

# MYRA GOLDEN'S

## Stop Screaming at Me!

### Webinar

Practical, ready-to-use tips, tactics, and techniques that will help **you get any angry customer to back down** AND regain their goodwill!



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“ No person is  
important enough  
to make me **angry**.”

Carlos Castaneda

"It is impossible to  
defeat an **ignorant**  
man with an  
**argument**."

William G. McAdoo

“There’s **no such thing** as a difficult **customer.**”

Someone who has never worked with customers

**We’re glad you’re here!**

The webinar will start in just a few seconds!

# MYRA GOLDEN'S

## Stop Screaming at Me!

### Webinar

Practical, ready-to-use tips, tactics, and techniques that will help **you get any angry customer to back down** AND regain their goodwill!

## Myra Golden

Myra Golden helps companies build value by listening, engaging, and better serving customers in daily interactions and across social media.

She has designed customer service programs for such companies as Verizon Business, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, National Car Rental, Michelin Tires, and Frito-Lay. Myra is the author of *Beyond WOW! The Service Leadership Approach to Exceptional Customer Service*.



# Opening remarks



Have I got  
your  
attention  
now?

## Agenda

- **Hostile interaction essentials**
- **Don't shoot yourself in the foot**
- **Conversation control**
- **Diffusion strategies**

# Hostile Interaction Essentials

The #1

tactic hostile customers  
use

The

“Bait” tactic

## The Bait Tactic

- ∅ Behaviors designed to **get you to respond emotionally**
- ∅ **If you respond to the bait**, you hand over the conversation to the customer
- ∅ **Used to upset you enough to throw you off balance** (as a result of being angry or intimidated)
- ∅ Goal: **control you and your behavior**

## The Bait Tactic In Action

**Customer:** What the heck is wrong with you?  
Every time I rent from ABC Rental, you hassle me and give me the runaround. This is the last time you will do this to me.

**Employee:** How dare you talk to me like that.  
I'm doing my best to help you in spite of the fact that we're short staffed.

**Customer:** I can talk to you any way I want. I'm the customer...I pay YOUR salary!

## The Bait Tactic

**Customer:** What the heck is wrong with you? Every time I rent from ABC Rental, you hassle me and give me the runaround. This is the last time you will do this to me.

**Employee:** Mr. Jones, you seem really upset about this.

**Customer:** Darn right I'm upset! What are you going to do about it?

## The Bait Tactic

**Employee:** I need to get some information from you so I can help. Did you book this reservation through a company?

**Customer:** Yes, I booked it with my corporate travel dept. I work at ABC Widget Company

Recognize the bait tactic. **Don't take the bait.** Let some things pass. **When you respond, respond with diplomacy.**

## **7 Things You Should Never Do With an Upset Customer**

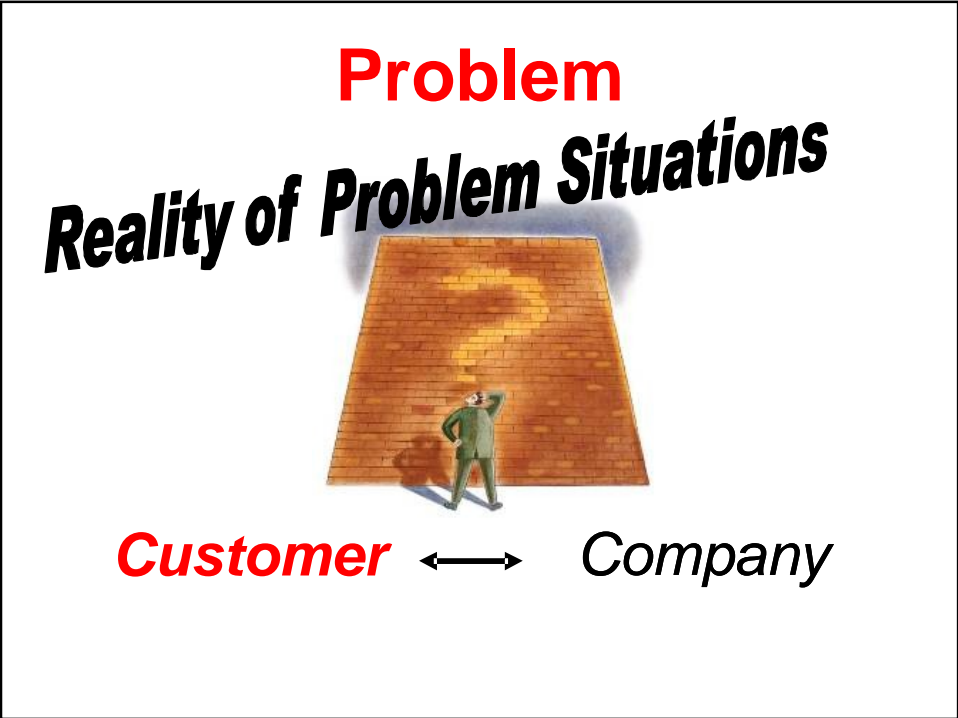
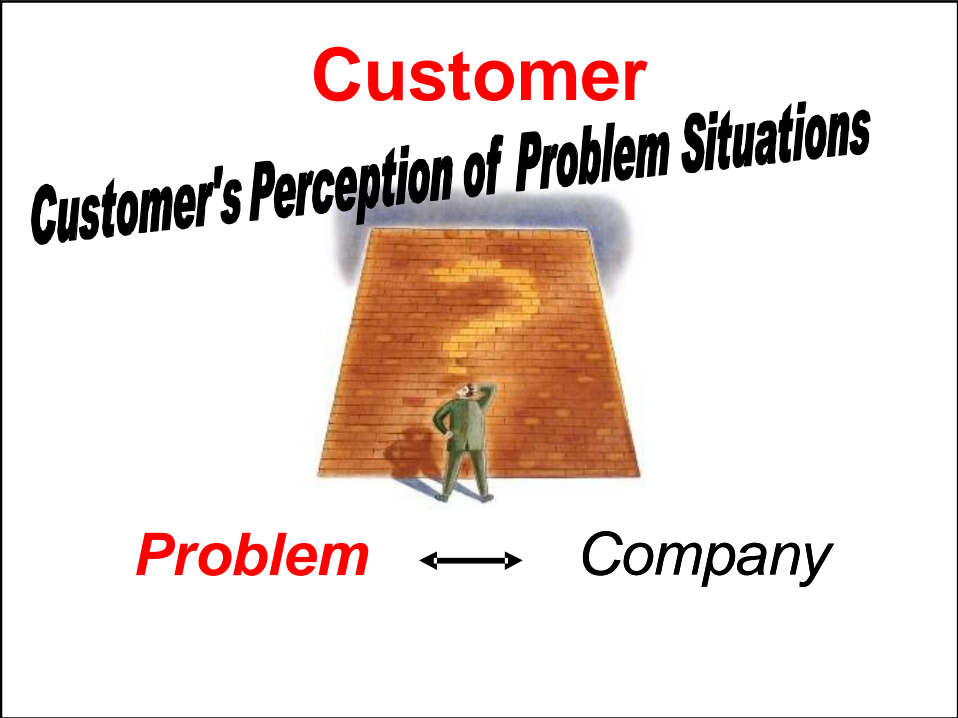
1. Threatening
2. Arguing
3. Reducing choice
4. Sounding too formal
5. Belaboring a point
6. Rebutting issues
7. Causing a sense of helplessness



- 1. Anger precludes rationality**
- 2. Anger diffusion results in a lesser payout**
- 3. Ventilation is crucial**

# Laying a Foundation

For problem resolution



Handling the  
customer who wants  
you to **bend the  
rules...**

Today's EXCEPTION  
becomes  
tomorrow's  
EXPECTATION.

How to handle  
the customer.

Who DEMANDS  
to speak to your  
SUPERVISOR.

The

U S A

Method

UNDERSTAND  
and show you do

Explain the  
SITUATION

ALTERNATIVE  
Action

2 Rules Your  
Customer  
expects you to  
Play by

What your customer is counting on...

**1** When attacked, you  
will respond  
**defensively**

**2** When attacked, you  
will **counterattack**

## A Defensive Response

- § ***I'm doing the best I can.***
- § ***Sir, I work in customer service; I had nothing to do with your problem.***
- § ***We would never say (do) anything like that.***

## The Counterattack

- § ***Stop yelling or I will hang up.***
- § ***Your mother should have taught you manners.***
- § ***You don't know what you're talking about.***



What **angry** customers want

Research by Robert Bacal reveals **Angry Customers Want 4 Things**

1. **Their problem solved**
2. **Helpfulness** on your part
3. To feel they have **choices**
4. **Acknowledgement**

**HOT**  
Buttons

## Hot Buttons

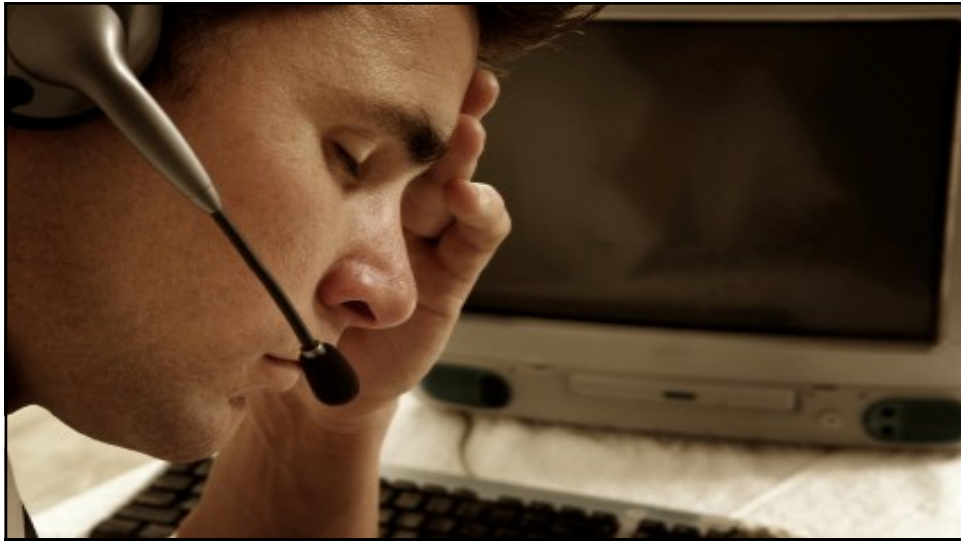
- Disparaging statements that **evoke a negative reaction.**

*The words alone have no significance.*

- If we allow our buttons to be pushed, **our ability to handle customers** diminishes.

### Typical “Hot Buttons”

- **Tone** of voice
- **Specific words**
- **Actions**



## Identify and **Neutralize** Your **Hot Buttons**

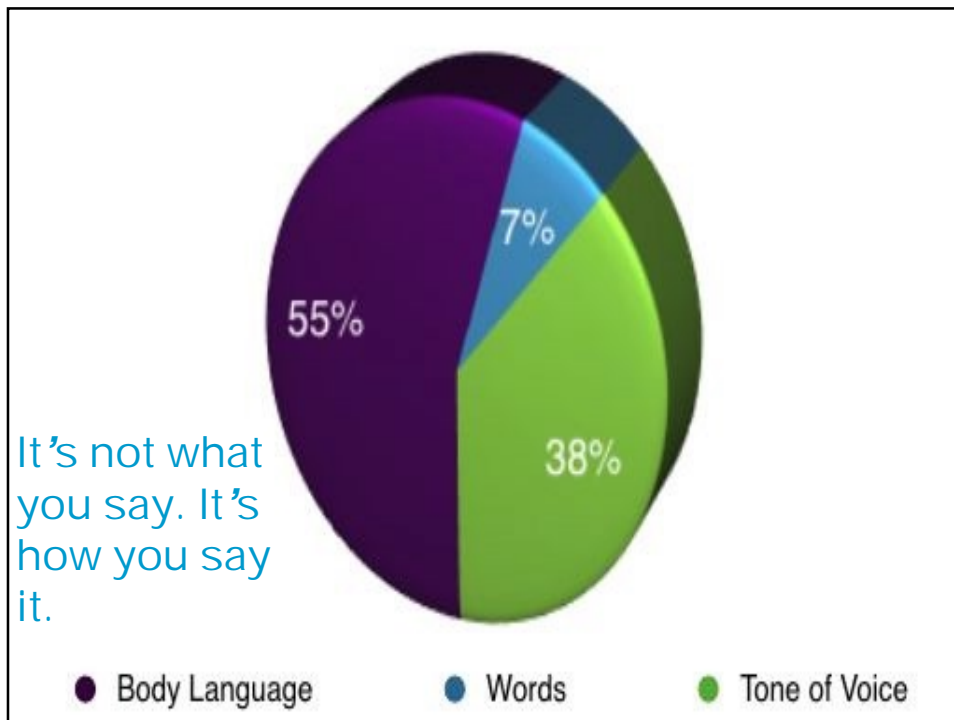
The more often you retrieve and think about your hot buttons under non-confrontational conditions, the less likely they will trigger a negative emotional response.

Whether you deal with customers in person or on the phone, **the way you begin a conversation will affect how the customer treats you.**

Robert Bacal

**Starting Off Right-** Making the most of the first 6 seconds that can make or break you

- **Proper tone**
- **Proper content**
- **Acknowledgement**
- **Sense of urgency**



THE PROBLEM IS RARELY/  
NEVER THE PROBLEM. THE  
RESPONSE TO THE  
PROBLEM INVARIABLY  
ENDS UP BEING THE  
REAL PROBLEM.

## ***Your Tone Should Be...***

- Courteous
- Helpful
- Willing
- Informative
- Personal
- Polite
- Sincere
- Warm

### Liability Complaints

- Assertive
- Formal
- Impersonal
- Objective

### But never

- Abrasive
- Blunt
- Cold
- Bureaucratic



## Provoking Language

- § You are ***certain*** you are right
- § You're ***unwilling to see the customer's position***
- § ***Challenges customer to back up what he says***
- § Has ***harsh, confrontational*** tone
- § Tends to ***blame the customer***

## Provoking Language Example

- ***Sir, There is no point arguing with me. You have to lodge your appeal with the Appeal Commission.***

*Supportive example:*

- ***Mr. Jones, I don't think I can help you with this. If you want to pursue it, the best thing is to contact the Appeal Commission. Would you like the phone number?***

## Provoking vs Supportive

- I can't
- You must have
- You're wrong
- Don't
- You can't
- I don't think I can
- It's possible that
- Is it possible that...
- It might be better
- I don't think that will help

After the break...

**20+ Phrases** word-for-word  
for handling



**Myra enjoys answering your questions...so type your question in the chat box now. You can also text your questions to 918-383-0835.**

20+ Phrases word-for-word  
for handling [view](#)

# Tough Customers

## Simple, Yet Powerful Anger Diffusion Techniques

### § Offer choices

§ *“I can arrange for FedEx to pick up the package from your home or, to get it to us faster, you can take it your local FedEx office. Which do you prefer?”*

### § Empathize

§ *“I realize this must be frustrating for you.”*

§ *“It must feel like these things take forever.”*

### § Use the customer’s name

## Handling a Problem That Was Caused By the Customer

1. **Never** tell a customer they are **wrong**.
2. Realize **you can't win an argument** with a customer.
3. Begin in a **friendly way**.

**Don't Shoot Yourself in the Foot**



Quick Tip

# Defending

the problem, company, or co-worker to the customer is NOT a good idea.

Quick Tip

# Immediately

address the problem/difficult  
customer

## How to deliver bad news

Without the negative backlash

## Delivering bad news strategy

Ø **Begin in a friendly way**

*(you catch more bees with honey)*

Ø **Sound as friendly and  
“partnering”** as you can

Ø **Give options** *whenever possible*



Why “**splitting the difference**” isn’t a  
good idea

# Conversation Control

**How to Get a Customer to Stop Screaming and Listen to You**

Ask 3 (closed-ended)  
questions back to  
back

# **“Topic Grab” Approach**

## **Verbal Self Defense**

- **“Broken Record” technique**
- **Go into “computer mode”**
- **Say, “You’re right.”**

# Verbal Aikido

## Verbal Aikido

- Ø **Never meet force with force**
- Ø **Strategically work to calm the attacker down**

## Polite Ways to Get Whiners, Ramblers & Storytellers to Cut to the Chase

- § **Apprise of a time limit early.**
- § **Interject with a question when the customer comes up for air.**
- § **Use the “point question” technique**
- § **Give a minimal response**
- § **Use “closing” statements**

# Diffusion Strategies

## How to Preempt an Escalation in Aggression

- Always return calls (**promptly**)
- Minimize transfers
- Speak clearly & clarify
- Use customer's name when interrupting
- Keep the customer apprised ?

## How to Preempt An Escalation in Aggression

- Focus on the issue/remind customer they have some control
  - Try to find some aspect of the customer's view with which you agree, but without affirming the customer's behavior
  - Any increase in intensity must be redirected to the past
    - *"A problem has developed out of past circumstances, so now we're looking for solutions..."*



What to do when the **customer** tries to **manipulate** you with **anger**

## **Your Tactics...**

§ **Withdraw**

§ **Listen **silently****

§ **Acknowledge **anger****

§ **Neutralize** your hot buttons!

## Simple, Yet Powerful Anger Diffusion Techniques

§ Refer to a supervisor

§ Assertively set limits

§ *“Ms. Smith, I want to help you, but if you continue to swear, I’m going to ask you to call back another time. It’s up to you...which do you prefer?”*

# 6

Reference Slides  
for *you*

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

- **Use a calm tone and non-inflammatory words**
  - Speak slowly
  - Avoid escalating your voice
  - Never threaten the customer with inflammatory statements like: *“If you don’t calm down, I can’t help you.”*

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

**Allow the customer to vent**

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

- **Express empathy**
  - Not to be confused with sympathy
  - *“I realize this whole thing must be frustrating for you.”*

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

- **Help customers feel they have choices**
  - Very important for customers to feel they have some control over the outcomes
  - Give them options and let them make choices, even small ones
  - Reducing choices and removing privileges tends to encourage aggression

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

- **Let customer know their feelings are important**
  - Natural calming mechanism
  - *“Thank you for taking the time to let us know about this. We appreciate the opportunity to clarify what we think has happened here.”*

## Encouraging Calm with Volatile Customers

- **Don't inadvertently encourage hostile behavior**
  - Saying, “This is all I can do.”
  - Rolling your eyes
  - Folded arms
  - Looking away
  - Saying, “What do you expect me to do.”
  - Walking away from a hostile customer

REFLECT BACK

# INTENSITY

Putting It All

# Together

A summary The **F.E.M.A** Model for  
Diffusing **Anger** and **Hostility**

## Focus Squarely on the Customer

- Make managing the customer's aggression your only focus
- Acknowledge the issue/any anger
- Allow the customer to vent 30-45 seconds
- Avoid coming across bureaucratically
- Try not to put the customer on hold
- Try to be the only person who deals with the customer

## Emphasize the Issue

- Identify and neutralize your "hot buttons"
- Maintain a neutral position and tone
- Reframe the issue
- Separate your feelings from your actions
- **Don't defend the problem, blame, threaten, or limit options**

## **Mitigate the Situation**

- Be careful not to use **provoking** language
- Use **supportive** language
- Don't sound too formal
- Apologize, if appropriate
- Offer the customer choices (even small ones)
- Empathize

## **Assertively offer Options**

- Talk about what you can do, not what you can't do
- Present options
- Help your customer to feel s/he has choices

# conclusion

## Q & A

- Email me at [myra@myragolden.com](mailto:myra@myragolden.com) for
- Additional questions not answered today
- For a copy of today's presentation
- Blog: [www.MyraGolden.Wordpress.com](http://www.MyraGolden.Wordpress.com)
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- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/MyraGolden](http://www.twitter.com/MyraGolden)

**Thanks for  
letting me be  
a part of your  
day! J**

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