

Kiss My Aster

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Take This Quiz to Find Out If You're a Bad "B" (and What to Do About It)

Amanda Thomsen



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A May quiz for you:

It's 8:30 a.m. and you open at 9:00 a.m. A customer just scaled the gate like Spiderman to begin shopping early—how do you respond?

- A. You ignore it completely and let the customer do whatever they want.
- B. You greet the customer—you were already ready to take on the day anyways! Maybe even offer them a cup of coffee.
- C. You wish them a good morning and then explain what a gate is and how it works, why you're not open 24 hours, and how what they've done is unfair to the other shoppers as well as the staff.

The phone rings and the customer says they bought a grapevine from you three years ago and now it's making grapes. Now they would like you to

explain to them how to make grape juice.

- A. You are momentarily stunned, but then tell them you'll Google it for them and proceed to read the first thing you pull up to them over the phone.
- B. You congratulate the customer on their bumper crop! Then you ask any of the staff if they've ever made grape juice at home and if it's just as easy as, you know, putting grapes through a juicer? And you don't really come up with an answer, but you and the customer bond over it and then you share that even though you didn't come up with anything about grape juice, you've made wine before with your grandpa in the basement 30 years ago and you share what you remember from that experience. You spend about 20 minutes on the phone.
- C. You tell the customer that you're glad to hear the plants you sold them have worked out so wonderfully and mention that although you're experts at plants, oftentimes recipes fall out of your jurisdiction and give them the number for the county extension because maybe they can help.

A customer wants to return a dead plant—they have a photo of a dead plant and it doesn't even look like anything you ever stocked, but they're here now with no receipt and they want their money back.

- A. Give them their money back. Life is way too short for this, bro.

B. Follow up with plant forensics questions. Where was it planted, how much sun did it get, how's their soil, how often was it watered, what's the deer pressure like in that neighborhood ... and then you realize you live in the same neighborhood! And after a quick connection check, the customer is actually married to your third cousin! You take the customer out in the yard on the golf cart to shop for a replacement plant, all the while happily gossiping about family and the neighborhood. They go home with an *Acer palmatum dissectum* Tamukeyama (b&b) and it takes three staff members to load it up for them.

C. You greet the customer warmly and look at their photos. You ask them if they thought the plant was healthy when they bought it and they seem taken aback, but stammer that, "Yes, of course it was." You then go over the refund policy with them that's posted, loud and proud at the cashwrap and proceed accordingly.

How did you score? First of all, they are ALL valid reactions in these situations, and if your crew doesn't have a balance of each kind of person, you'll end up getting stuck on all kinds of minutiae. And on any given day I, personally, have been all three of these people ... can you relate?

Mostly As: You have a healthy work/life balance OR you're completely beaten down. You need to look into Brene Brown on HBO Max talking about boundaries.

Mostly Bs: We all wish we were having as much fun as you are and also 1) you make us all look mean even though we aren't and 2) we're picking up the slack left over by your 45-minute side quests, but you always bring in snacks for the break room so carry on, I guess.

Mostly Cs: The customer is not always right/is rarely right, but it's delivered professionally. You have boundaries, respecting your own time as well as the customers' and it keeps you sane. Shine on, you crazy Diamond Frost Euphorbia hybrid. **GP**

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