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## MODULE 10: SAYING “NO” WITHOUT CAUSING RESENTMENT

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**SUGGESTED TIME:** 25 Minutes  
**POWERPOINTS:** PPT 29  
**WORKBOOK PAGE:** 8

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### Module Objectives:

- § To provide participants with a strategy for saying ‘no’ diplomatically.
- § To encourage participants to always tell customers what they “can do” and not simply what they “cannot do.”

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE TRAINER

Read the lecturette prior to your training session, and take notes so you can use it as the basis for your own comments to the group.

### INSTRUCT

Prepare a short discussion on the USA Method for Saying No using information from the provided lecturette. Use an actual situation where “no” is the only acceptable response from the employee/company to make the discussion even more impacting.

**Use PPT 29 to support your lecture.**

### SAY

*There are things that will happen that are beyond your control. Flights will be overbooked. Rain will delay work. Staff won’t show up or they will quit. Customers will refuse to take the liability coverage and end up in an accident. (Note: Ideally, you’ll plug your own specific situations here.) But you have to roll with it and still turn that situation around for the customer.*

### Explain

*“I will now share with you a simple 3-step method you can use when you have to say ‘no’.”*

**Note to Facilitator:** *The USA Method is best understood when presented using a realistic example. For this reason we strongly suggest sharing a specific and realistic scenario from your company as you instruct the USA Method.*

**After presenting your own real-world scenario with USA, present USA as a way to respond to customers who demand to speak to management (see lecturette for example).**

**Understand – It's very important that the customer feels you understand the inconvenience they have experienced. If they don't feel you understand what they are feeling, they may become more frustrated, vocal and difficult. Demonstrate understanding with a sincere statement. *"We were unable to keep our originally scheduled appointment and for that I sincerely apologize. I can certainly understand why you would want to have someone come out immediately."***

**Situation – Explain your situation, that is, the reason you are unable to meet the customer's needs. *"Here's our situation: your Territory Rep is out in the field with a full schedule today. As much I'd like to get you the help you need right now, that just isn't possible."***

**Action – It is not acceptable to tell a customer "no" without telling them what you can and will do. *"What I can do is put you down for treatment tomorrow afternoon. The way the schedule looks now, that is doable. If anything changes, we will call you."***

#### **Magic Formula Closing**

**In most cases, when you demonstrate empathy with an understanding statement, explain the situation, and tell the customer what you can do, you will appease the customer. You will be effectively and politely saying no without causing resentment. When you say no using the USA method, you will find that fewer calls have to be escalated to your manager and that you are more confident in your response**

## DISCUSSION

Divide participants into groups of 3 and have each person discuss a real-world situation in which they have had a difficult time getting a point across to a customer or have been in a situation where “no” was the correct answer. Ask them to quickly explain the situation to the people in their group and then say *no* using the USA method. The listeners in the triad should offer feedback and pointers. Each person should take about 60 seconds to explain his or her scenario. Allow up to 10 minutes for this activity.

## APPLICATION EXERCISE

Have participants go to their note page and write down the one or two things you've just discussed (from USA method) that are most important to them.

Allow 1-2 minutes for this exercise.

## LECTURETTE

There are two ways to say “no”. Are you using the right approach?

The one word every single customer “hates” to hear is “NO”.

One way to say “no” is to simply state it directly and negatively. “*No, we cannot refund your money.*” Or “*The warranty is expired. You, therefore, are responsible for any damages.*” ... While you may be completely accurate in your statement, you are putting the customer at serious risk for defection.

Another way to say “no” is to not actually “say” the word “no” at all. Using this approach, you can say “no” to a customer without causing resentment or worse, losing the customer.

Try saying “no” using the **U S A** method.

USA stands for ...

- § **Understanding Statement.** Never say ‘no’ to a customer without first demonstrating that you understand fully their request or question. It is very important that the customer feels you understand the inconvenience they have experienced. If they don't feel you understand what they are feeling, they may become more difficult.
- § **Situation.** Explain exactly why you will have to refuse the customer's request.

§ **Action.** When you have to say no, you still have to offer an option. In the Action step you tell the customer what you 'can' do.

In a real-world situation, here's how the USA method works: ...Let's say you have a customer on your phone who is demanding to speak with your supervisor.

Here's how you could respond using USA:

**Understanding Statement:**

*"I respect your need to speak with someone in authority."*

**Situation:**

*"My supervisor is counting on me to do my job and resolve problems our customers encounter. Will you please give me an opportunity to try to solve the problem before we go any further?"*

**Action:**

"If after speaking with me, you are still unhappy, I'll immediately connect you with my supervisor. How does that sound?"

In most cases, when you demonstrate empathy with an understanding statement, explain the situation, and tell the customer what you can do, you will appease the customer.

You will be effectively and politely saying no without causing resentment. When you say no using the USA method, you will find that fewer calls have to be escalated to your supervisors and that you are more confident in your response.

When you say "no" to customers using the USA method, you will be saying "no" without actually saying "no", you'll be diplomatic, and you won't cause resentment.