



RISK PROTECTION & CONSUMERS

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CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

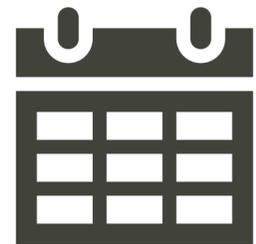


Consumer Relations Manager

- Renewable Energy Promoter
- Healthy Industry Supporter
- Consumer Advocate

~5 Years Industry Experience

Marketing and Pre-Sale
Sales and Installation
Post-Sale Support and Warranties
Complaints and Disputes



Complaints & Disputes

Approximately 5000 complaints received and mediated or resolved.



CONSUMER COMPLAINTS (SUMMARY)

Complaints/Disputes generally fall into two categories: Tangible or Intangible.

Tangible complaints focus on an issue that is relatively easily verifiable i.e. product faults, poor or non-compliant installation, performance issues or a dispute over contract terms - therefore easier to prove or resolve.

Intangible issues - or what I like to call “the unknowns” are not as easy to verify, often come down to a breakdown in communication, misconceptions or failed expectations and are much harder to resolve therefore should be at the top of your list to avoid. These can include: grid connection & metering, system performance v expectation, savings guarantees, maintenance requirements and unexpected costs.

To understand why we see such a high volume of these types of complaints it’s important to understand the traditional consumer buying cycle and how the solar buying cycle can often look quite different due to a variety of contributing factors (see subsequent slides).

I frequently see consumers making costly solar purchases without educating themselves or doing enough research into how solar works and how it can work for them. When the traditional buying cycle is broken by these internal and external factors consumers can start to experience feelings of doubt, confusion and even remorse and are likely to begin questioning or evaluating their purchase against expectations which can lead to complaints or disputes.

Complaint or dispute resolution can be time consuming and costly for a business of any size. Even more so when the complaint falls into one of these grey or “intangible” areas where points of contention can be harder to validate.

Consumer protection laws are fairly black and white and if a complaint ends up with a consumer protection body, there is usually little room for, or tolerance of grey areas. Many complaints can often be tied to customer expectations and/or perception - with the retailer often ultimately held accountable.

The industry (as a whole) needs to do more to educate and inform consumers, making the vast array of information simple to understand and easily relatable to individual circumstances. Minimising the risk of complaints or disputes starts with educating *your* customers.

Solar is not a “one-size fits all” solution, nor is it a “set and forget” piece of equipment so it is vital to understand who your customers are, what their needs are and to size a system correctly to help them maximise savings benefits. Explain the end to end installation process and who is responsible for grid connection and metering. Explain the warranty terms in place and who services warranties. Explain maintenance required and suggest a maintenance schedule.

The easiest way to make sure you’re covering your bases and protecting yourself and your customers is to put these things in writing and avoid relying on verbal agreements. Provide clear terms and conditions of sale (either in writing or on a website), itemise your costs and allow your customers time to absorb all this information and give them the opportunity to ask questions.



CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

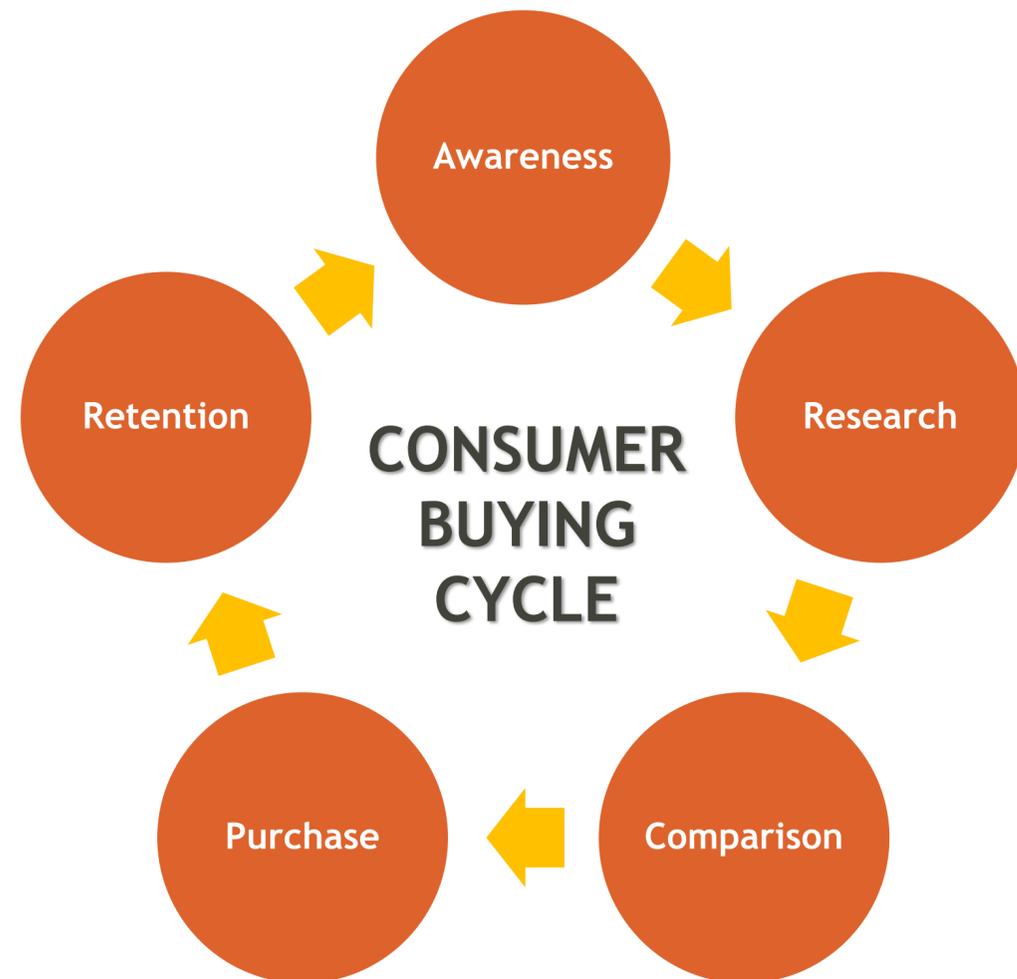
The Tangible (or the “Knowns”)

- Installation faults
- Faulty products
- Performance issues
- Contractual disputes

The Intangible (or the “Unknowns”)

- Grid connection & metering
- System performance v expectation
- Savings guarantees
- Warranty claims
- Maintenance
- Unexpected costs

THE TRADITIONAL CONSUMER BUYING CYCLE



- Want, need or desire is realised
- Awareness is heightened
- Research begins, Information sought
- Options are reviewed and compared
- Purchase decision is made
- Post-purchase evaluation

THE PROBLEMATIC SOLAR BUYING CYCLE*

Contributing Factors:

Internal influence (psychological)

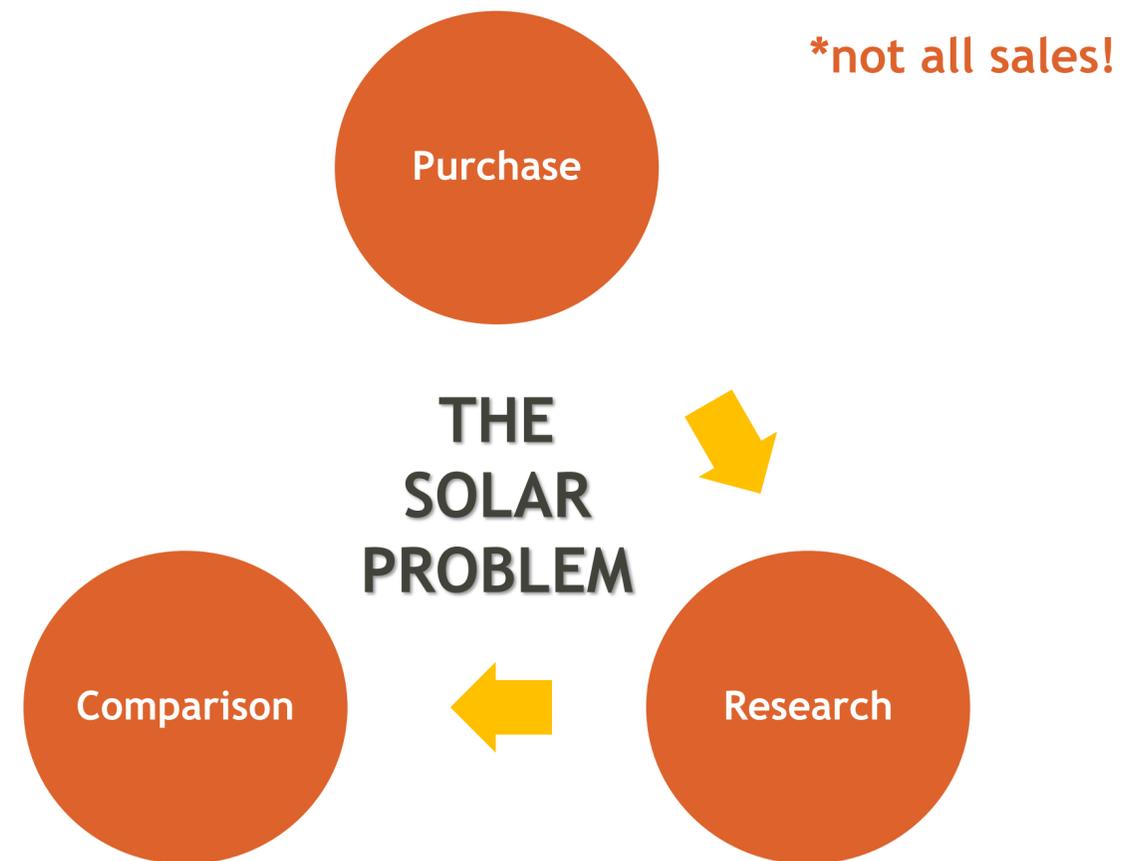
- Complexity
- Confusion/information overload
- Price-driven

External Influence

- Unsolicited sales
- Door knocking
- High pressure sales tactics
- News or the politicising of energy

Can lead to:

Questioning, doubt, confusion, distrust, remorse...



PROTECT YOURSELF!

Dispute resolution can be time consuming and costly for any business.

While common “intangible” complaints may seem like grey areas, consumer protection laws and guarantees are relatively black and white:

- Products work and do what you asked for
- The goods supplied are fit for purpose
- Right to refund if goods do not work as they should
- Compensation for losses suffered where supplier could have reasonably foreseen the problem



PROTECT YOURSELF (AND YOUR CUSTOMERS)!

Educate and inform your customers:

What is the end to end install & connection process?

What warranty terms are in place and who is responsible for handling warranty claims?

What maintenance may be required?

Understand their needs and sell/size appropriately:

How can customer maximise savings?

Back yourself:

Avoid verbal agreements, put it in writing!

Allow customers time to absorb information prior to accepting a quote and be prepared to answer a lot of questions.

Provide clear terms and conditions of sale.

Itemise costs.



THANK YOU

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