

Customers Don't Like Surprises



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Philip Brind'amour, a customer success consultant within Lumen's Customer Success team, recently faced what could have been a tough customer conversation. Surprises, endearing as they may be for a backyard birthday party, aren't always to be desired – especially in customer relationships. This was something Brind'amour had to tackle head-on in a conversation about rerates.

Clients are eligible for rerates when clients' solutions are out of term, ultimately resulting in price shifts at the time of renewal. Brind'amour's client, a leading global enterprise application software company, desired flexibility and had been hesitant to renew out-of-term services. A few months ago, several of his client's services were rerated, resulting in rate increases that prompted the client to contact Brind'amour to discuss the shift in price.



Philip Brind'amour, Lumen Customer Success Consultant

Brind'amour diffused the situation by listening to his client, having the rerates reversed and credited through the do not touch list (DNTL) process to meet Lumen's contractual obligations, specific to this company.

After addressing his client's needs, Brind'amour found an opportunity to pivot the conversation into a proactive discussion about pending rerates. The group worked together to get in front of the upcoming rerate conversation and found a solution that best fit the client's needs. Brind'amour's proactive communication, led to the client's interest in renewals across all lines of business.

This rerate conversation left Brind'amour feeling relieved and excited for his client's future, knowing they felt confident to come to him with questions in the future.

"Customers do not like surprises, especially when it affects their bottom line," said Alice Klepac, lead project manager.

Jean Anne Verbik, director of customer success enablement, says clear communication is central to building client trust in a successful relationship.

"This communicative and preparatory discipline is a critical element of the Customer Success model as it minimizes surprises and 11th-hour fire drills which we know from our customers is a frustrating and chaotic experience," Verbik said.

Verbik notes these proactive customer-centric practices are critical to Lumen's enterprise transformation and serve as a catalyst in building customer loyalty and advocacy. This is just another reason why Lumen is not only in the business of technology, but in the business of reducing customer surprises. Unless of course, it's a good one.

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