

Managing Challenging Inbound Customers with Composure

- Are customers really always right, even when they cross the line?
- How do you respond when a customer starts screaming at you over the phone?
- Should you allow yourself to be a punching bag, or is there a better way to stay composed and professional?

Introduction

Handling inbound customer interactions can be one of the toughest parts of any service professional's role. A single wrong word, a delayed response, or inaccurate information can quickly turn a conversation into a conflict. With customers becoming increasingly demanding, the ability to manage these situations calmly and effectively has become a critical skill. This workshop equips participants with practical techniques to defuse tense situations, manage angry customers professionally, and prevent issues from escalating into hostility that could damage both the customer relationship and the company's reputation. Participants will also learn how to stay composed under pressure, maintain confidence, and recover emotionally after difficult encounters. By mastering these skills, inbound service professionals will be able to turn even the most challenging interactions into opportunities to strengthen trust, improve relationships, and deliver positive outcomes for both the customer and the organisation.

Program Objectives

This program aims to:

- Understand the importance of managing challenging customers and exceeding their delight.
- Develop essential customer service communication skills when dealing with demanding customers.
- Appreciate the different knowledge levels of the customer.
- Identify the different customer types and how to deal with each of them.
- Learn specific methods to manage angry customers.
- Implement and deliver service recovery to continue to lengthen the life-cycle of the customer.
- Learn to de-stress oneself up after a blistering customer encounter.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this program, the participants should be able to:

- Understand the type of situations that make customers challenging and how not to escalate the situation.
- Manage customers in a step by step manner when they are irate.
- Recover quickly after a blistering encounter with customers.

Who Should Attend:

Contact Centre Professionals, Inbound Service Professionals

Methodology

Case studies, forum discussion, role-play, presentations, gamification

Program Outline

Day One	
9:00am - 10:30am	<p>The Perception of Service in Today's Experiential Economy</p> <p>This workshop starts by providing the participants with an understanding of the state of mind of customers today- "I want it my way, Now". The participants will also understand the role of the Contact Centre to provide knowledge and ensure each call ends with the caller, satisfied.</p>
10:30am - 11:00am	Morning break and networking
11:00am - 1:00pm	<p>The Emergence of Dissatisfaction in Customers</p> <p>This module covers the various phases of a normal inbound call and how a difficult customer can be identified through the variations in the call. Furthermore, we look at the triggers of customer dissatisfaction and the causes of poor service caused by the service professional.</p>
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch and networking
2:00pm - 3:30pm	<p>Understanding the Types of Challenging Customer</p> <p>The participants would learn to identify the knowledge level of each customer that calls in by listening and asking simple questions. Be able to identify the six main types of difficult customers and practise the ground rules of communication with them. Learn to explicitly communicate the customer's challenge & needs to show that you understand.</p>
3:30pm - 4:00pm	Tea Break and networking
4:00pm - 5:00pm	Superior Communication Skill When Dealing with Customers

	The participants would learn to ask better questions and control a conversation. Know how to practise transparency with customers. The ability to say "No", "Not now," "Cannot be done" without annoying the customer is the key to any escalation.
Day Two	
9:00am - 10:30am	Identifying the Angry Customer The participants would know what causes conflict in any conversation and be able to identify the severity of the situation one is facing with the customer. Understand the rules of engagement at each stage of the conflict. Learn to self-check before the situation escalates.
10:30am - 11:00am	Morning break and networking
11:00am - 1:00pm	Competencies for Managing Challenging Customers The participants would learn vital communication methods to deal with angry or irate customers. Use the ADR or LEARN method to defuse the situation. Be able to use the rapport building techniques with customers to show that we want the best outcome for them.
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch and networking
2:00pm - 3:30pm	Rebuilding Self Confidence After A Nasty Confrontation The participants would know how to dispel each difficult communication and "Don't Take it Personally." Identify personal fears and take actions to reduce the stress level of the work.
3:30pm - 4:00pm	Tea Break and networking
4:00pm - 5:00pm	The Calm and Composed Inbound Service Professional The participants would learn the five critical techniques to keep oneself calm and compose for any interaction with the customer. Be able to continuously develop better Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Habits (KSAH) as an Inbound Service Professional.