

SMALL TALK



KNOWING SMALL TALK

What is it?

- Pleasant conversation about common interests or topics that are not very important

Who makes it?

- People who do not know each other well or at all (friend of a friend, office employees who are mere acquaintances, receptionists, hairdressers, waitresses or waiters etc.)

Why Small Talk?

- To break the ice
- To fill an awkward silence

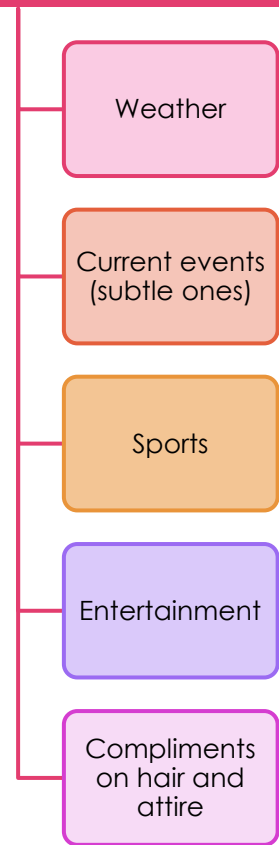
Where to make it?

- Often at places where people wait for something
- Bus/train stops
- Lounges
- Doctor's waiting room
- Queues in a grocery store
- Elevators
- Dining rooms, rest rooms
- Social events

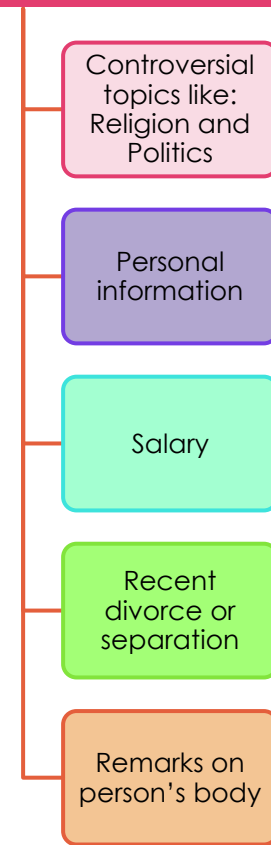


SMALL TALK ABOUT WHAT?

“Safe” Topics:



“To be avoided” Topics:



WHEN do people make small talk?

1

The most common time to small talk to occur is the first time you see or meet someone on a given day. For example, if you see a co-worker in the lounge you might say hello and discuss the sports or weather. However, the next time you see each other you might just smile and say nothing.

2

If there is very little noise that might be an indication that it is the right time to initiate a casual conversation. You should only spark up a conversation after someone smiles and acknowledges you.

3

Do not interrupt two people in order to discuss something unimportant such as the weather. If someone is reading a book or writing a letter at the bus stop it is not appropriate to initiate a conversation either.

4

Another good time to make small talk during a break in a meeting or presentation when there is nothing important going on. Finally, it is important to recognize the cue when the other person wants the conversation to stop.



Small Talk: Conversation Starters

Talking about the weather

- Beautiful day, isn't it?
- It looks like going to snow.
- It sure would be nice to be in Hawaii right about now.
- I hear they're calling for thunder storms all weekend.
- We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we?
- How about this weather?
- Did you order this sunshine?

At the office

- Looking forward to the weekend?
- Have you worked here long?
- I can't believe how busy/quiet we are today, can you?
- Has it been a long week?
- You look like you could use a cup of coffee.
- What do you think of the new computers?

Waiting somewhere

- I didn't think it would be so easy today.
- You look like you've got your hands full (with children or goods).
- The bus must be running late today.
- It looks like we are going to be here a while, huh?
- I'll have to remember not to come here on Mondays.
- How long have you been waiting?

At a social event

- So, how do you know Justin?
- Have you tried to cabbage rolls that Sandy made?
- Are you enjoying yourself?
- It looks like you could use another drink.
- Pretty nice place, huh?
- I love your dress. Can I ask where you got it?

Small Talk: Conversation Starters

Talking about current events

- Did you catch the news today?
- Did you hear about that fire on Fourth St?
- What do you think about this transit strike?
- I read in the paper today that the Sears Mall is closing.
- I heard on the radio today that they are finally going to start building the new bridge.
- How about those Reds? Do you think they're going to win tonight?

Out for a walk

- How old's your baby?
- The tulips are sure beautiful at this time of year, aren't they?
- How do you like the new park?
- Nice day to be outside, isn't it?



COMMON TOPICS TO MAKE SMALL TALK



SPORTS (CURRENT
MATCHES,
FAVORITE TEAMS
ETC.)



HOBBIES



WEATHER



MEDIA (FILMS,
BOOKS,
MAGAZINES ETC.)



HOMETOWN
(WHERE DO YOU
COME FROM?
HOW IS IT
DIFFERENT/LIKE THIS
TOWN)



LATEST FASHION
AND TRENDS



CELEBRITIES



WAYS TO GET BETTER AT SMALL TALK

1. Demonstrate interest in your conversation partner.



2. Ask open-ended questions.



3. Allow your conversation partner to teach you.



4. Read the news.



5. Be honest.



6. Copy good conversationalists.



7. Boost your conversation partner's self-esteem.



8. Ask, 'What's keeping you busy these days?'



9. Know that other people feel weird.



HOW TO MAKE SMALL TALK



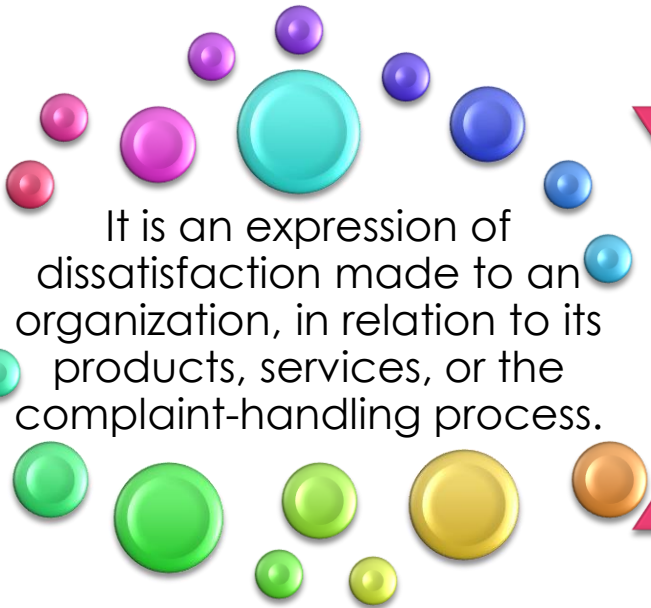
HOW NOT TO MAKE SMALL TALK





HANDLING COMPLAINTS EFFECTIVELY



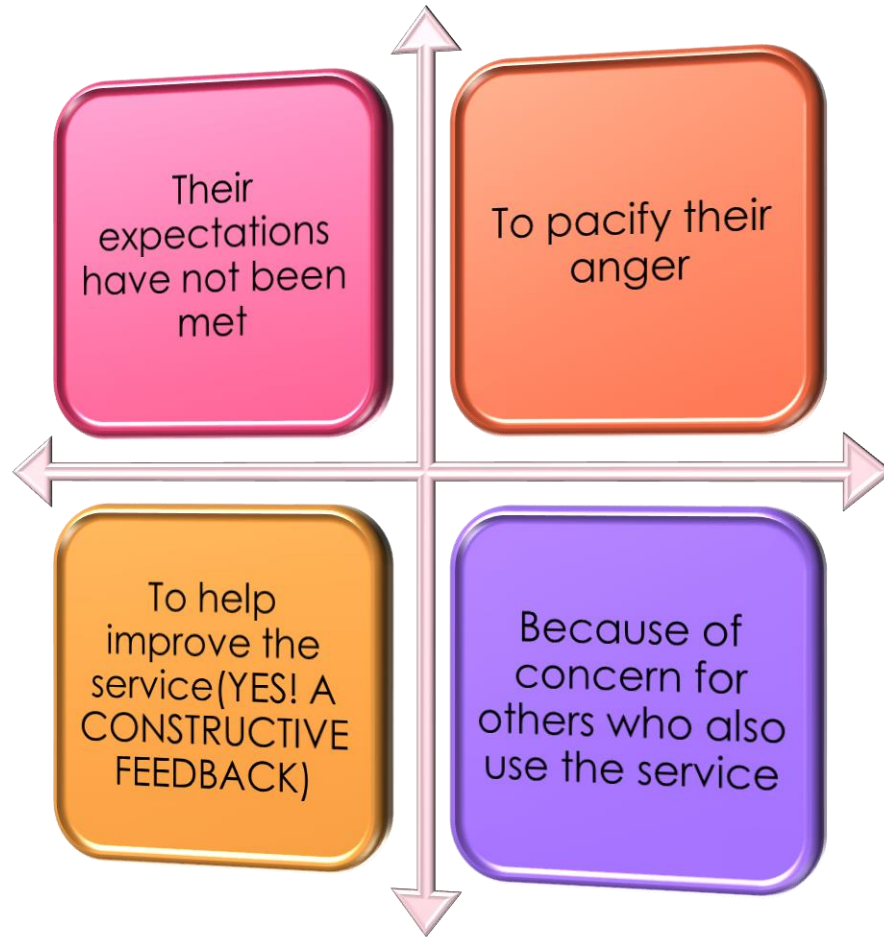


It is an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, in relation to its products, services, or the complaint-handling process.

Purpose of making a complaint is to explicitly or implicitly get a desired response or resolution

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?





WHY DO PEOPLE COMPLAIN?



COMMON COMPLAINTS

Wrong information

Poor customer service attitude

Overpricing

Lack of adequate information

Delays

Unresponsiveness of service providers



WHY COMPLAINT HANDLING IS SIGNIFICANT?



REDUCES STRESS (THAT OF
THE COMPLAINANT AND
SERVICE PROVIDER BOTH)



PROVIDES A FEEL-GOOD
FACTOR



RESULTS IN CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION



COMPLAINT: A GIFT(A BLESSING IN DISGUISE)!

Complaints are gift packages waiting to be opened because they:

Are given freely

Are not solicited

Are unexpected..
They come as a surprise

If handled well,
hold the key to
delight for
recipient
organization



WHY TREAT IT AS A GIFT?



Because by making a complaint, the caller is communicating directly with the organization about the service failures, competitor offerings etc. without any extra cost of conducting a survey



Complaints define what the service seekers want, thus giving the organization pf a thorough market research



If handled properly, increases customer trust, helps building long term relationships



It is chance for the organization to retain the customer



STEPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS EFFECTIVELY - YOUR REACTION TO THE COMPLAINT MATTERS!

Service providers react to customer complaints in different ways.

Some:

- Ignore complaints
- Become defensive
- Become angry or annoyed
- Are concerned about the loss of trade or the damage of their professional reputation



STEPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS EFFECTIVELY - YOUR REACTION TO THE COMPLAINT MATTERS!

Others:

- Treat complaints as hindrance (they just wish the customer would go away or they don't believe some or all of what the customer is complaining about)



HANDLING COMPLAINTS EFFECTIVELY



CHARACTERISTICS PORTRAYED BY CUSTOMERS WHILE COMPLAINING



Expect such behavior and remember however that a complaint is evidence that, in the customer's view, we have not met their expectations



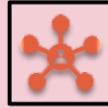
HOW TO HANDLE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS?



HOW TO HANDLE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS?



Address customer by name

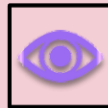


All communication should be
in singular first person

Use “I am sorry” not “we”



Don't make excuse or blame others in your organization



Give the customer your full attention and establish eye
contact



Paraphrase their complaint in your own words to determine
whether you have correctly understood the situation



HOW TO HANDLE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS?



If you don't know the answer to their problem, don't lie.



Call back when you say you will, even if for some reason, you haven't been able to obtain a satisfactory answer by then



Make the customer part of the solution

Not part of the problem



HOW TO HANDLE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS?

Don't

be defensive



Be

composed at all times



Don't take

criticisms personally



Offer

an apology even if the disservice is not your fault



Show

empathy by using such phrases as: "I can understand how you feel", "I appreciate what you're saying."



HOW TO HANDLE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS?



TELL THEM WHAT YOU
CAN DO, NOT WHAT
YOU CAN'T DO



FIND OUT WHAT IT WILL
TAKE TO TURN THEIR
DISSATISFACTION INTO
THEIR SATISFACTION



IF THEY AGREE TO THAT
SOLUTION, ACT
QUICKLY BEFORE THEY
CHANGE THEIR MIND



FOLLOW UP



AND REMEMBER: YOU
CAN NEVER WIN AN
ARGUMENT WITH A
CUSTOMER



STEPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Acknowledge

Acknowledge receipt of the complaint

- It is important that you acknowledge the receipt of the complaints, oral or written. Preferably allocate a complaint reference number and provide customer with a contact point for further correspondence.

Record

Accurately record complaint information and make it accessible

- Make sure that your recorded version of the complaint matches exactly with what the customer said. Also make sure that the complaint record is accessible by any branch of the organization that the customer may contact.

Attach

Attach timeframes for resolution of complaint

- The company should attempt to resolve complaints on first contact, but if this is not possible, then a complaint should be finalized within a specific number of days e.g., 10



STEPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Customer must be informed about any delays in resolving a complaint

As soon as you realize that they are unable to resolve a complaint within the given timeframe, contact the customer, and inform him/her of the delay and set a new timeline.

Make staff aware of complaint handling procedures

The complaint handling procedure should be known to all employees and be part of regular training

Inform customers of complaint handling procedures

Posting your complaint handling procedures on your office premises is a good way to inform customers. Also, these procedures may be incorporated in the organization's brochure



Dealing with complaints



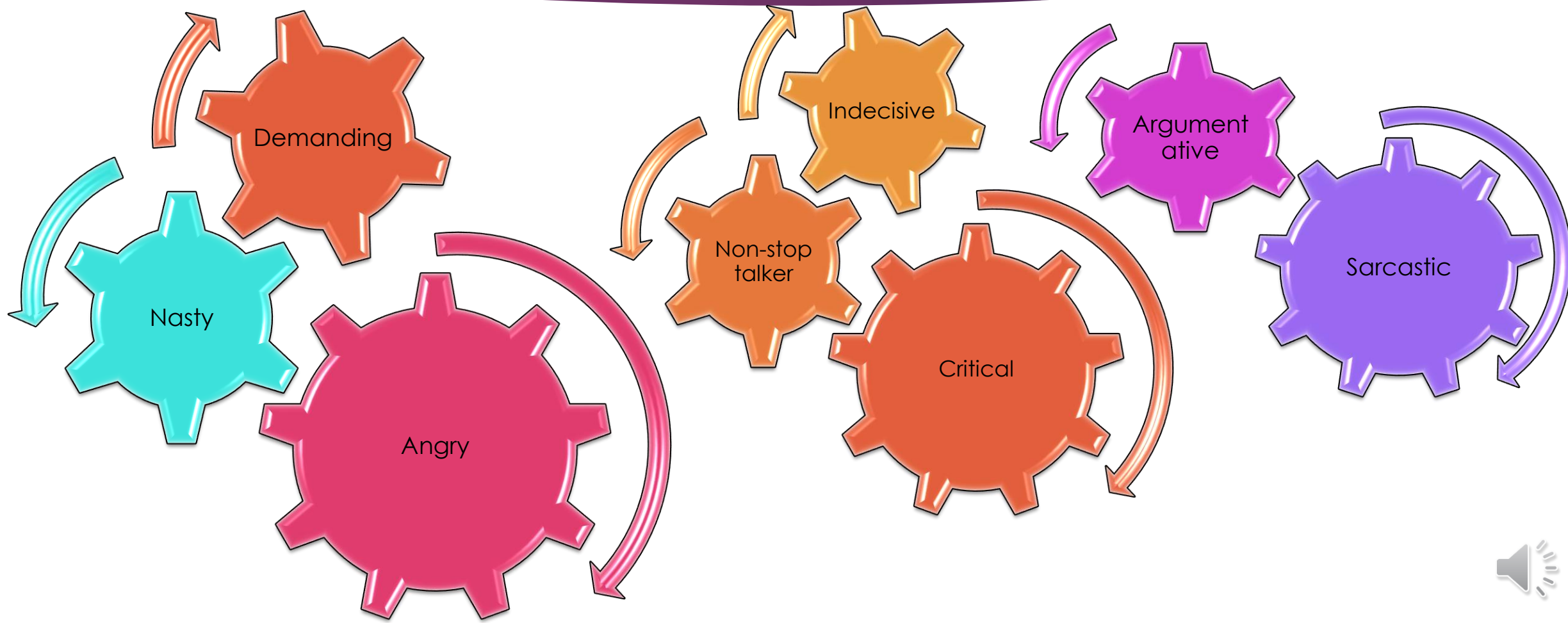
HANDLING DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Who is a difficult customer?

How to handle such people?



TYPES OF DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS



WHY ARE THEY DIFFICULT?



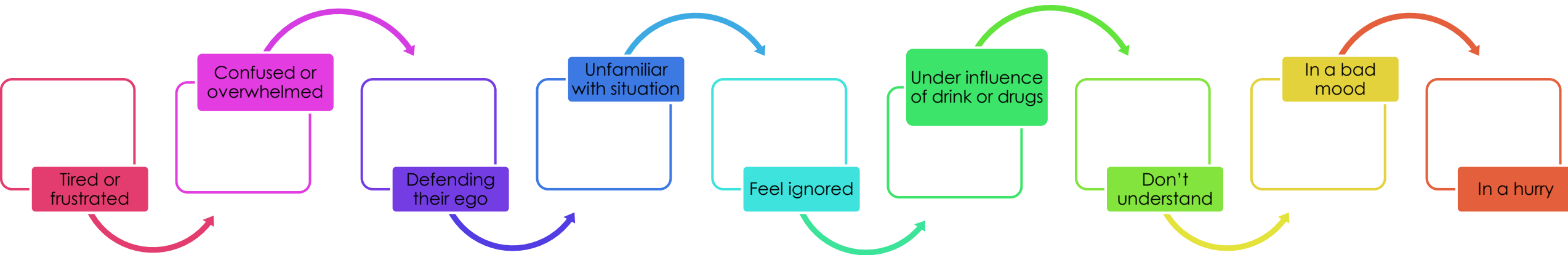
THEY ARE OFTEN EXPRESSING A NEED
BUT CHOOSE AN INAPPROPRIATE OR
IMPOLITE WAY TO COMMUNICATE THIS



THEY ARE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THEIR
OWN REASONS NOT BECAUSE OF YOU



COMMON REASON FOR BEING DIFFICULT



HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS?

Approach them professionally and not personally

Taking things personally can damage your professional reputation

Listen for the signals that you are taking things personally

Check your customer service attitude

Attitude is the key to success



This job would be very good if it weren't for the difficult people, I have to deal with everyday



HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS?



Remind yourself!

This is my job and I'm going to do it professionally
If it were not for these customers, I would not have a job

Every time I solve a problem, I will feel better



Reinforce this by saying...

"I like the job, not because it's easy, not because there are no difficult people, not because there are no frustrations but because people are part of any job and I can make things easier by taking things professionally"



SUMMARY

1

Be positive

2

**Take things
professionally
not personally**

3

**Aim for
customer
satisfaction, not
just service**

4

**Solve problems
without blaming
yourself or
others**

5

**Remember
attitudes are
caught, not
taught**



SUMMARY

If you can't verify the solution say, "Please let me know if there's anything else I can do for you. I'm happy to help!"

If you can verify the solution say, "I've tested this myself and it all appears to be working as expected. But please let me know if you're still running into issues."

Log the complaint so you can track trends

Dig deeper by asking the right questions

What do you mean by...?
Could you expand on that point further?
What other information do I need?
Why is the complaint important?

Identify the type of customer you're dealing with

Who aren't shy
Who pay well and need premium support
Who contact frequently

Respond to the customer quickly

Present a solution, and verify that the problem is solved



LEARN!

Listen- Listen carefully to you customer. Don't interrupt or tell the customer to calm down, this will only ignite their anger

Empathize- Feel the pain of the customer, that them you can understand how they feel

Apologize- Apologize to the customer, even if you feel that you have no part in the problem. Do not blame the customer, but there is no need to take the blame yourself!

React- Decide what you will do to resolve the problem and tell this to the customer.

Now!- Do not delay, take immediate action



BLAST!

Believe- believe what your customer is saying is true

Listen- Don't just hear, listen to your customer

Address- Apologize and address the problem

Solve- Come to an agreement on how to solve the problem.

Thank- Thank the customers for their business



Complaint Management – **NO MESS**ing about!



Dealing with unhappy customers is an Art.



GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK


Compliments: Are positive but don't tell us how to improve

Criticism: is negative but doesn't tell us how to improve

Feedback: can be positive/negative
but does help us improve



FEEDBACK




It is an information about reactions to a product or a person's performance of a task which may be used as a basis for improvement.

Modifications or control of a process or system by its results or effects

It is the response of the audience, which enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of the message.

When an event is a part of a chain of cause-and-effect that forms a circuit or a loop, then the event is coined as "FEEDBACK"



EFFECTS OF FEEDBACK

01

Feedback makes communication meaningful

02

It sustains the communication process

03

It tells whether communication is making sense or not

04

It helps to plan the future strategies

05

It completes the process of communication and makes it effective



TYPES OF FEEDBACKS

Constructive

Is meant to improve the performance of an individual or a team and should not be used to tear them down.

Instills confidence in people while gently telling them what they could do in the future to perform even better.

Used by visionary leaders

Destructive

Points at faults and is a direct attack on the individual or the organization. In this, no practical feedback or supportive assessment or advice is given

Used by playground bullies



HOW TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK?

When providing constructive feedback, one must try to do following things:

Focus on the situation, not the person

Comment on the issue, not the person

For example:
"The assignment is late" not "You are late in submitting the assignment"

Don't make personal attacks

Share how a problem affects you, without going on and on about it

Be specific with your feedback as this will allow the receiver to know what needs to be changed or continued

Give feedback personally as this helps develop a connection and make people feel valued and it allows questions and clarity



5-Step Strategy for Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving Feedback

1. Examine your motivations
2. Ask for permission
3. Prioritize the feedback
4. Give specific examples and ideas
5. Check in

Receiving Feedback

1. Assume non-defensive, open body language
2. Paraphrase the feedback
3. Request specific ideas and examples
4. Ask them to prioritize
5. Thank them

For more resources, visit www.AmericasMarketingMotivator.com



CHARACTERISTICS TO BE POSSESSED WHILE GIVING FEEDBACK

Be realistic

- Direct your comments towards matters which can be worked on

Be specific

- Generalizations are particularly unhelpful
- Base the feedback on concrete observable behavior

Be sensitive

- Be thoughtful in your comments and tone

Be descriptive

- Don't be evaluative, being descriptive does the magic

Be non-judgmental

- Offer your personal view
- Do not act as an authority, even if you are one elsewhere
- Give your personal reactions rather than the value laden statements



CHARACTERISTICS TO BE POSSESSED WHILE GIVING FEEDBACK

Don't compare

- Treat each person's work as his/her own, not some part of a competition with others

Be diligent

- Check your responses
 - Is it an accurate reflection of what you want to express?
 - Have you perceived the contribution accurately

Be direct

- Say what you mean, don't wrap it up with fancy words

Be positive

- Say what you appreciate

Be aware

- Note your own emotional state before giving feedback



CHARACTERISTICS TO BE POSSESSED WHILE RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Be explicit

- Make it clear what kind of feedback are you seeking
- If necessary, indicate what kinds you do not want to receive

Be attentive

- Take time to listen, to understand and consider what is being said by rephrasing and being interested in other person's point of view
- Ask for suggestions on how to enhance your practice and grow professionally

Be aware

- Notice your own reactions, both intellectual and emotional
- Be aware of your reactions of rejections or censorship on your part

Be silent

- Refrain from making a response
- Don't be distracted by the need to explain



Do's and Don'ts

Giving and receiving feedback

Do		Don't	
Giving Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Start with positive feedback•Be specific about problems•Ask other person their opinion•Focus on thing that can be improved•Focus on facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Exaggerate•Be general with problems•Start sentences with "You" if you are saying something negative•Talk for too long•BE careful when giving advise directly if not asked for (Avoid "Should")	
Receiving Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Ask for examples•Ask for ways in which you could improve•Acknowledge valid points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Be defensive	

