

## We Don't Want Satisfied Customers

I was once Vice President of Engineering for a manufacturing company that made patch panels for communication networks. It's a simple product, but everything has to work perfectly. The components need to be of the highest quality, the wiring needs to be correct, and the quality control has to be at the highest level.

So, we had shipped a large order of panels to one of our most important customers up in Seattle. About a week later we received a call from the customer. He was pretty irate! The patch panels were failing.

When they pushed a patch chord in, the jack was just falling out the back side. They had spent a lot of time installing these panels and wiring the building, and now the things were falling apart! How could have we shipped a defective product to them! This had to be a QC issue, so my boss wanted me to go up and fix it.

I took our best technician, a bunch of spare parts and a toolbox, and we flew up to Seattle.

On the way up I read an article in the flight magazine about a company who didn't want satisfied customers - they wanted their customers to be pleased.

When we got there we went straight into the IT Manager's office. He was pretty upset and he told us how he used to trust our company, how they had spent a lot of time installing these panels, and how disappointed they were with the product.

It was my turn to speak and I said, "We don't want satisfied customers." He was already really upset, and I could see him start to bristle. Then I said, "No, we don't want satisfied customers. We want our customers to be pleased. And we are here to do whatever it takes to see that, by the time we leave here, you are pleased with our response and you are pleased with

our products." He wasn't happy, but said he would give us a chance to make it right.

It was a quality control problem. The assemblers had no idea that they were installing the brackets backwards so they wouldn't hold the jacks properly.

So, we spent a couple of days fixing and testing the patch panels. We were in close contact with the IT Manager throughout the whole process, and kept him updated all along the way.

Finally it came time for us to meet for the exit interview. I was a little nervous, but I knew we had given it our best shot. He said, "When you guys first showed up here I was pretty upset. In fact I was ready to have you take your patch panels out and refund my money. When you told me you didn't want satisfied customers, I was ready to show you the door! But you said you wanted customers who were pleased, so I figured I would give you chance - and I am pleased. Thank you so much for coming up and fixing the problem."

As time went on, this same customer gave us tons of repeat business.