Strategies for Success: Dealing with Difficult People
Communication Skills

Please rate your level of ability in the following areas:

**LISTENING**

Concentrating on another person’s message instead of thinking about what you will say next.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**QUESTIONING**

Helping people explain their thoughts and concerns.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**SENSITIVITY**

Recognizing and responding to others’ feelings, not just their words.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**PERSUASIVENESS**

Seeking to understand others and focus on the benefit to them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
## Reasons Customers Quit Buying from Suppliers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>YOUR GUESS (% of 100)</th>
<th>ACTUAL (% of 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Move Away</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships with another company or salesperson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive Price</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with the Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude of indifference expressed towards customer by one or more persons representing the supplier</td>
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### The Importance of Satisfied Customers

- It cost five times more to get a customer than to keep a customer – *Fortune*

- Companies that reduce customer defections by 5% can boost profit’s by as much as 85% – *Harvard Business Review*

- Business with high-quality service:
  - Average 12% return on sales
  - Gain market share at the rate of 6% a year
  - Can charge approximately 10% more than their competitors
  - *Study Technical Assistance Research Programs*
There are three elements to every face-to-face message:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOUR GUESS (%) of 100</td>
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<td>ACTUAL (%) of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Elements of a Message
  - Telephone
  - Face to Face
  - Words
  - Tone
  - Visual
4 Steps to Customer Success

Follow Up or Escalate

Maintain Composure

Empathize, Acknowledge, Apologize

Actively Listen & Question
You don’t have to be a product of your environment. Your circumstances can be controlled by the choices you make.
Look Beyond the Surface
The Listening Challenge

Avoid Impersonal Language

Avoid any phrase that puts distance between you and your customer.

The following subtle phrases are especially important to avoid:

- Maintain
- Composure
- Actively
- Listen & Question
- Empathize,
- Acknowledge,
- Apologize
- Follow Up or
- Escalate

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- Maintain
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- Actively
- Listen & Question
- Empathize,
- Acknowledge,
- Apologize
- Follow Up or
- Escalate
What Words Will You Use?

Make it Personal:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Be Specific:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Express Empathy:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What Words Will You Use?

Tell the customer what you will do:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Defusing the Irate and Abusive

Delivering Bad News

Dealing with the Distraught

Controlling the Rambler
STRENGTHS

Think about what you like about your ability to handle customers.
List those areas that you feel are your strengths.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

NEED IMPROVEMENT

Think about what you dislike about your ability to handle customers.
List those areas that you feel need improvement to make every interaction special.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

ACTION STEPS

List the steps you will take to help you improve your customer relations skills.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

EVALUATION

How will you know when you have improved?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________