

The Consultant's Corner

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INSIGHTS  SUCCESS
"Building On Strengths"

5 Tips for Dealing with Angry Customers and Co-Workers

In every business, mistakes happen and co-workers or customers get angry. But when a problem is fixed properly and stays fixed--loyalty actually increases!

Here are five steps you can take to not only resolve the problem but also actually build loyalty with your co-workers and customers. In fact, you can use these steps to deal with anger and build positive relationships in all areas of your life.

1. **Listen carefully to the person who is angry.** Active listening requires a lot of effort and cannot be accomplished when we're distracted. You need to stop everything you are doing and give your customer 100% of your attention.
2. **Empathize with the other person's concerns.** Let him or her know that you sincerely care about the problem even if you don't agree with their comments.



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Stop Employees from Protecting Their Turf

Employees who won't share work or information with co-workers can drag down your entire staff. Help territorial employees loosen their "turf" grip with these steps:

- ◆ Describe how their behavior affects the organization's goals. Example: "To help process orders within 24 hours-which is our top service priority this year-we periodically will need to see your order-summary reports, Eugene. When you don't share them, we can't monitor our progress."
- ◆ Explain the importance of shared responsibility. Today's organizations can't afford not to share information and institutional knowledge. Discuss with territorial employees the need to share information about their work so that someone else could complete simple tasks in their absence.
- ◆ Show how sharing information leads to job security. Territorial employees sometimes control critical functions within the organization to make themselves irreplaceable. Let them know that their thinking is dangerously outdated. Show them the traits you really value are versatility, adaptability and the ability to function in diverse environments.



Source: *Manager's Edge*, as adapted from *Resolving Territorial Conflict: Who Took My Parking Space?*
www.employer-employee.com.



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Staff Coaching

You can find a coaching opportunity in the most ordinary task or interaction. Each is a chance to improve the performance and morale of your staff.

Superior coaching brings out the best in people, and even your top performers can benefit. Help your staff grow by providing a quality coaching program.



Department of Labor – Latest Numbers

Consumer Price Index:

📈 +0.7% in Jan 2006

Unemployment Rate:

📈 4.7% in Jan 2006

Payroll Employment:

📈 +193,000 in Jan 2006

Average Hourly Earnings:

📈 +\$.07 in Jan 2006

Producer Price Index:

📈 +0.3% in Jan 2006

Employment Cost Index:

📈 +0.8% in 4th Qtr of 2005

Productivity:

📉 -0.6% in 4th Qtr of 2005

Source: www.bls.gov (4 Mar 2006)

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Let him or her know that you sincerely care about the problem even if you don't agree with their comments. One way to show you care is to thank that person for bringing the problem to your attention

3. **Apologize** even if you are not the cause of the problem. When said sincerely, the words "I'm sorry" can remove as much as 95% of most people's anger.
4. **Resolve** the problem. Show your co-worker or customer that you are on his or her side and will do everything you can to help them get the problem resolved. If an employee in another department can fix it, help make the transition smooth by explaining the problem so they don't have to tell their story more than once.
5. **Now** is the time to address the problem. When a problem is addressed quickly and with care, loyalty actually goes up.



The best way to handle a situation in which a co-worker is angry or upset is to remember the acronym **L.E.A.R.N.** and apply the five steps listed above. Then feel great about the positive difference you made in that individual's day!

Increase Business with Referrals

Increase business by asking for a referral from an existing customer. Referrals are one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to market. Referrals have more impact than any other marketing strategy or advertising because prospective customers rely on the confidence and trust that your existing customers have for you. A satisfied customer is usually glad to help you and can provide a strong testimonial for your company. This can open doors quickly for new customers.



Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

— George S. Patton

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