declined?”

“No ma’am,” I kindly said. “It was saying *Visa tender not allowed.*”

“And what about when it was run as a debit?”

“My cashier said it was saying *invalid card* as a debit.”

“Well, why didn’t you try it as a debit after you took off the phone card?”

*Oh geez, I thought. Here we go.*

First of all, the choice of debit or credit is *up to you*. She knew this as she had tried running her card through several times. So why didn’t *she* try using her card as a debit after the phone card had been taken off if she thought it would make such a difference?

Secondly, this is why, and this is the reason I gave her:

“Because your card is not a debit card.” *You yourself said this*, I thought, but didn’t say.

“Well I just called my bank and they said nothing was wrong with my card. You should have tried it as a debit to see if it would work that way instead of embarrassing me.” She was still using that patronizing voice, like I was a complete moron—or four years old—and she was above me.

My blood was already starting to boil, but I forced myself to remain calm. I took the phone into the office, away from other customers’ ears.

“Ma’am,” I said, a little exasperated but still polite, “I was not trying to embarrass you. I never implied you didn’t have any money in your account. I was only suggesting your bank—for *your* safety—might have put a daily spending limit-”

She cut me off again: “I’ve been with my bank for such-and-such amount of years!-”

I was through being nice to her, so I cut *her* off:

“I can’t read your mind! How am I supposed to know what bank you’re with and what their policies are? I’m telling you this again: I was only *suggesting* the bank may have to approve your transaction after a certain amount-”

“My *bank* does *not* limit me!” She growled in a voice that Satan would be proud of.

She just didn’t seem to get it. And I was pretty steamed, so angry that I was already shaking because the woman wouldn’t even give me the respect of letting me finish a sentence and try to defend my supposed actions of “embarrassing her.”

“Would you let me finish!” I yelled into the phone.

“I don’t have to let you finish because I know what my bank does.”

I sighed. "You're not getting what I'm trying to say here."

"Well neither are you. You should have tried it as a debit."

"It was saying *invalid card*." I said the words slowly, so she might understand me. "Your card is not a debit card, as *you* said before; it would not have worked."

"Did you try it after taking off the phone card?"

**\*Facepalm\***

"No. Because it. said. *invalid. card*. It was not because of the purchase; it's because your card is *not* a debit card."

Are you gettin' it yet, sweetie?

This went on for a few more minutes until the woman demanded I give her the corporate office phone number so she could make a complaint about me because I had "horrible customer service skills."

Just for the record, I had worked at this store for over a year when this happened and never—not once—had a customer complained about me before. In fact, I always got the opposite; people always complimented me on how friendly and helpful I was. My boss told me not to worry about it, and I was never reprimanded.

She-bitch gets the official stamp of:

