



Next Third Thursday Webinar

APRIL 20, 2017

Get Your MOJO Back!

It's time to remember the things that motivate you and bring them back into your everyday life. What's your passion? What are you good at? What do you want to be when you grow up? We'll ask some of those questions and help you find ways to bring that excitement into your workplace.

Watch for the videos of our latest series of webinars coming at the end of this season in April to the CPTP YouTube Channel. <https://goo.gl/iS0iJP>

*Need more assistance
on this month's topic?
Have we got classes for you!*



No matter how much of a diplomat, a peacemaker, or a customer service professional we are, we are going to encounter irate customers from time to time.

Most of the time, these individuals have more going on than we realize. They've been involved in this situation long before they got to us, so there's a good chance that they were angry before this encounter even began. We can't take it personally, because we're not usually the cause of the anger. We're just the one who's getting to hear the result of it!

Keeping that in mind can help us remove some of the emotion from our side of the conversation. And trying to move toward a solution without further angering the person is a skill that takes patience, understanding, and flexibility.

In this handout we'll share some of the best ideas from our CPTP Webinar, **Dealing with Irate Customers**, in hopes that your next difficult customer interaction is calmer and more productive for both you and your customer.

Resources:

- www.CallCentreHelper.com
- www.BusinessKnowHow.com
- www.Motivate.com

You're a customer service professional and most of your interactions are positive and productive. But what happens when the other person is an irate customer?

Then we need to fall back on our skills and any tools we can call upon to defuse the situation. Following are some ideas to help.

When the other person is angry enough to yell, try these techniques:



TECHNIQUES TO ADDRESS YELLING

- Lower the volume
- Use a calm but firm voice
- Ask specific questions
- Get assistance
- Take a break

- ❑ Lower your volume. It will often encourage the other person to lower theirs too.
- ❑ Use a calm but firm voice. A pleasant tone helps, and when it's coupled with a firm, confident tone, it can create a positive atmosphere for creating solutions.

- ❑ Ask specific questions. This can derail the "anger train" by getting the person to focus on the solution.

- ❑ Get assistance. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Let your team know you need back-up in this situation.

- ❑ Take a break. Sometimes both parties need to step away for a moment, especially if the situation has escalated to abusive language.

- ❑ Below are statements that can be useful in these situations:



ABUSIVE SITUATIONS

- I truly understand your concern, Mr. Jones, but I need you to change the language you're using so we can work together.
- You seem very upset right now, Mrs. Brown. Would you prefer for us to call you back later to discuss this?
- I'm sorry, Mr. Smith. If you continue to use this language, I'll be forced to end this conversation.

We want to give the customer advance warning if we're considering ending this conversation. So, if our best efforts don't work, we can then end the conversation knowing that we tried to get past this "language barrier".



WHEN SAFETY IS AN ISSUE

- Implement a system for your team
- Use a code word
- Ensure you have an exit path
- Do not approach or touch
- Call for help

And sometimes the customer just needs to know that we care.

Empathy statements like the one recommended by Autumn Sullivan during our webinar can help set the stage for a positive discussion: "I hate that you had that experience, but let's make sure we rectify the situation from this day forward."

This not only recognizes the person's feelings, but lets her know that she is now part of the solution. Some other empathy statements include:



EMPATHY STATEMENTS

- I can see how important this is to you.
- I know this process can be confusing.
- I'm sorry to hear that you're in this situation.
- I can't imagine what you're going through right now. Let's see what we can do to make things better for you.



REASSURING STATEMENTS

- Calling us was the right thing to do.
- I'll let you explain the situation first. Then we'll work together and find your solution.
- I can certainly understand why this is distressing.
- What we'll do right now is...

Jeri Brumfield shared an excellent statement that combines empathy with progress toward a solution: "I think this is very important to you, and I want to get you a resolution. Can I get back to you with the best answer after I speak with XYZ who isn't here at this time?"

Other statements that help introduce solutions and reinforce the caller's confidence include:



INTRODUCING SOLUTIONS

- Your issue is unusual, but I've dealt with situations like this. I can help you.
- In my experience, the best way to proceed is... How does that sound to you?
- I know this isn't how you want to spend your morning, so let me offer this solution.
- Thank you for being so patient while I work to resolve this.



TEAMWORK STATEMENTS

- Let's work together to solve this.
- Let's make sure you get what you need from this situation.
- Here's an idea. Tell me what you think.
- What do you feel would be a good solution?

And Henry Mayes Jr. reminded us that the most important follow-up action is to make sure we respond to calls and emails promptly. Letting an irate customer sit and wait is definitely not a way to reduce that anger!



FOLLOW UP

- Document the problem.
- Study to find the cause.
- Offer ideas to improve.
- Communicate so others don't have to experience this issue first-hand.

Taking the time to thank the person for bringing the problem to our attention is a good idea too. After all, they're giving us the chance to make things right instead of just complaining to others!

And thanks to Dennis Wicker, we know of a great resource book: **Customer Service Survival Kit** by Richard Gallagher. Check Overdrive to see if your library has the e-book.