

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Dealing with customers is a routine activity for the person who works in a marketing department, including customer service staff. Dealing with customers will not be easy if it deals with some difficult customers.

“Difficult customers come in several varieties, including angry, impatient, intimidating, talkative, demanding, and indecisive customers” (Lipow 1).

The most difficult customer to handle is the customers who are angry (Kahle 1). During my internship, I also experienced that the angry customer is more difficult to handle than other customers because they did not want to listen to the explanation and the solution given. This type of customers has to be handled carefully; otherwise, they can be more difficult. There is a possibility that difficult customer can become worse if the staff cannot satisfy them with his / her explanation. The staff should know the way to handle them professionally. The purpose of knowing the way to handle them is to have a good relationship with the customers. By having a good relationship, the customers will trust the company; thus, there will be a continuous increase in demand and profit.

The problem of dealing with difficult customers also happens at P.T. Tunggal Jaya Utama (P.T. TJU), Bandung. P.T. TJU, as a private company based on property and contractor field, always has a direct relationship with the customers in its activity; therefore, the company always needs a good relationship with each customer. The company should try to give all customers want. However, some problems sometimes occur and those make some customers angry, impatient, and difficult to handle. When dealing with this situation, not all staff knows how to handle it. Furthermore, there is a probability that the customers will leave the company.

The situation in which the customer service has to deal with the difficult customers and to keep the good relationship with them becomes an interesting and valuable case to be studied. This study aims at finding the causes, the effects, and the solutions of dealing with the difficult customers at P.T. TJU.

B. Identification of the Problem

1. Why do some customers become difficult or too difficult to handle?
2. What are the best ways to deal with difficult customers professionally?

C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

The objectives:

1. It is to know the reason of customers becoming difficult or more difficult to handle.
2. It is to know the way to handle the difficult customers professionally and the benefit of it for the person who deal with them, and for the company.

The benefits:

1. For P.T. TJU, this study would be useful for the customer service staff to know how to handle difficult customers and to be better in handling customers in the future.
2. For readers, this study provides a real case about the problem of dealing with difficult customers, besides theories to be compared with the case. Thus, the benefit from this study for the readers is they would get more knowledge and experience about the topic.
3. For me, the benefit is gaining more experience and knowledge about the topic both in theories and a practice.

D. Description of the Institution

P.T. Tunggal Jaya Utama (P.T. TJU) is a private wooden house industry company, including general contractor, property, general trading and export – import. P.T. TJU is located at Jalan Ir.H.Juanda No. 250, Bandung-Indonesia. Since founded by Rizky Masyani in 1999, P.T. TJU has grown and made some valuable contributions to the property sector in Indonesia. P.T. TJU's vision is becoming the best wooden house industry

in Indonesia. Its mission is to have a good relationship with the customers, after sales service. Recently, P.T. TJU is expanding the joint venture with some national and international companies.

E. Method of the Study

The data were collected from literatures and observation. The literatures are theories about customers' behavior, to handle customers, especially about difficult customers, which were taken from books, and Internet. The observation was done during my internship at P.T. TJU. The data which were taken from observation are: general data about P.T. TJU, such as company profile, data of activities of customer service in handling the customers and handling the problems, and also documentation which are pictures and journal.

F. Limitation of the Study

The study has some limitations. First, the study was done in P.T. TJU office, in the marketing department, the customer service and follow up subdivisions for two months (December 2008 – February 2009). Second, the ones who were observed were only the customer service and follow up subdivision staff, who often dealt with the customers.

G. Organization of the Term Paper

The main content of this term paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction. This chapter is an introduction and general information about problem of the study, start from the background of the study, identification of the problem, objectives and benefits of the study, description of the institution, method of the study, limitation of the study, and organization of the term paper. The second chapter is the problem analysis. This chapter is an analysis to the problem of the study's causes and effects, based on the related theories. The third chapter is the potential solution. This chapter is an analysis to the potential solutions to the problem of the study, with positive and negative effects of each solution, based on related theories. The last chapter is the conclusion. This chapter is the answer to the problem of study's questions in chapter one, get by combining the analysis problem and solutions. The best solution to the problem of study would be explained in this chapter, with their reasons.