

Title:

Handling Challenging Situations with a Customer-Focused Mindset

Word Count:

899

Summary:

Customer service often means dealing with angry, frustrated, or rude customers. Dealing with

Keywords:

sales, selling, customer service, customer, challenge, service, communication

Article Body:

Most Customer Service Professionals deal with many challenging customer situations. These sit

- A customer who is upset about the quality or delivery of our product/service.
- A product return or a cancellation of services.
- Incorrect information given to the customer.
- A customer who is negative toward your company due to past experiences.
- Confrontational issues and conflict.
- Angry customers.
- Explaining a company policy or procedure.
- Fielding a request to escalate a call to management.

The ultimate goal in these challenging situations is to provide a win-win solution. We want o

The Five-Step Process

Have you ever been an upset customer, calling your product or service provider with a serious

Step 1 ~ Strategize

How do you develop a strategy?

- Develop your goal for the interaction. What do you want as the end result? (i.e., save the
- Identify your parameters: what can you do or provide the customer independently or with your
- Prepare by identifying common problems and win-win solutions.

Your strategy should be to arrive at a solution that will be a win for both your company and t

Step 2 ~ Acknowledge

The acknowledgement is essential to communicating in challenging situations. Use phrases like

Step 3 ~ Clarify

Sometimes we mistakenly proceed to resolve a problem based on what we THINK the customer was s

- ^What I hear you saying is is that right?~

- ^Can you tell me more about ..?~
- ^How may I help you .?~
- ^What were you hoping would happen ?~

Clarifying leads us to the appropriate solution in a more efficient manner.

#### Step 4 ~ Present Resolution

The fourth step is to present a resolution. Presenting a resolution is not a challenge if we

#### Step 5 ~ Checkback

The checkback is our opportunity to make sure that the customer is satisfied and feels good ab

Examples of checkbacks include:

- ^How does that sound?~
- ^What do you think about x?~
- ^Are you with me?~
- ^Does that make sense?~
- ^Will that meet your needs?~
- ^Would that be satisfactory?~

#### Applying the Five-Step Process

The following example illustrates a customer-focused approach, using the Five-Step Process.

Step 1: Strategize: Our strategy is to retain the customer whenever possible. We want to prov  
A customer calls to complain about the quality of the product he received.

Step 2: Acknowledge: ^I apologize that the product was not of the quality that you expected.

Step 3: Clarify: ^In order for us to improve on the quality ~ and for me to better serve you,

Step 4: Present Resolution: ^We would be happy to exchange the product for a similar product

Step 5: Checkback: ^Would that be satisfactory?~

Depending on the customer's responses, we may actually have to go through the Five-Step Proces

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