



## DE-ESCALATION IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is the act of supporting and advocating for customers in their discovery, use, optimization, and troubleshooting of a product or service. It's also the processes that support the teams making good customer service happen.

### When it just doesn't work – De-escalation Tips

**1. Stay Calm**

Remaining calm when listening and especially when speaking can work to calm the customer, sometimes to the point that a normal conversation can take place, never argue.

**2. Listen Without Interruption**

Let them vent. Again, it is the School District the customer is angry with, not the CSR. Give the customer your full attention, do not cut them off, and just listen.

**3. Never Make Promises You Cannot Keep**

Understand your position in your organization and what you are able to do for your customer. Never speak for another employee or Supervisor. Let the customer know if you are unable to resolve their issue and if necessary, who to refer them to.

**4. Do Not Argue and Never Say “No”**

Do not engage the customer's argument, no matter what they say. Remember what your role and abilities within your organization are. Do not be afraid to tell the customer you may have to check with a Supervisor or research their issue.

**5. Suggest Realistic Steps for Resolution**

After listening, do not be afraid to recap the conversation. It shows empathy and that you are taking the customer complaint seriously. If you can resolve the issue by all means do so. If not, provide a realistic timeline and remember, don't make promises you can't keep.

**6. Never be afraid to say “I don't know”.**

Misinformation or wrong information is usually how we got to this point in the first place. Do not compound the problem by providing any further wrong information. If you are unable to answer a question or are unsure of the answer, inform the customer that you will need to get back to them. Assure them your delay is so that you provide accurate information.



## When it just doesn't work – De-escalation Tips *continued*

### 7. Communicate

Say what you are going to do and then do what you said. There is nothing worse than setting a deadline and not making it. Never tell a customer you will have an issue resolved by the end of the day unless you are sure you will. If at all possible, leave it open ended but keep the customer informed. Obtain contact information and advise daily of the status until a resolution is achieved.

### 8. Violence or threats of violence

Your safety is paramount. There should be a zero-tolerance policy in your organization for any threats or violent behavior. Your policy should dictate what to do in these circumstances and you should become familiar with it in the event it does happen. CSR's should always try to keep some sort of barrier between themselves and the customers to lessen the chances of any physical contact. Never be afraid to ask for assistance from a co-worker or Supervisor if you feel unsafe or threatened in any way

## Exceptional Customer Service

- Maintain a high level of **professionalism** by following these guidelines
- **Listen and be attentive** to what your customer needs
- Communicate using clear and concise business language and remember to **watch body language**
- **Be understanding** of all people and situations, especially where you may have biases that are contrary



**Smile, be happy and have fun!  
It will always show in the service you give!**

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