**HOW TO DEAL WITH IRATE CUSTOMERS**

The first step in resolving a difficult situation is to diffuse the customer’s anger so they are ready to listen to your solution. Angry customers are one of the most challenging aspects of customer service, but they are also an opportunity. If you can successfully diffuse an irate customer and find an acceptable solution to their complaint, you can transform that angry person into a loyal customer for life.

**Begin by Listening**

Most irate customers need time to vent before they are ready to listen to what you have to say. Give them that time right from the beginning – actively listening to the complaint so you can get to the underlying problem and a possible solution.

Sometimes it helps to repeat the problem back to the customer to ensure you have heard them correctly and understand the problem accurately. Clarifying questions can also help you get a good grasp of the situation so you can recommend a viable solution as quickly as possible.

**Do Not Answer Emotion with Emotion**

It is easy to get emotional when someone gets angry with you. However the furious customer on the other side of the counter or phone line is likely not mad at you – but rather angry at your company. If you can avoid taking the complaint personally, you will be more likely to respond to the customer’s anger with calm and patience.

If you feel your temperature rising, excuse yourself for just a moment to calm down or bring another staff member into the picture that can provide a calming influence.

**Watch Your Tone and Volume**

The best way to counter a high volume from a customer is with a low one that exudes calm and patience. By the same token, watch your tone when you are responding to an angry customer. If the customer senses sarcasm, nastiness, or condescension in your voice, you are more likely to escalate the situation, rather than diffuse it.

**Apologize When Warranted**

There are times when a customer is angry over a legitimate mistake made by your company. In these circumstances, an apology is in order, and since you are the official representative of the company at that time, you are the right person to offer that apology.

**Take Responsibility, Take Action**

Once you understand the customer’s complaint, it is time to take action. Since you are the front line for this particular issue, you automatically become the “go-to” person to find a resolution. Even if you have to bring in another employee or department to rectify the situation, it is important to follow up with the customer personally so that they know you are seeing the issue through to the end.