GRIT GUIDE
BY GRIT BLUEPRINT

GRIT GUIDE
NO. 02

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BLAMES THE DOOR BLAM

BEFORE ANYONE BLAMES THE DOOR

How to Check a Door Complaint Before Anyone Blames the Door

A jobsite walk-through that shows if the problem is the door or the opening it sits in.

Featuring Michael Tull and Stefanie Couch

gritguide.com/how-to-check-a-door-complaint-before-anyone-blames-the-door/

7 steps 9 min read Checklist to print

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YOU'LL FINISH WITH

A claim file someone else can act on: the customer's words, five photos, readings for level, plumb and square, what you saw at the fasteners and the top hinge, and a next step with a name and a date.

THE STEPS

01 WRITE DOWN THE COMPLAINT IN THE CUSTOMER'S WORDS

02 TAKE FIVE PHOTOS BEFORE ANYONE TOUCHES IT

03 CHECK THE FLOOR FOR LEVEL

04 CHECK THE WALL FOR PLUMB

05 CHECK THE FRAME FOR SQUARE AND LOOK AT HOW IT IS HELD IN

06 LOOK AT THE TOP HINGE BEFORE YOU CALL THE DOOR WARPED

07 SAY WHAT YOU FOUND AND NAME THE NEXT STEP

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From the episode: The Real Reason Customers Buy Again. Watch it at gritguide.com/grit-guide/videos/the-real-reason-customers-buy-again

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You know the call. “This door you sold me is warped. It won’t close.” The customer wants a new door today, and wants you to pay for it.

Michael Tull has been in the door business for fifty-five years. He started at 17 and now runs Tull Sales as a manufacturer’s rep, a salesperson who represents manufacturers in a territory. On the Grit Blueprint Podcast he said the door maker gets blamed first every time: “My door won’t open, my door won’t lock, my door won’t close properly, I’ve got air leaking around my door. Well, that’s usually an installation problem.”

So before anyone orders a replacement or files a warranty claim, go look at the opening. A warranty claim is a request for the manufacturer to repair or replace a product under its written warranty. This guide gives you the order to look in. It is for inside and outside salespeople and reps at dealers and distributors who get the complaint call. It does not make you the installer or the judge. The manufacturer decides its own claims, and the manufacturer’s installation instructions say how that door has to go in. Your job is to show up, look, write down what is true and tell the customer what happens next.

BEFORE YOU START

- The order number, the product name and who installed the door
- A level. Michael Tull carries a laser level, a tool that throws a straight line of light across a floor or up a wall
- A phone with a charged battery, for photos
- The manufacturer’s installation instructions for that door, printed or saved on your phone
- Your company’s rule on who may adjust or repair a door that is already installed

01 WRITE DOWN THE COMPLAINT IN THE CUSTOMER’S WORDS

Start at your desk, before you drive anywhere. Write what the customer says, the way they say it: “Door rubs at the top corner on the latch side.” Do not write “warped door” or “bad install.” Those are causes, and you do not know the cause yet.

Then get the facts around it:

- Which door it is and where it is in the house
- When they first saw the problem
- The order number and the product

- Who installed it and about when
- What anyone has done to the door since

Ask for one more thing: “Please do not adjust or remove anything until I have seen it.”

02 TAKE FIVE PHOTOS BEFORE ANYONE TOUCHES IT

The episode page says to photograph the opening before anybody touches it. Take the photos in this order, so a person who was not there can follow them.

- The whole door and the wall around it
- The side or corner where it sticks, from a few steps back
- A close-up of the trouble spot
- The label or stamp that shows who made the door, if you can find one
- Each reading you take in the next steps, with the tool in the picture

Keep the original files. If you want arrows or notes on a photo, mark up a copy. Write down the date and who took them.

03 CHECK THE FLOOR FOR LEVEL

Level means flat from side to side, like a floor with no humps in it. Set your level across the bottom of the opening and read it. Write down what you see and where: “Floor drops toward the hinge side.”

Start here because the whole door sits on it. Asked what happens when the floor is not level, Michael answered: “You’re not gonna close the door.”

04 CHECK THE WALL FOR PLUMB

Plumb means straight up and down. Hold the level against the jamb, the side piece of the door frame. Do both sides. Then check the wall next to it. Write down each reading.

This is where Michael’s laser level earns its keep. A contractor sees him walk up with it and asks what it is. A minute later two people are looking at the same line of light on the same wall. Michael tells them, “if your wall is plumb and my door’s hung properly, we’re not gonna have a problem.”

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Based on steps 3 to 5 of this guide. Credit: Grit Guide

05 CHECK THE FRAME FOR SQUARE AND LOOK AT HOW IT IS HELD IN

Square means the corners are a true 90 degrees. A frame that went in racked, which means pushed out of square, will bind no matter how good the door is. To bind is to rub or stick. Check the corners the way the manufacturer's instructions tell you to, and write down which ones are off.

Then look at how the frame is held in the wall. Look for shims, the thin wedges an installer slides between the door frame and the wall framing to hold the frame straight. Look at what was used to fasten the frame. In the real example below, a door the customer called warped had been installed with no shims and with finish nails.

You are not grading the installer. Photograph what is there. The manufacturer's instructions say what that door needs, so compare the two and write down what you find.

06 LOOK AT THE TOP HINGE BEFORE YOU CALL THE DOOR WARPED

A door that sags can look like a door that is warped. The episode names a fix that is often simple: two-and-a-half-inch screws in the top hinge, which pull the door back up.

So look at the top hinge and the screws in it. Photograph them. Then stop and check two things before anyone picks up a drill: the manufacturer's instructions for that door, and your company's rule on who may work on a door that is already installed. If it is not your job to touch it, show the installer what you see.

07 SAY WHAT YOU FOUND AND NAME THE NEXT STEP

Now you can talk about cause, and only as far as your notes go.

If the floor, the wall, the frame or the fasteners are off, show the customer and the installer your readings and photos. Say what you saw. Leave out whose fault it is.

If the opening is level, plumb and square, the frame is shimmed and fastened the way the instructions call for, and the door still will not work, you may have a product problem. Doors do fail. Send the file through the manufacturer's claim process: the order, the photos, the readings and the customer's words.

Either way, be careful with promises. A claim that has been opened is not a claim that has been approved. Do not promise a credit, a replacement or free labor unless it is yours to promise. Before you leave, the customer should know what you know, who is working on it and when they will hear from you next.

FINISH LINE

You should now have: A claim file someone else can act on: the customer's words, five photos, readings for level, plumb and square, what you saw at the fasteners and the top hinge, and a next step with a name and a date.

TWO SCRIPTS

Use it when: a customer calls and says the door is defective.

SCRIPT

"I want to get this fixed for you. Before I call it a door problem or an install problem, I need to see the opening. Can I come by **[day and time]**? Until then, please do not adjust or remove anything. Can you text me a photo of **[the whole door]** and one of **[the spot where it sticks]**?"

Use it when: your checks point to the opening and not the door.

SCRIPT

"Here is what I found. The **[floor / wall / frame]** is off at **[where you measured]**. Here is the photo. A door set in an opening like that will **[rub / not latch / not close]**, no matter who made it. I do not decide the claim. **[Manufacturer]** does. I will send them these photos today and call you by **[day]** with what they say. Would it help if I showed your installer what I saw?"

REAL STORY

Stefanie Couch tells two of these in the episode.

She went out on a claim with one of her outside sales reps. The door was binding and the customer said it was warped. At the opening they found the door had been installed with no shims and with finish nails. They showed the customer how to fix it.

The second was a door 12 feet wide and 8 feet tall in a finished house. It would not close right. The floor was not level when the door went in. The company that supplied the door had not installed it. By the time the problem was traced, the drywall was done and people were living in the house. The whole door had to come out, the concrete had to be taken down flat, and the door had to go back in.

Whose story **Stefanie Couch**, Founder & CEO, Grit Blueprint

Both stories are in The Real Reason Customers Buy Again, between 14:30 and 17:03 in the transcript.

DOOR COMPLAINT VISIT CHECKLIST

- [ ] I wrote the complaint in the customer's words
- [ ] I have the order number, the product and who installed it
- [ ] I took the five photos before anything was touched
- [ ] I wrote down the floor reading
- [ ] I wrote down the plumb reading for both jambs and the wall
- [ ] I checked the frame corners and wrote down which ones are off
- [ ] I photographed the shims and fasteners and compared them to the manufacturer's instructions
- [ ] I looked at the top hinge and its screws
- [ ] I told the customer what I saw, who decides and when I will call

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- The file has the customer's words, the order number and dated photos.
- Level, plumb and square are each written down, with where you took the reading.
- The file says "opening" or "product" only if the readings back it up. If they do not, it says "not known yet."
- The customer and the installer have both been told what you found.
- The next step has a name and a date on it.

Michael's reason for doing all this has nothing to do with winning an argument. He says to go to the job, "share with them what you actually see that's wrong and show them how to fix it. Because then you become valuable to them, and they're gonna buy from you again."

WHAT TO DO NEXT

If slab, jamb and prehung are new words, read Doors 101 next. Then keep the Window and Door Order Checklist by the phone. A clean order will not fix a crooked wall, but it takes one cause off the list.

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EPISODES IN THIS PIECE

The Real Reason Customers Buy Again

With Michael Tull · The Grit Blueprint Podcast · Feb 2026

SOURCES

1. The Real Reason Customers Buy Again (Grit Blueprint Podcast, Michael Tull with host Stefanie Couch) Grit Guide

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READ IT
ONLINE
This guide, the episode behind it and the rest of the Grit Guides are at **gritguide.com/how-to-check-a-door-complaint-before-anyone-blames-the-door/**

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