



# Customer Service – Creating positive outcomes to customer complaints

**Time: 30 - 40 minutes**

Like any business, we have to deal with angry or unhappy customers as part of our roles and it's never easy. If we know what to say and more importantly how to say it, we may be able to save the situation. In fact, we can even end up with a better relationship with our customer than we had before.

In this session you'll explore how to deal with angry or difficult customers. We'll highlight specific tips and techniques that you can use to take the heat out of the situation and allow you to start to resolve the situation so that you can leave the customer in a much better situation than when your conversation started.

The goal of this session	What you'll need:
Through group activity and discussion identify some strategies for handling customer complaints.	Note paper Pens Handout: 'Choose your attitude'
<b>The Aim of this session:-</b>	
For you to share some best practices around handling customer complaints.	



It's important to realise that we may not be able to resolve every single customer situation but we do have an ability to move them up from where they currently are and make them feel better about the situation and indeed the business.

**Ask:** What sort of things do customers complain about?

**Expect various answers relative to business and role.**

**Explain:** In all cases where a call or meeting becomes challenging, it is important that we have the right skills to deal with them and that starts with being in the right frame of mind to deal with it effectively and that is what we're going to look at in this session.

**Ask** for examples of times when they felt they themselves had cause to complain about the service they'd received from a company

**Ask** them how it made them feel at the time?

**Look for answers to include:**

- Angry
- Disappointed
- Emotional
- Upset
- Aggressive

**Ask** If a customer were in one of those emotional states when we call them, what would they want from the person speaking to them on behalf of the business?

**Look for answers to include:**

- For them to listen
- Take accountability and say sorry
- Take ownership to solve the problem
- Empathise with them and their situation
- Solve it quickly

**Explain** that when you speak to customers about their complaint they could be unhappy and you should be prepared to deal with that situation from the start.

Let's look at some challenging customer situations you've encountered in your role.

## Activity:

Share challenging customer scenarios

**The purpose** of this activity is to explore, share and find some common resolutions to difficult customer situations you've encountered in your role.



**Explain that** everyone at one time or another will have had a bad customer experience.

Although the customer is 'always right', some customers can be unpleasant or rude when they don't get what they want. As a customer service adviser you must handle these situations skilfully and professionally.

**Ask** everyone to think of the last difficult customer they dealt with and then ask a volunteer to share their experience with the group.

**Ask them** to describe to the group what happened in their scenario using the following structure

- a. What happened in my scenario was...
- b. How I handled it was by....
- c. The outcome was...
- d. It left me feeling....

The group may ask questions of the volunteer

Ask the group to consider if they'd had that customer how they might have handled the situation.

Explain that the key to dealing with any challenging situations begins with your own mindset. Once you're aware that your customer is unhappy, then your first priority is to put yourself into a positive, customer service mindset where delighting your customer is your number one goal.

This means setting aside any feelings you might have that the situation isn't your fault so why are you getting the brunt of the customers' anger. Remember, it isn't YOU the customer is angry or disappointed with: it's your business.

This is your opportunity to put all of your skills into action and work to fix the customers' problem whose relationship with us may be impacted at this time.

**Explain that** all that matters is that you realise that your customer is upset and that it's up to you to solve the problem.

It's important to handle difficult customers professionally. Learning how to stay calm and how to stay cool under pressure can help you get through challenging situations with grace and professionalism.

Ask who has seen the equation:

$$E + R = O$$

It stands for an **E**vent + your **R**esponse = an **O**utcome

**Explain** that we have probably all been in situations that make us cringe. Times when we look back and think we could have handled that better and when we go back and



analyse what happened, more often than not, it was caused by our reaction to the event, not necessarily the event itself.

**Ask** if anyone can think of a time like this?

**Ask** them to briefly tell the story.

**Ask** what they would have done differently?

**Explain** that we can't change the event that has happened, but we can influence the outcome of the situation we are dealing with at the time by how we respond to it and then take appropriate action to resolve it.

**Ask** when a customer is unhappy with us when you're speaking to them, do you believe you have a choice in how you react to the situation and can that have an impact on the outcome?

**Look for:** Yes. We all have a choice about the attitude we adopt and that choice can impact the outcome. The more positive the choice we make, the more likely that the outcome will be positive.

**Explain:** Yes of course we do. As very intelligent human beings with powerful minds we all have the opportunity to make choices about how we're going to react to things that happen in our life. We call this self regulation. This is when we make conscious choices to act in certain ways.

**Ask:** What choices can we make about the attitude we take, especially when we are dealing with challenging situations and complaints?

**Look for answers to include:**

- Choose a positive attitude
- See the situation as not personal to you.
- See it as an opportunity
- Empathise with the customer and show a desire to help
- Focus on the things you can truly influence not dwell emotionally on things you can't.

**Action**

**Ask** if there's been anything from their colleague's stories that reminded them of situations they'd been in?

How would they have reacted?

**Activity – Choosing your attitude**

Explain that to finish the session off you'd like them to spend 5 minutes as a group discussing the following points and writing down what they're personally going to do to choose their attitude



Give each of them a copy of the Handout 'Choose your attitude'

Ask them to think about what they're going to do to demonstrate the following behaviours:-

- Choose a positive attitude
- See the situation as not personal to you.
- See it as an opportunity
- Empathise with the customer and show a desire to help
- Focus on the things you can truly influence not dwell emotionally on things you can't.

Encourage them to write words they might use with the customer that will help them when they're dealing with challenging situations and actions they might take to remind themselves to do these things.

Once this activity is complete agree Actions

Following the feedback, ask them to come up with:

One thing they're going to stop doing.

One thing they'll continue to do.

One thing they'll start doing or do differently.



Handout: 'Choose your Attitude'

<b>What you're going to do</b>	<b>How you're going to do it.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose a positive attitude</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See the situation as not personal to you.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See it as an opportunity</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empathise with the customer and show a desire to help</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on the things you can truly influence not dwell emotionally on things you can't.</li></ul>	