

The 'three Hs' that will always fix a bad customer experience

 By [Julian Diaz](#)

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We all make mistakes. It's what makes us human. It's how we learn. And as businesses, we implement technology and automate processes to try to minimise the likelihood of human error.

However, regardless of the advanced systems we may implement, mistakes and mishaps will happen. It's how we respond as a business in these moments of truth that can turn an unhappy customer into a customer for life.

One such way of responding is something I've coined the 'three Hs', which I learned from a personal experience in the early, 'bleeding edge' days of e-commerce.

Valuable lessons learned from 'Brian' the customer service agent

As an early adopter of e-commerce in the late 1990s, I turned to an online greeting card site to send a birthday card to my Mom in Atlanta. The site allowed users to choose a greeting card, insert their message online and then have the physical card posted to their loved ones via snail mail. A perfect blend of bricks and mortar with digital.

Long story short, my Mom never received the card. **Something went wrong.** So, I went back to the online greeting card site to voice my complaint. What I got in response was an email that restored my confidence in their business and taught me three valuable lessons in customer service which I still use today, 15 years later. The email read as follows:

Dear Julian,

I have looked high and low for your order and it is nowhere to be found. What I am going to do is give you a Gift I.D. number for a FREE card. I know it is no compensation for missing mom's day but maybe you could smooth things over with a funny one on us!

Just go to our home page, enter the "Special Access" area at the bottom of our page and use this number for a free card: [5-zq-rsfvn51-wb]

If you have any further problems with your order, don't hesitate to contact me! And again, I apologise for the loss of your order. I hope that you come back to us...

Sincerely,

Faith restored - thanks to the three Hs

Instead of being upset, I ended up liking these guys more, because I felt like I was dealing with an actual human on the other side of the world who actually cared. I realised how "Brian" customer service agent did this: yes, there was a service issue that made me unhappy initially, but in response they were **Honest**, **Humble** and **Heroic**.

The 3 Hs explained

The use of these three Hs can be applied when responding to a mistake or a shortcoming in service or expectations.

1. Be Honest: Explain what happened, or in the example above, say you're honestly not sure what happened, but sincerely apologise...
2. Be Humble: Apologise, sincerely, and accept responsibility.
3. Be Heroic: Make up for it and "save the day". Find a solution to try and fix the situation. And assure them it won't happen again.

Being human, we will make mistakes and things will go wrong, but that's OK. A bad customer experience can be turned into a good one by showing customers the human side of your business by simply applying the three Hs in your response.

ABOUT JULIAN DIAZ

Julian Diaz is responsible for Marketing & PR at Principa, software, data analytics, and consulting company that helps companies maximise marketing ROI, minimise consumer credit risk and increase operational efficiencies. Originally from the US, Julian moved to SA in 1998 after a 4 year marketing stint at a global software house in Germany. Julian has launched or re-branded various technology brands and developed successful strategies for achieving high levels of mindshare for brands internationally. He is fluent in German & Spanish

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