

12 Things You Should Never Say to Your Customers

Keep your customers happy by avoiding ever saying any of these 12 phrases.

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Is it true that "The customer is always right?" Of course not! But even if your customers are wrong in practice, your attitude towards them and the respect you treat them with shouldn't change.

All business owners know that the customer is your bread and butter. While it's not possible to keep everyone pleased, all the time, here are 12 things you should absolutely never say to your customers.

"That's against our policy."

Maybe it is, but customers aren't interested in your policy. They're interested in how their situation can be resolved to their satisfaction. Rather than saying their request is against policy, offer what you **can** do to solve the problem.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Maptive CEO Brad Crisp gives this advice:

"Dealing with angry customers is all about retention/conversion through relationship building. I recommend following these steps: (1) own the issue (take responsibility and apologize); (2) embrace that there is opportunity in difficult situations to build a relationship; (3) propose

solutions and overwhelm their anger with your kindness; (4) offer free stuff if necessary; (5) follow up to make sure you made them happy."

"Let me try to do that..."

Try? That sounds like your customers may not get their issues resolved, and demonstrates a lack of self-confidence on your part. If you need to ask someone else, or get approval, simply say that you're doing that. Don't sound unsure about whether or not you can help the customer--be sure you can!

"I'll get back to you as soon as I can."

If you think about this from a customer perspective, it's easy to see why this is frustrating, as it leaves customers wondering what "soon" means--today? Tomorrow? A week from now? Be as specific as you can about your follow-up. If you don't know when the issue will be resolved, offer a call on a specific date to give an update on the situation.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Groove Founder/CEO Alex Turnbull gives this advice:

"Much of the time, the number one thing the customer is looking for is an apology. Always start with sorry, and mean it. Even if you're not at fault, you can still empathize and feel sorry for the way the situation is making the customer feel."

"What you should do is..."

People generally resent being told what to do. If they called you, they want YOU to fix it--not to tell them to fix it. Do everything you can and then offer customers specific follow up steps to resolve their issues.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, When I Work CEO & Founder Chad Halvorson gives this advice:

"I've found the best approach to helping an upset customer is to stay calm and be as helpful as possible. Maintain control of the conversation, set clear expectations and always be working towards a solution."

"Are you sure?"

Customers can be wrong, but service representatives shouldn't point it out. It's tempting to do so--especially if you feel the customer is being silly or making an issue out of nothing. But doing so discounts their feelings and makes them feel foolish, which may escalate the situation. Calmly help them with their issue and move forward--no matter how much you'd like to do otherwise.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Vero CEO & Co-Founder Chris Hexton gives this advice:

"Treat them with respect. There is nothing worse than brushing a customer's opinion aside or acting like you know everything: your customers are the those whose pain you're solving--listen to them!"

"I'm not sure, but I think..."

You won't know the answer to every situation, but you shouldn't tell the customer that. You also shouldn't give customers an answer you're unsure of, as doing so might lead them in the wrong direction. Instead, let them know you'll look up some information and either put them on hold or offer to call them back in a few minutes.

"That's not so bad..."

If your customers are upset with something, you want to empathize as much as possible. The issue you're hearing about may not be major to you, but it is to them--and that's what matters. Be careful not to make any statement that downplays the customer's feelings or frustration over the situation.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Autosend Co-Founder Ashli Norton gives this advice:

"Answer quickly and completely. There's nothing worse than partially helping a displeased customer days after they need you. You'll not only make them more upset but they'll have enough time to hunt down your competitors and share their experience with others online."

"Listen to me..."

Angry customers rarely listen. However, ordering them to be quiet and listen will come across as condescending and make the situation worse. Allow the customer to vent their feelings and empathize with them before offering a solution.

"I will let them know."

Even if you agree with the customer's frustration, you never want to call the company you work for "them." To the customer, you are the company, so be careful to say "we" when referring to your employer. If you don't, you'll lose credibility and risk coming across as avoiding responsibility.

"You shouldn't have done that."

While it's true that the customer shouldn't have thrown away the bill, disregarded the company's email message, or made some other mistake, telling them won't change the situation. It will, however, make the customer feel angry and embarrassed. Focus on the situation as it is and offer the best solution you have.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Filament Director of Products Jason Amunwa gives this advice:

"Sound like a human being, talking to them face-to-face. Say "I", instead of "We", "Sorry" instead of "apologize" and never, ever say "inconvenience!""

"Calm down."

This one phrase elicits more anger than nearly any other. Yes, customers may need to calm down in order to effect a solution, but telling them so will only make them more irate. Instead,

let the customer vent, showing empathy with phrases like "I see," and "I understand." Eventually, they'll calm down on their own, allowing you to move forward.

"You don't want that, you want this..."

Offering alternate solutions or products may seem perfectly reasonable, but phrasing it like this tells customers that you think they're foolish. Instead, say something like, "Yes, that's a great option, but let me tell you about an even better one..." If they doubt the quality or usefulness of your solution, focus on the positive benefits they can gain from continuing their relationship with your company.

ProTip: On how to address or approach an angry/upset/displeased customer, Help Scout Content Strategist Gregory Ciotti gives this advice:

"The CARP method is incredibly useful: control of the situation, acknowledge that you understand your customer's concerns, refocus away from the customer's emotions to the solution at hand, outlining how you'll take care of it. Finally, solve the problem, confirming that everything has been resolved to the customer's satisfaction."

In the case of customer service, MANY things are better left unsaid. Hiding your own frustration or confusion can be difficult, but it's very important in terms of creating and maintaining a growing business and happy customers. Avoiding these 12 phrases won't eliminate your customer service issues entirely, but they will prevent a lot of needless frustrations.

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(The above information was taken from <https://www.inc.com/sujan-patel/12-things-you-should-never-say-to-your-customers.html>.)

Notes from Me, Ginger Robertson, one Who Has Much Phone Work Experience

Note: Occasionally, technology will act up on us all. It is perfectly fine to say "May I put you on hold while I refresh my system?" Always be calm yourself, even during a challenge with your phone and computer system. Always be calm even when client is angry. If caller goes high or frantic in their voice, you always keep your tone in check by keeping your voice low. If you argue or raise your voice, you are adding to not helping deal with the caller's frustration. You are adding to their frustration by having a high pitched frustrated tone. "You stay low and patient in tone, while they go high"; you stay low and patient in tone". Always be in control of a conversation and do all you can to remind both you and the caller about the points you are hearing them make. You want and must be accurate with information when helping and resolving an issue. Most callers are normal not anger filled. The normal typical call is fairly straight forward, where you listen to what the caller wants and locate the person they want to talk to. For some people you locate, like your supervisor or the company director, you will need to announce your name and why you need them. For other calls, besides the angry, send to the appropriate person. Try dealing with the case manager/counselor/person they want to speak with first before getting yours and their supervisor involved. I spent so much time in this

document dealing with the angry call because it is really easy to become overwhelmed and stressed with them, which is unlike the typical straight forward calls, where you are inputting or looking something up in a database, referring caller to other resources to better assist them, or simply transferring the caller and offering the necessary phone number for the staff person being transferred to. The exception to giving out a phone number is when giving to your agency director. Always get information when having to speak to your management on a situation so they have the entire picture. In emailing, do the same thing and always verify pertinent information such as name, email, phone number etc. Never ever be rude. Keep this from happening at all cost. If you have a bad connection with caller, tell them so, and wait about five to ten seconds, and tell them to call you back or you call them back and apologize for the glitch in connection. If your phone systems and computers are down, let client know this, and offer to call person back as soon as your systems are functioning. Imagine you are in the place of the caller and how you would feel if your issue was not addressed and what it is like getting the "run around". You must check emails and voice mails a few times daily to keep up with important information needed for phone calls. Calls are always returned the current day or next business day. If you are out, make sure someone covers your phone. Send and enable auto replies about who can be contacted on a situation if the need arises. Let those assisting you with phones know about any issues going on while you are away in case a particular caller comes in that you have been dealing with. Always be pleasant no matter what. Always remember you, the phone representative, are the first point of contact and the important gateway to the rest of the agency/company. Your attitude will set the reputation of your agency/company. You always must convey positivity even during a challenge. If someone is threatening to staff, let the caller know you are working on a solution. Alert your management staff. The same is true for people that call in and constantly curse at you. Acknowledge their frustration, but do let them know with three warnings that you will have to talk with them later when they are not using bad language. Say something like this.... "I understand you are upset and I want to work with you toward a solution. However, I cannot and will not will not tolerate your abusive language. Mention something similar two more times before telling the caller you are having to end the call now and you can call them or they call you back when things are more civilized." Again, alert your supervisor to the abusive incident. Anytime you have a difficult caller, it is best to let your supervisor know the details in case the caller tries to take actions against you and the company. Jot down notes about your calls, whether good or bad, to refer back to for future reference. Always answer phone with "Agency Name, your name speaking, How may I help?" or something similar. (Fill in just mentioned details.) Answer calls promptly as possible when the phone rings. If several calls are coming in at once, do your best to answer them and temporarily place on hold or offer to call back if caller one is going to be on with you for a while.

Find out more on good quality phone customer service by talking with supervisors, good mentors, and attending trainings. It is easy to sadly get complacent. When you feel this coming on, stop and take time to review these tips, or take time away from work to get yourself regrouped.