

Title:

6 Tips for Keeping Your Cool When Customers Get Hot

Word Count:

401

Summary:

Don't take the bait when dealing with difficult customers.

Keywords:

Customer Service

Article Body:

1. Be assertive - not aggressive or passive. My definition of assertion is simple: "Say what you mean, mean what you say, and don't be mean when you say it." Let this rule guide your conversations with all customers and you will always be confident, cool, and in control AND you'll always be professional.
2. Speak more slowly. You'll be amazed at how much more clearly you can think and how much control and confidence you experience when you consciously slow down your rate of speech. Speak slowly and methodically when your emotional triggers are launched and you'll maintain poise during difficult conversations.
3. Wait 1-2 seconds before responding. Responding immediately to difficult or tactical customers could result in you saying something you'll later regret. Before you respond, take a deep breath, wait at least 2 seconds, and think about the best response and the best approach.
4. Take a time-out. When you sense that your buttons have been pushed, take a break. You can tell the customer you need to put him on hold while you review a file, or whatever excuse sounds good at the time. The point is to get away from the customer for a few seconds so you can re-group.
5. Use positive self-talk. I'm going to sound like Dr. Phil on this one, but I'm quite serious. Instead of saying to yourself, "I don't get paid enough to put up with this ____." Say something more positive like "This guy really needs my help." Thinking more positively helps you respond more positively and professionally. Negative thoughts lead to negative words, and it spirals into a very negative situation.
6. Show your power before you use it. Often, a subtle suggestion of your "power" is far more effective than the outright use of your power. As a customer service

professional you may have the power to terminate a phone call. You could say to your customer: "If you don't stop yelling, I will terminate this call." But, believe it or not, you are far more "powerful" if you say, "I want to help you, but when you yell and cut me off, you make it difficult for me to work with you." The latter statement demonstrates your power and your message most definitely gets across. The former statement uses up all of your ammunition and won't usually diffuse an irate customer.

These incredibly simple tips will position you to keep your cool when customers get hot!