

# **How to Adapt Your Service Style for a Difficult Customer**

## ***For a Random to Service a Sequential***

Pay close attention to timing. Don't be late for this customer!

Try not to surprise them. They don't like surprises.

Keep good track of any commitments and make sure you follow through on them in order, on time.

Answer their questions with appropriate, relevant answers. Don't change the subject.

Ask them what they want you to do, when, in what order.

## ***For a Sequential to service a Random***

Be prepared to change directions and do something you hadn't expected to have to do. Their priorities may change.

Remind them politely of what they had asked you to do if they seem to have forgotten. Make sure they still want it.

Don't get upset if they seem to keep changing the subject or changing their mind. Their style is just different from yours.

## ***For a Divergent to service a Convergent***

Check what the plan is and review your commitments. Then make sure that you deliver what you promised. If you don't, they will notice and object.

If you see a real need to change approach or direction, explain it and seek their permission first.

Recognize that closure is important to them, and try to focus on completing and delivering work neatly and well.

Don't confuse things by trying to introduce other projects, proposals or problems in the middle of things. Stay focused and they will respond well.

### ***For a Convergent to service a Divergent***

Listen to their concerns and ideas, even if you don't think them relevant. They won't be comfortable until they've looked at many options.

Don't try to force fit a plan or solution that they aren't comfortable with.

Try to be flexible! If they want to do things differently @md or do many things at once, then let them.

Don't hurry them.

### ***For a Private to service a Public***

Make an effort to share your thoughts and feelings so they don't think you are unfriendly.

Don't try to "quiet them down" if they are upset. They may need to vent their feelings, and it is natural for them to do so in an uninhibited manner. Just smile and act sympathetic and they will quickly calm down. At least they are willing to come forward and tell you what's wrong.

In discussions, try to ask them what they think instead of telling them what they should think. Lead them to the brink of answers, then let them provide the answers.

### ***For a Public to service a Private***

Make a point of listening more than usual and try talk less than they do.

Make sure that you give them plenty of personal space. Don't sit or stand too near them or ask too many personal questions.

Speak quietly.

Don't worry about silences. They probably like longer gaps for thinking than you do.

Keep a close eye out for any problems so you don't miss them. This

customer is unlikely to come forward complain. If you don't ask and correct, they will simply defect.

### ***For a Receptive to service an Expressive***

Your ability to listen and sense what they want allows you to be the ultimate service person. Use your listening skills to make sure you know how this customer feels and what they want.

Expect this customer to complain often. Not all of these complaints are truly serious. Many are just emotional outbursts that will blow over quickly. If one doesn't, then you can go into overdrive and solve the problem.

Give them plenty of emotional support and positive feedback. They want to hear that things are going well.

Don't rush them when they are talking. Your willingness to listen and show concern will strengthen the customer relationship.

### ***For an Expressive to service a Receptive***

Remember to ask and listen, not just talk. It is too easy to dominate your interactions and never find out what they think or want.

Slow down. Ask easy questions, and wait for them to elaborate upon the answers.

Probe with questions to learn more about them and their priorities and concerns. It is easy to miss opportunities because this customer does not volunteer information.

A good rule is to try to make the customer the subject of conversations, not yourself.