

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Product / Service: Lawn Mower

Business: You are a sales person working for the local Dirt Road Feeds & More. Your customer base ranges from the newer, hobby-farmer to the experienced farmer or rancher. Your company sells feed, seed, farm supplies, power equipment.

Situation: Your store sells riding lawn mowers and other lawn care equipment. Modern riding mowers require regular maintenance such as oil changes, blade sharpening, tire pressure inflation, proper fuel, air filter cleaning/replacement, etc. Your store provides a comprehensive maintenance plan for all riding mowers as well as the parts and fluids for customer to purchase to do their own maintenance.

Common problems are that customers do not properly:

- Maintain tire pressure, which would cause uneven cutting
- Use quality, fresh gasoline when first operating their mower in the spring which affects mower performance
- Fail to change the oil in the mower regularly, which affects mower performance
- Fail to sharpen or replace mower blades, which affects evenness of cutting

The customer may approach you with either one or both of the following complaints:

Complaint #1: “My riding mower is only one year old, but this spring it won’t keep running and doesn’t have the power it did last spring.”

Complaint #2: “I get a really uneven cut with the mower when it does finally run well enough to operate.”

Dirt Road Feeds & More Store Policies and other relevant information:

1. If merchandise is deemed defective, the sales person should attempt to replace it. If the problem is due to customer failure, the salesperson should provide suggestions to fix the problems. Your store honors manufacturer’s warranties and provides maintenance and repair in your service department.
2. Customer data is stored in the store system, so sales receipts are not necessary to prove date of purchase.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Lawn Mower

Situation: You purchased a lawn mower last year and used it all last summer and fall. It worked well, but you have not changed the oil, aired up the tires, did not use fresh gasoline, have not sharpened the blade; basically, you have done zero maintenance to the machine and don't know how to do maintenance. You are rather irate that the riding mower you spent over \$5000 on last year is not off and running this spring. It has a hard time starting and runs sluggishly. The mower makes an uneven cut. You are passionate about having an attractive, lawn and have big plans for Easter at your home: your in-laws are coming as well as a big group of siblings and their kids. You need your mower to work and I mean "right NOW".

You as the customer may approach the contestant who is acting as an employee of Dirt Road Feeds & More with one or both of the following complaints:

Complaint #1: "My riding mower is only one year old, but this spring it won't keep running and doesn't have the power it did last spring."

Complaint #2: "I get a really uneven cut with the mower when it does finally run well enough to operate."

The student should ask probing questions to determine the cause of the problem. DO NOT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION, BUT IF ASKED BY THE STUDENT THIS IS WHAT REALLY HAPPENED:

#1. You have done no maintenance and don't know how to.

Conclusion: The contestant should help you discover that you need to take advantage of their annual maintenance program. They should schedule at time for you to bring in your mower; they might even offer to come pick it up.