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Communication Tips for Dealing with the Angry Customer

By Adam Sargant

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1. Be clear about what you want to achieve. It is unlikely to be enough just to want to be rid of the angry customer (although this can be a natural response). It is usually more satisfactory (and satisfying) to set out to have the other person satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with in the best possible way.
2. Never, ever promise what you can't deliver. It may make them feel better now, but tomorrow...
3. DO take responsibility for what you can. There is nothing more irritating than someone who says "There is nothing I can do about that... it's company policy"
4. Validate the customer's feelings. In their world, they have every reason to be angry. It's OK to tell them that you can understand why they might be angry, as long as you are seen to be seeking a solution.
5. DO get as much specific information about the customer's perception of the problem as possible. Not only does this communicate interest, it will help you in resolving the problem in a manner satisfactory to the customer.
6. Stay calm and focussed on the desire to resolve the customers problem. When confronted with anger and aggression, the normal response is to prepare for fight or flight by producing adrenalin. If you have to, pause and take a slow breath. Do not allow the customer's anger to provoke you.
7. If you have time (e.g. between taking and returning a call), there is a valuable exercise that is useful in all sorts of conflict situations.
 - a) Take stock of yourself. In your imagination, put yourself in the confrontational situation, and simply notice what it is that you are feeling, experiencing and thinking.

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- b) Put yourself in the other persons shoes. Imagine yourself seeing through their eyes, feeling their feelings, and if it is a face to face confrontation, see yourself as they would see you, hear yourself as they would hear you.
- c) Step out and step back. See the whole interaction with the both of you present. Observe this as an impartial observer, with the scene at eye level in your mind's eye. If you feel emotional at this stage, simply imagine "switching" that emotion into the body of the person it would be most appropriate for.
- d) And come back.

The valuable thing about this exercise is that it enriches your understanding of the communication between you, giving you greater choice and greater objectivity, while allowing you the opportunity to empathise with someone in a situation where empathy could otherwise be difficult.

Adam Sargant is a freelance communications trainer with an interest in (among other things) dealing with angry and aggressive clients. His background is in NLP and nursing mentally disordered offenders, as well as running two succesful recruitment agencies.

Customer Service Training Tips

By LeeAnna

Good customer service is the best way to keep customers coming back to your business. super stores that have hundreds of employee's, these companies do not give their workers enough incentive to be customer friendly, and they don't seem to insist their employees use the customer training tips that are provided during their training. Businesses always supply new employees with their own customer service training tips in the beginning but they seem to forget them after being employed for awhile. Maybe stores and businesses should make their employees go through a refresher course and re-learn the customer service training tips that were given to them in the beginning. Training your employees in the art of customer service can be the least expensive improvement you can do. Make sure your employees have good people skills and that they enjoy working with people. One nasty person with a bad attitude can ruin a small business faster than a hold-up. Here are some customer service training tips that may help your employees.

Some customers are just plain difficult. They are always complaining, they are picky, know-it-alls, faultfinders, constant complainers, unreasonable, demanding. There's no way you can avoid them so you have to learn to deal with them. Angry people cannot rationalize because they are so wrapped up in the emotion of anger that anything you say gets filtered through their emotion. Rationalizing, problem solving, listening, and negotiating are all left-brain activities and your angry customer is stuck in the right side of the brain, and therefore cannot be expected to rationalize with you. Here are a few more customer service training tips.

Believe it or not the best way to diffuse a situation with an angry customer may be cleared up with two little words. "I'm sorry." Recent research shows that more than 50% of customers who have voices a

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complaint never get an apology. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that most people just want to be acknowledged, and when they get ignored and treated like they don't matter and their opinion means nothing. One of the better customer service training tips I found is saying "I'm sorry," can make all the difference in the world.

I don't believe in the saying the "customer is always right." No their not always right, and there are those that make themselves feel superior by belittling others. Being courteous to customers does not mean you have to accept abuse from them. Nobody deserves to be treated badly, but unfortunately there are those who go out of their way to do so. Saying things like, "Thank you for letting me know that you're unhappy with..." will usually calm even the meanest customers and the nicer you continue to be with them, the calmer they get, this is a very good customer service training tip. Try it a few times it really works. There's also another saying that goes: "You don't have to show up to every fight you're invited to."

Leeanna is an expert author who writes for customer service training tips



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