



Customer Conflict Awareness





Introduction



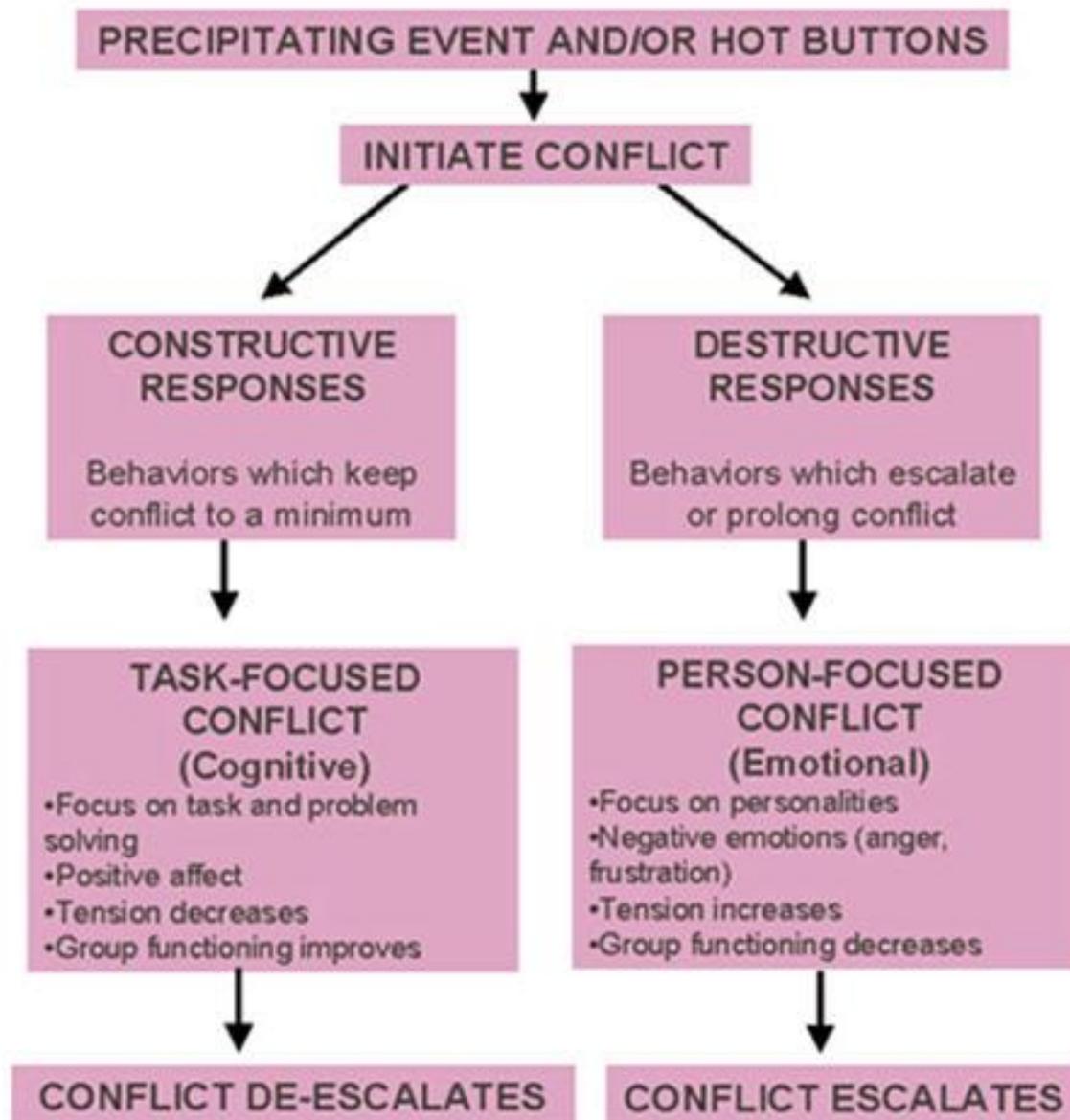
Understanding what conflict means...

Conflict is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people. The result is stress or tension and negative feelings between disputants. A conflict can range from a disagreement, or clash, to a fight, which may consist of harsh words, or may involve the use of force.

Conflict Resolution is the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or a conflict. Successful conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet each side's needs, and adequately address their interests so that they are each satisfied with the outcome.

Conflict Prevention - While Conflict resolution engages conflict once it has already started conflict prevention aims to end conflicts before they start or lead to verbal or physical violence.

Path of Conflict





The Local Government Context

There is no question that local government staff work under different constraints than those in the private sector. You may be in an enforcement position, obliged to identify breaches of legislation or government regulations. You may be in the position of determining financial benefits for people that will have an effect on the wellbeing of those people and their families. Alternatively, perhaps you work in an administrative job within a department that carries out tasks that annoy the public.

Apart from being under the microscope, you don't have the flexibility of private sector employees. While large stores can take the position that the "customer is always right", your customers are not always right, and you can't always meet their requests without breaking the laws you may be charged to enforce. You probably can't give money back, or replace a product for example if the customer doesn't like it. Often you can't forward their comments and suggestions to the mayor or his department.

In a bureaucratic hierarchy, the policy makers and decision makers are not easily accessible to local government employees that deal directly with the public.

Who Pays the Price?

We all pay a price. Employees on the "firing line" have to deal with the stresses, great and small, resulting from having to deal with angry, frustrated customers.

Angry customers can eat up lots of organizational time and energy, particularly when they decide to climb the organisational ladder with their complaints. Employee safety can be threatened by angry customers. It just isn't fun, and it's no laughing matter.

You Can Do Something About It!

It may seem you can do little to defuse the anger and hostility of customers. It seems to be set off by the smallest things, and above all, it seems unpredictable. However, the truth of the matter is that employees can do things to defuse the anger and reduce abusive behaviour. People can learn to act in ways that reduce this kind of behaviour, and ensure that they don't do anything that will result in an unpleasant situation going ballistic.

You should know that it takes some time to learn how to deal with these situations and it takes diligence and effort, but it isn't hard. Most people can learn the defusing skills, and put them into effect. Our goal is to become practiced in defusing hostility so it becomes second nature, so that effective defusing responses replace less effective ones.

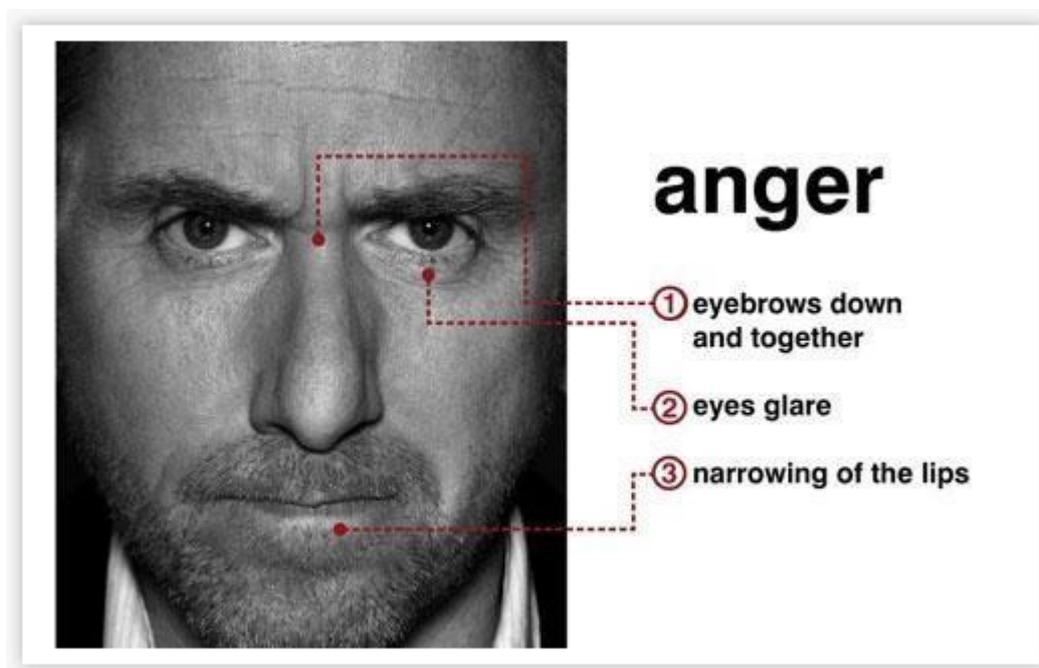


Important Note on Safety

It is very important, that you consider safety as a bottom line. Your safety and the safety of other staff, customers and members of the public is paramount. There will be times when it will be impossible to defuse someone, particularly if he or she is prone to violence, or mental instability. You must always be concerned with safety, and must do what is necessary to keep everyone safe. Always err on the side of safety!



No course or learning material can tell you exactly what to do in each individual situation. There is no standard approach that works each time. You must be very clear that each hostile situation will be different, and that you must use your own judgment to determine what you ought to be doing. The workbook you have includes tactics and techniques you can use, but you must decide how and when to implement the techniques when the time comes. We can't do that for you it's down to you alone.



Anger

Anger refers to an internal state (feeling) experienced by the person in question. An angry person experiences some physiological changes, some invisible and some visible. There are some important things to note about anger, and angry people.

People choose their own emotional states. That is, their feelings of anger, or for that matter, any other feelings, belongs to them. As such, it isn't your responsibility.

What is your responsibility, however, is to ensure that you do not knowingly do something to escalate the situation to provoke anger.

We need to accept the fact that people will be angry, at times. They have a right to be angry when they choose. What they do not have a right to do is to take out their anger on you, particularly when you have done nothing to contribute to it.

What is important is that you become relatively comfortable with the notion that people will become angry. If you spend all your time trying to make people happy, you are doomed to fail.

Angry Behaviour

People express their anger in various ways. Some raise their voices or become more animated. Others turn red. Mild expressions of anger are simply ways a person vents a little steam. As with the feeling of anger, we need to be reasonable in terms of what offends us, and allow the angry person some latitude in behaviour before we deem the behaviour unacceptable.



There is a clear reason for this. If we allow ourselves to be offended every time we encounter angry behaviour, we are going to be pretty miserable, and pretty ineffective in dealing with other people.



Hostile, Abusive Behaviour

What sets apart hostile, abusive behaviour from angry behaviour is that hostile, abusive behaviour is intended, consciously or unconsciously to have some or all of the following effects to:

- Put you off balance
- Manipulate and control you
- Demean you in some way
- Cause you to feel guilty
- Intimidate you

It is this kind of behaviour that causes the greatest amount of stress for local government employees, because people using hostile, abusive behaviours tend to rant, insult, use intimidating tactics, and simply won't go away.

While we may tolerate some degree of angry behaviour without being concerned, **we need to be concerned about hostile/abusive behaviours.**

We want to stop these behaviours as professionally as possible.

If we can, at the same time, reduce the anger of the client, that's great. If we can't, we need to remove ourselves from the situation.



Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse takes a great many forms, from very subtle, to obvious. When we talk about verbal abuse, we refer to behaviours like the following:



- Persistent swearing
- Yelling
- Sexist comments (both explicit and implied)
- Racist comments (both explicit and implied)
- Irrelevant personal remarks (e.g. about your appearance)
- Threats (e.g. I'll have you fired, or I'm going to the mayor).
- Intimidating silence
- Accusations of various sorts (e.g. calling you a racist)
- comments about your competency, knowledge, dedication

Non-Verbal Abuse

Non-verbal abuse refers to behaviour that has nothing to do with what is said, but has to do with things like body posture, facial expressions, gestures, etc. Let's make no mistake about it. Non-verbal abuse is intended to send a message or messages to you, such as "I don't like you", or, "I am fed up", or even "In my eyes you are worth nothing". When we talk about nonverbal abuse, we refer to behaviours such as:



- Standing in your personal space staring at you (long eye contact)
- Table pounding (sometimes)
- Throwing things
- Leaning over you (using height)
- Fearsome facial expressions
- Loud sighing
- Pointing, other offensive gestures

Sometimes, these behaviours may not be intended to intimidate or demean you, and may be a relatively normal way of expressing anger. However, we classify them as abusive, because they do tend to have a manipulating effect on you. You will have heard of the phrase "HARDEN UP" this approach rarely works,

"What we want you to do is "SMARTEN UP"

Violence

What causes violence? It is impossible to determine the reason for every violent outburst but there are common factors that may apply to all places of work. We can define violence as any activity that is either intended to cause, or can cause physical harm to another person, be it you, a co-worker, or customer. A combination of personal and/or environmental factors often influences the situation. Violent or threatening behaviour at work may involve many factors, including the following:



- Random violence with no clear intent or under influences of drugs or alcohol
- Intimidation/harassment used to achieve a desired end expression of uncontrolled irritation such as dissatisfaction with poor service or prolonged discomfort
- Displaced anger from past situations applied unreasonably to the issue at hand
- Verbal abuse to intimidation and low-level threatening behaviours
- Violence related to mental health problems
- Violence related to criminal activity, thrill seeking or revenge
- Violence related to cultural or religious differences between subgroups in society.
- Forms of violence such as verbal abuse, intimidation and threatening behaviour may not result in physical injury but have significant effects on the psychological wellbeing of employees.

Your first priority is to ensure your own physical safety, and the safety of those around you. For this reason, most organisations will accept that you have a right to remove yourself from a situation, or request backup assistance in situations where you feel physically threatened. You don't have to be absolutely sure a physical threat exists; you just don't want to take chances.



Learning how to control the environment through angry and hostile behaviour is learned at a very early age. As people get older, they get better at it. The truth is that by the time you're an adult, you are an expert in it. You know how to do it, how to make people mad, how to get people's attention, how to make other people feel guilty, and how to influence the behaviour of others. When people are upset, they revert back to earlier, more primitive learned behaviour.

We have a normal sound-minded regular person who has learned a number of

- communication skills
- is effective in conflict resolution
- problem solving

Normally, when faced with situations where he/she is not overly upset, these skills will be used. The problem comes when the person is very angry, to the point where the adrenaline is pumping. At some point, if they become sufficiently "activated", they will revert back to behaviour learned at an earlier time in life, and behaviour that is well learned and well-practiced.

The more primitive angry, hostile behaviours that worked so well early in life re-emerge in the normally rational, calm adult.

As a little test of this theory, ever notice that adults who are hostile often behave like small children? Some hostile customers are habitually nasty. However, many hostile customers are normally rather polite people, who get sufficiently upset to revert back to the more childish behaviours they have learned during their lives.

This does not excuse abusive behaviour. The point here is that those people are reacting to their internal states and the situation, not to you personally. We will come back to this point when we talk about how you can maintain your own self-control.



The Purpose of Hostile, Abusive Behaviour

Now that we have been explained where and when hostile behaviour is learned, we can clearly see that its major purpose is to **control**, or **manipulate** the environment. Since we are talking about your hostile customers, we can say that the purpose is to **control you** and to **influence your reactions**.

- While we would like people to like us, and not be angry with us, if we choose this as a goal, we are bound to be disappointed. We try to make our customers happy, but the truth is that many local government jobs involve giving bad news that is going to make people unhappy.
- Anger is a feeling that belongs to the other person. It is hard to affect directly. Hostile and abusive behaviour is another story. We want to focus our defusing efforts on reducing the amount of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviour. This is a realistic goal.
- Later, we will flesh out the notion that abusive behaviour is about control. The hostile or abusive person is trying to manipulate and control you and your decision-making.
- We need to provide some leeway for people to express their anger, provided the expressions are not demeaning, insulting or manipulative. If we react to every four-letter word, twitch, or raised voice, we will go nuts, and we won't be very good at defusing the abusive situation.

You are probably very familiar with the body language, tone of voice, specific words, and specific attacks used, since they tend to be repeated.

The truth is that there are only a finite number of ways people can be hostile. These attack methods are learned very young, and they can vary somewhat from culture to culture.

It almost seems that hostile behaviour follows rules. Just like a game, the behaviour that occurs in hostile situations is characterised by certain patterns that repeat over and over again.

If we consider hostile interactions as a game, albeit a serious one, and understand that it has rules, then it will help us understand what to do when verbally attacked. Before we discuss the two major rules of hostile interaction, we need to introduce the concept of **"bait"**.



The Bait Concept

Recall that earlier, we said that the major purpose or goal of the attacker is to control you and your behaviour. The attacker wants to take and hold the initiative, forcing you to react and respond to him, rather than the other way around, so long as the attacker can hold this control over the conversation, it is likely the interaction will continue. This isn't good, because if you are spending your time reacting and responding, you won't be able to help the customer, or even end the interaction in a positive way.

The primary technique the attacker uses to maintain control is the use of bait. Bait consists of behaviours (verbal and non-verbal) designed to get you to react, usually in an emotional manner. If you respond to the bait, you hand over control of the conversation to the attacker, which is exactly what he/she wants. The bait is used to upset you enough so that you will be off balance, as a result of being angry or intimidated.

Take a look at the following brief dialogue....

Customer: What the hell is wrong with you? Every time give me the run around. If you knew what you were doing this is the last time you are going to do this to me.



Employee: How dare you talk to me like that, I do my best to help and you don't even see that we're short staffed!

Customer: I can talk to you any way I want. I pay your salary! You work for me!

Now, look at how the employee responds. He responds with an **aggressive remark** (How dare you talk to me like that) followed by a **defensive remark**. However, the important thing to note is that the employee has **taken the bait**, responded to the attacking remarks, and is **being controlled by the attacker**. By responding in this way, the employee is **giving up control**.

The customer replies with **additional bait**. In addition, the conversation is now going far afield. Whatever the original problem, it has now been lost. If this conversation were to continue, we would find that it would get more destructive, and perhaps even more abusive, as both parties will behave badly.

This is typical of situations where an employee takes the bait. The employee's reaction sends a few "sub messages" to the customer.

First, the customer knows he has found some **gaps in the employee's armour** and now knows that he can maintain control using this kind of **baiting behaviour**.

Second, the customer knows that he can upset the employee. The upshot is that the attacks will probably continue, since the customer is getting what he wants, control over the employee and control over the interaction



Now, let's take a look at a slightly different scenario.

Customer: What is wrong with you? Every time I come here, you hassle me and give me the run around. If you knew what you were doing, this wouldn't happen. And, this is the last time you are going to do this to me.

Employee: Sir, I can see you're upset about something.

Customer: Damn right, I'm upset. What are you going to do about this?

Employee: Well sir, I need some information from you so *I can help you*. So let's get some details down and see how we go. Will you do that for me sir?

Note the difference. The employee does not take the bait dangled by the customer, and is working to **reassert control** over the interaction. He does this by **acknowledging the person's anger**, but **NOT** exploring any of the bait remarks. At the end of this short dialogue, the customer responds to the employee.

This second conversation is much more likely to be shorter, and more productive. The key point is that the attacker expects you to take the bait ... it's in the rules of the hostile game.

The psychological rule the attack uses goes like this: If I use bait, the other person will react to it in ways that will allow me to maintain control. You are going to set up a new game, with a different set of rules, and the first step is to not play by the attacker's rules, on the attacker's turf. **The main point about bait is that you don't take it.**

Recognise it for what it is- an attempt by the other person to control and irritate you.





What angry people want.....

When you have dealt with an angry customer, you may have asked yourself "What does this person want from me?", or even perhaps asked the customer this question. An important question has a number of answers. Knowing the answers will help you calm down an angry person, and reduce hostile behaviour directed at you.

The most obvious answer to the question is local government customers want their problem **solved**.

In other words, the customer interacts with local government with a particular goal in mind.

Unfortunately, we cannot always do what the customer wants, since we have to work within the constraints of our jobs. We don't always have the authority, or even the ability to meet the requests of clients.

Most of the time we can't give them what they ask for.

They want help

Angry or hostile people want you to be helpful, even if you can't solve their entire problem. If they see you as making a genuine effort on their behalf, they are much less likely to be hostile towards you personally.

Think about your own experience for a moment. Have you ever had the experience of going into a department store to make a purchase?

You walked in and had difficulty finding the item you wanted? After searching throughout the store, you finally find a staff person. When you ask the employee where you might find the item, you get a response like this:

"Don't know. That's not my department."

Sure, it's aggravating that we can't find the item. But what really sends us through the roof is the **lack of helpfulness shown by the staff member**.

Maybe if the employee had said:

"Gee, I not sure, but if you wait just a moment I'll see if I can find out for you".

That would be an entirely different story. We would appreciate the effort being made for us, and be less likely to harass the employee making the effort.

The same goes for your customers. When you make an effort, or appear to be trying to help, your customers are less likely to strike out at you.



They want choices

Your customers want to feel they have choices and alternatives. They do not want to feel helpless, or trapped, or at the mercy of the "system".

The same is true of your customers. Make them feel they have no options, or they are trapped, and they will tend to strike out at you.

On the other hand, offer choices whenever possible, and you are less likely to be attacked by the upset individual.

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Don't offer no option, but try a number of options allowing the customer to choose. Suggest some other possibility that might be workable. This is much less likely to set the customer off.

There are always choices to offer. And we know that customers respond positively to being offered choices. It reduces their own sense of helplessness.





They Want Acknowledgment

Perhaps one of the most important things an angry person wants is to be acknowledged. People want to feel you are making the effort to understand their situation, and their **emotional** reactions to it. Often, the simple act of acknowledging that a person is upset will help to calm them down, provided the acknowledgment is phrased and "toned" correctly.



The most common error employees make when dealing with an angry customer is to ignore the feelings being expressed and shift immediately into problem solving mode.

Unfortunately, customers perceive this approach as uncaring, unfeeling and unhelpful which can intensify their anger.

It is critically important that you acknowledge the emotions being expressed at the time. Use empathy as well as active and reflective listening techniques to do this.



Active Listening

You listen to others many times in a day, but how well do you listen and how can you do it better? Not listening effectively can make conflict situations worse.

Listening is not the same as hearing. It requires active involvement on your part. The rewards for effective listening are gratitude, respect and closer relationships than before.

People with good active listening skills:

- show respect for the speaker, and are sensitive to their feelings
- empathise with the other person
- pay attention with their whole manner – body, eyes, facial expression
- concentrate on what is being said and are not thinking up a response or interrupting
- encourage the speaker to continue by nodding and murmuring
- Listening is a much-underrated skill. True listening requires practice as well as effort

Reflective Listening

Is a form of listening that encourages the speaker to continue, by paraphrasing or feeding back to the speaker what she or he has said. This is a very useful tool for clarifying the situation from both ends to get the full picture.

You must always act professional in dealing with any members of the public, even in a conflict situation as difficult as it may seem at the time

Communication works best when you **really listen** to other people, asking questions and listening allows you to see another person's point of view or understand their needs.





How angry situations escalate

Triggers

Angry situations don't always start with very abusive or hostile behaviour. What happens is that even a calm situation can escalate very quickly as each person "**triggers**" the other. Of course, when one or both people are angry in the first place, there is a far greater chance of escalation.

Crisis Cycle

The escalation/crisis cycle is a process where an individual becomes hostile or enters in an angry state of mind, and by virtue of less than optimal treatment, becomes more and more frustrated and abusive. In a typical escalation cycle, the employee overreacts which in turn, increases the anger of the client. If the cycle is not interrupted, the situation becomes a crisis situation, out of control, where people may be put at risk.

Escalation doesn't have to happen. It is important the employee be aware of his or her own behaviour in contributing to this cycle, particularly because the employee will bear the stress problems that crises bring with them.

When the situation moves to crisis; the probability of violence increases, as does the probability that the person will cause unpleasantness after they leave.

- Swearing
- Sudden silence
- Personal space invaded
- Fist Clenching
- Aggressive stance
- Interrupting
- Not listening



In many cases, the cycle can be stopped provided the employee is able to step back from the situation, handle it professionally, and not get sucked into arguments or other behaviour that will contribute to the cycle. What is important is that you are able to stop, or prevent escalation right from the beginning. It is a lot easier to prevent hostile behaviour than to deal with it once it has emerged, full-blown.



Communication

Communication is the major make-or-break factor in handling conflict, as it is in handling life. We are so used to trying to get our message across, and judging and interpreting the meaning of what other people say that we tend to respond too quickly, often without having any significant understanding of the other person.

The key factor in effective communication is maintaining openness. This means speaking in a way that will keep the communication flowing, rather than causing your audience to close off or become defensive.





Assume that the customer has a right to vent

If you are working in any capacity that directly interfaces with customers, you are going to encounter an irate customer at some stage. The most common response is to evaluate the merit of the complaint while you are listening to it. Try to curb that common response and replace it with the assumption that the customer has a right to vent, even before you know the details.

- The customer may be angry because he or she made incorrect assumptions that led to improper expectations.
- The customer may be angry because of previous experiences, or simply because the problem occurred at a very inconvenient time.
- Regardless of the circumstances, acknowledge the customer has the privilege to be irate.
- Listen carefully to how the anger is expressed so you can find the root cause of the emotion

Listen to emotion without emotion

Listen to the inflections and emphasis that the customer places on specific topics to identify the emotional catalyst. Listen to the emotion as well as the words. This will help you to identify the specific item or items that need primary attention. Resolving a technical issue may be only partially effective if it does not also address the customer's emotional concern. It may not be possible to completely resolve the emotional distress, but it is appropriate to acknowledge it.

Do not respond with emotion. Remember that the customer's anger is not directed at you personally, even if the customer's language is directed at you. If the customer's language is attacking and borderline abusive, it is because the customer is looking for acknowledgement and response to the emotional distress. It may be necessary to repeatedly acknowledge the customer's emotion to diffuse the situation.

Be Patient

Customer conversations come in waves. When the customer is at the peak of expressing anger, sorrow or distress, be patient and listen. It is not effective to interrupt the customer when he or she is venting combustible sentiments. It is like pouring petrol on a raging fire. Rather, wait for the waves of emotion to recede and then use that opportunity to interject with reassuring comments.

Sometimes the customer's anger will erupt and return like another set of waves. When that happens, be patient and wait for the customer to run out of petrol before you approach the fire again. Take quiet deep breaths and wait patiently for your turn to speak.



Speak softly

If you encounter a loud and abusive customer, respond by speaking softly and with a very steady tone. If you try to shout over the customer or interrupt, then the customer will concentrate on the verbal battle for attention and will not pay attention to the importance of your message.

If you want your message to be heard, wait for a pause from the customer. Silence is your golden cue that it is time to speak your important message in a soft voice. Eventually the customer will have to lower his or her voice to hear what you are saying.

Even though it may seem that the customer does not care about what you have to say at first, remember that the customer approached you for resolution. The customer may have built up a considerable amount of emotion before reaching you, but ultimately the customer does want your advice and assistance to resolve the problem. Once the customer remembers why he or she contacted you, the customer will be receptive to your soft spoken conversation.

Reiterate

After you have listened carefully to the customer, reiterate the priorities that you believe that you heard from the customer perspective. This will assure that you are focused on the appropriate issues and reassure the customer that you are concentrating on the proper priorities.

Use a soft, firm and inquisitive voice. Ask the customer to confirm that you have restated the facts and priorities accurately, and in some cases write them down.

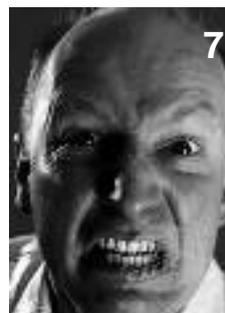
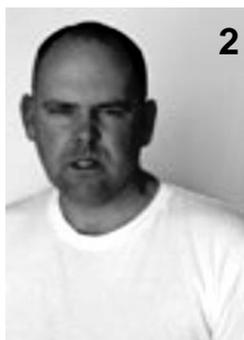
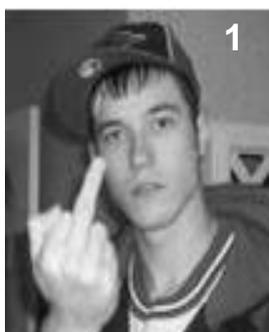
Own the Problem

Sometimes it may be tempting to distance yourself from the problem by stating that you are not responsible for it, that another department will need to handle it, or that you are just a messenger.

Put that temptation in a can and put a lid on it. Expressing that you do not have ownership of the problem or the potential resolution gives the customer a feeling of being adrift and powerless. If the customer senses that he or she is communicating with someone who is powerless, it will create yet another reason to be frustrated and angry.

Facial & Body Language Visual Observation

View these pictures below and tick the ones that you find that portray the signs of negativity, anger or intimidating body language.



Circle the number below to match the numbered picture above of which person you would you feel comfortable staying and holding a conversation with.

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Body language

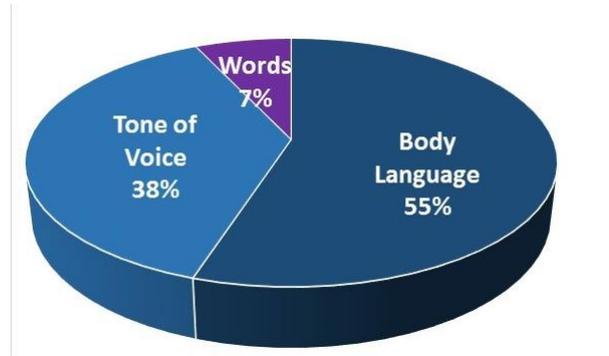
Body language is the meaning behind the words or the “unspoken” language.

Studies show we use the following ways to communicate:

7% is verbal -what we say

38% is voice – tone, pitch and volume

55% is body language



The majority of the rest of communication is unspoken. This unspoken language isn't rocket science. However, there are some generalisations or basic interpretations that can be applied to help with the understanding or translating of these unspoken meanings. Here are some basics below.

Eyes / Arms

If you don't look someone in the eyes while speaking, this can be interpreted as dishonesty or hiding something. Do not fold your arms whilst in conversation with another person, this can be seen as defensive, so have your arms free.

Attention Span / Attitude

Other people can tell what type of attitude you have by your attention span. This shows through and makes you seem disinterested, bored, possibly even uncaring.

Attention Direction

If working a group, ensure everyone is included in the conversation and angle of view. (Avoid people moving in behind you) If need be, single a person out and ask them to move aside with you so you can speak to them on a one on one basis.

Personal Space / Distance

Give people room and keep out of their space. Entering too close can be intrusive and viewed as aggressive.

Shaking hands



As a rule, we generally try to avoid shaking hands or any form of physical contact with our customers for obvious safety and perception reasons.

Shaking hands, although basically a ritual, may also contain significant acts of domination.

The '**power grip**' grabs the other person's hand firmly and shakes vigorously.

The '**vice grip**' does this to extreme, intending to demonstrate strength by causing pain.

The '**hand on top**' method offers the palm down, using the principle that being above the other person in any way symbolises superiority. This is often combined with an elbow grab.

The '**not letting go**' method - If you do not let go within the prescribed period, then you are taking control. Even for a second, this can send power signals.

Possible Threat Signals

Attack signals

When somebody is about to attack, they give visual signal such as clenching of fists ready to strike and lowering and spreading of the body for stability.

Invasion

Invading the space of the other person in some way is an act of aggression that is equivalent to one country invading another. Touching the person is another form of invasion even social touch zones, such as arm or back can be construed as aggressive.

False friendship

Invasion is often done under the cloak of familiarity, where someone acts as if they are being friendly and moves into your space, but *without being invited*. This will cause a dilemma of whether to repel a 'friendly' advance or to accept dominance of the other.

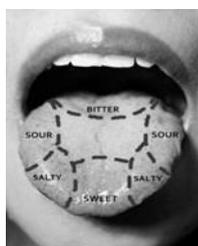
The Five senses – Use them to your advantage as an early warning system



The **ear** (an organ) is specially made to receive sound waves that are sent out by vibrating objects and converts them into sensations we call sound.



The **nose** contains the nostrils and organs of smell. The stimulus that excites smell is chemical, for example onion and garlic give off different chemical sensations.



The **tongue** is the organ that controls taste. Taste is also a chemical stimulus. Things to be tasted must touch the tongue, sometimes, taste become combined with smell because of the connection between the mouth and the back of the nose.



Touch is created by stimulating the skin (the largest organ of the body) through the sensations of touch, pressure, pain, heat and cold



The **eye** (an organ) acts like a camera. Human vision is stereoscopic, which means seeing in three dimensions. When we look at objects two slightly different images are transmitted to the brain, and are merged so the brain can interpret the image that we see. This allows us to see objects which stand away from the background, not flat like you see in a photograph.

Recognise the Signals

Each one of these images below contains potential conflict that could be applicable to you on any given day or night, ranging from a mild form of intimidation through to possible fatal conflict encounter.

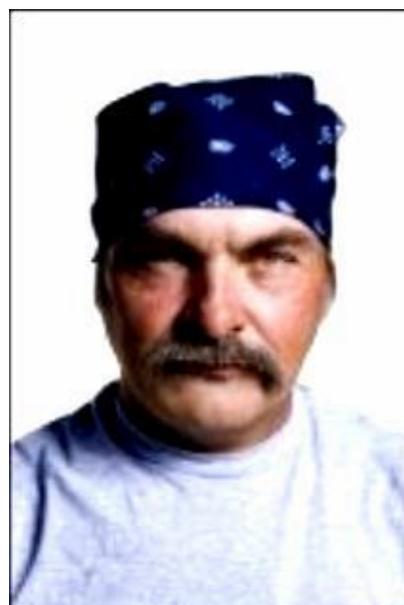


- **Do Not** stay and try and **Defend Your Honour** or the fact that you are right
- Remember body stance for your own balance
- Use distractions around you to your advantage
- When walking away keep an eye on where the person is and if they are trying to follow you
- Use the nearest exit point to leave the area
- If need be place yourself between something and the aggressor until help arrives

Describing an Offender

If you are involved in a conflict situation, which has escalated out of control, you may need to provide a good description of the offender, outlined below are the basic points to recall the information required later.

- Gender
- Nationality (e.g. European or Caucasian, Polynesian, Maori, Indian, Asian etc.)
- Age 10 year blocks
- Appearance (Body build, height, weight, scars, tattoos, hair style, jewelry)
- Clothing
- Vehicle Registration, make & model colour and what direction the vehicle has gone





How good are your observation skills?

Using the picture you looked at on the previous page describe the man in the photo in the way you would describe an offender from memory.

Gender	
Nationality	
Age	
Physical appearance	
Clothing	
Vehicle	



Offensive Weapon

As an employee and a member of the public yourself, you must always be aware of any life-threatening situation that may present itself. This may involve a person brandishing a weapon. Hopefully this may never occur, however in today's current climate you should keep a constant vigil towards your own safety and be prepared to deal effectively with this type of scenario, should it present itself.

What procedures would you follow if you encountered someone that pulled out a knife and displayed it in a threatening manner?

When notified of a possible bomb threat in the area you are working why is it necessary not to use a radio telephone or cell phone close by to the location?





How to cope when dealing with alcohol or drug induced people

Identify the potential for conflict quickly and take swift and tactful action to prevent any escalation.

- Be as understanding as possible.

- People that become angry when they are drunk often have a difficult time coping with anger when sober. Understanding this will help you when diffusing the situation.

- Always stay calm. Getting equally upset and angry will only escalate the situation.

- Avoid subjects that trigger their anger.

- Avoid trying to yell over them. They will only get louder and the situation will only get worse. Instead, use a low and calm voice.

- Don't be bossy.

- Do not demand that they leave or that they stop talking. This will only make the person defensive causing their anger to intensify.

- Stay safe. Know when it is time to leave them alone or you may end up bearing the brunt of all their anger either through hurtful comments or worse, physical violence.

Identifying the effects of common drugs

Methamphetamine AKA 'P'

- Energy and alertness
- Talkativeness, increased confidence, excitement
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of power and invincibility
- Aggression, paranoia, irritability
- Increased heart rate, breathing and blood pressure
- Sweating, dry mouth, dilated pupils
- Reduced appetite



Marijuana

- Increased appetite
- Red eyes
- Slow movement
- Paranoia



LSD

- Unpredictable behaviour
- Extreme changes in mood
- Delusions
- Dilated pupils
- Increased blood sugar
- Tremors
- Sleeplessness



Cocaine

- Angry
- Hostile
- Psychosis
- Extreme addiction
- Dilated pupils
- Panic
- Violence
- Erratic behaviour
- Tactile hallucinations



Heroin

- Confusion
- Nausea and vomiting
- Light sensitivity.
- Slowed respiration.
- Slowed heart rate.
- Bluish hands, feet, lips, etc.
- Damaged teeth and skin



Ecstasy AKA MDMA

- High energy levels
- Euphoric state
- Desire for physical contact
- Elevated alertness
- Heightened empathy
- Sweating or chills
- Tension in mouth, face and jaw

