A customer service representative job not for the faint-hearted

KUALA LUMPUR: "Do you know that this is urgent? Do you even know what I want? Or you're just plain stupid to understand anything? You can't even do a simple customer service job!" These are the nasty lines that Zati Farhana Zulkarnain has come across many times as a customer service representative.

"Customers may not be kind or even can be unforgiving but the customer service representatives still have to work on the premise that the customers are always right. The role of customer service representative is often not much appreciated but those in the vocation stand the tantrums of some customers."

"A customer once yelled at her saying that she was just a customer service representative and her main job is to provide and serve whatever was requested by customers. "It's true that it's part of my job to serve customers but they use abusive words against me. He started calling me useless and brainless. Sure, I would never take it personally; I don't even know him but I'll never forget what he had said to me," she said.

She also recalled another experience where the customer verbally abused her after she disclosed her name. "You're just a customer service representative. Anyone can do what you do. You have to do what I asked you to do." She quoted one customer saying "since you all customer service staff are so free, I give you all some work to do lah' and the customer laughed away.

When customers show antagonism, she would try her level best to tolerate them and get the job done. "I'm not complaining but people have to understand that we're human too," she said, adding that she is just like everyone else trying to earn an honest living.

Nonetheless, Norfhaten Fazreen points out she has come across many pleasant customers too in her line of work and make customer service representatives happy.

The job of a customer service representative is not for all, it requires certain skills including the art of communication and great patience. "It is not easy. Most people think that you can be a customer service representative as long as you know how to speak a language fluently and willing to work on shifts," said Zati Farhana Zulkarnain.

"You must be very confident in everything you say and you must know how to convince a customer. It teaches you to be patient and get ready for multitasking," she explained.

A customer service representative is also required to understand the job scope of their colleagues at different departments in order to explain to customers when they call to inquire about the products or services offered. - Bernama