

## Tips on Dealing with Difficult Customers or People

- 1. Maintain self control.** Losing your cool and giving in to emotion will only escalate the situation. Lower your voice and speak slowly making sure to listen and not place blame
- 2. Ask non-threatening questions** beginning with "what is it that needs accomplished" to identify the root cause of the difficulty
- 3. Listen to the customer's reason for being difficult.** Few people are difficult without a reason - even if that reason does not seem important to you
- 4. Acknowledge the problem,** then repeat it back to the client to ensure understanding
- 5. Don't argue.** Justifying your actions will only fuel the difficulty. If you do feel you must defend your actions, give your one best reason and then stop
- 6. Apologize** - even if you think the client is wrong. Avoid assigning blame, even if the client's actions helped create the situation
- 7. Offer a Solution** - make a specific commitment as to what actions you will take. If you can't make things right, offer an alternative solution to accomplish the goal.
- 8. Continue to act professionally.** Demonstrate a high level of professional competence, and make doubly sure that every detail of the transaction is handled correctly
- 9. Find out what caused the client's behavior** so that you can avoid a repetition of the incident and follow-up to make sure it was resolved.
- 10. Focus on the SOLUTION rather than dwelling on the problem** – people become upset because they want a result or solution they feel they have not obtained. The fastest and most effective method of satisfying an upset client is to provide a solution.

**Set limits on what you will tolerate,** saying no to a client is ok as long as you are making a rational business decision and not an emotional response. If you want to try and preserve the relationship, ask someone of authority or customer service to assist.

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