

HANDLING IRATE CUSTOMERS

AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



Service Quality Institute

The Global Leader in Customer Service

PREVIEW

LEADER GUIDE

HANDLING IRATE CUSTOMERS

AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

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PROGRAM COMPONENTS



The Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations program has three components:

- 1) Two DVD's (totaling approximately 55 minutes of vignettes and instructional information)
- 2) A Leader's Guide
- 3) The Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations Participant Package (Participant Book, Technique Card, Certificate of Accomplishment, Performance Standards).

Video

The video, shot on location at various businesses, features realistic, everyday scenes of employee situations and interactions.

The video corresponds to the program by section: For instance, Session 1: Section 1 on the video corresponds to Session 1: Section 1 in the Leader's Guide.

At the end of each video segment, the Group Leader is directed to turn off the video and turn to the next exercise or activity.

Leader's Guide

The Leader's Guide is divided into 14 parts: the Leader's Introduction and 13 training sections.

The introduction provides you with the information you need to get the program up and running effectively.

The Leader's Guide includes:

- *A complete transcript of each video*
- *All exercises, and in-class activities*
- *Suggested leader text or key points for the leader to cover*
- *Sample or likely participant responses to questions and activities*
- *Implementation suggestions and training hints*
- *Additional follow-up questions*
- *Space to record sample participant responses to questions*

Types of Questions and Exercises

Throughout Handling Irrate Customers and Difficult Situations, the following method is used to distinguish the kinds of questions the leader will ask participants.

- *Questions in the form Participant Book Question # correspond to the questions within the numbered exercises in the Participant Book.*
- *Questions in the form Discussion Question refer to questions that are not within the numbered exercises in the Participant Book and may include follow-up questions. Participants will not have these questions in their books.*
- *The Participant Book contains Assignments at the end of each reading session. Participants are asked to complete these assignments as part of the work between sessions.*

When going over numbered exercises, the Group Leader is encouraged to refer participants to specific Participant Book questions by question number.

Participant Book

The Participant Book is rich in examples, illustrations, and strategies that support the videos and discussions.

The Participant Book is the activity guide and resource for each participant who goes through the program. It includes an array of techniques, strategies, exercises, activities, and assessments. Like the Leader's Guide, the Participant Book is divided into sections. Each section includes introductory and resource information to supplement and expand on material presented in the video segments. Also included are all program exercises and suggested assignments, optional exercises, skill practice, etc.

The Participant Book material is rich in examples, illustrations, and strategies that support and expand upon the video segments and exercises in each section. As a Group Leader, you can take advantage of this material when introducing new topics or when providing answers to participant questions.

The Participant Book is often referred to throughout the program. Encourage participants to read the book at home at their own pace and highlight key ideas for discussion. Make notes throughout the Leader's Guide that reference the Participant Book, then refer participants to the Participant Book when you think important ideas or principles can support their learning. The participants will be asked to complete all of the exercises and assignments throughout the Participant Book; the necessary page numbers for each activity are included in the Leader's Guide for easy navigation.

The Participant Book serves as an ongoing reference and resource long after the program is over. By referring participants to specific pages in the book, you create awareness of the wealth of information it contains. Participants are urged to take advantage of the interactive benefits of the program by writing in their books and using them fully. Participants are likely to refer back to the step-by-step tips and techniques when needed.

Leader's Guide at a Glance

Adjacent example
box 1

The following section provides sample formats of the main components of the Leader's Guide.

The full transcripts
of the videos are
included in the
Leader's Guide.

VIDEO SCRIPT OF SESSION 1: SECTION 2

Running Time: 3 minutes, 25 seconds

NARRATOR: Have you ever considered what makes a customer irate? What causes them to lose their cool and take it out on you or one of your co-workers? Consider the following scenario.

Employee: Good afternoon Mr.-

Customer: Don't even start with that condescending smile. You can wipe it right off your face. I don't even want to see it.

Adjacent example
box 3

Suggestions for
Leader's Text are
printed inside
shaded boxes.

LEADER TEXT: Welcome to Session 1 of Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations. For those of you who don't know me, my name is (YOUR NAME), and I'll be acting as Group Leader during this session. As Group Leader, I'll be providing some framework for our discussions, but each of you will be helping one another as we go along.

Now that you know me, I'm going to have each of you introduce yourselves, but a little differently. You will each introduce yourselves using the most stressful customer situation you have ever encountered. You will pair up with another participant and you will play the part of the customer, while your partner will do their best to deal with the situation.

So take a minute to think about your most stressful, hated, and difficult customer situation. It can be anything. The more irrational the better.

(Give participants a few minutes to take notes if they need to.)

Adjacent example
box 3

All exercises from
the session are
included in the
Leader's Guide.

Adjacent example
box 3

Hints and notes
for the leader
accompany the
exercises.

Adjacent example
box 3

Corresponding
questions from the
Participant Book
are enclosed in
shaded boxes.

Adjacent example
box 3

Questions are
followed by
sample participant
responses in
parentheses and
by one or more
blank lines for the
leader to add
additional sample
responses or
notes.

Participant Book Question 1: Have you ever lost your cool (or wanted to) when interacting with an employee at any of the businesses that you patronize? Describe the situation.

Participant Book Question 2: What do you think drove you to have such an extreme reaction?

Honesty is essential at this stage. Try to create a safe place where participants don't fear judgments or reprisal from you or the other participants. Try to make it causal and fun by sharing a situation of your own as well as your feelings. Highlighting your own shortcomings and embarrassment can create a collegial sense of openness and sharing within the group and the participants should respond in kind.

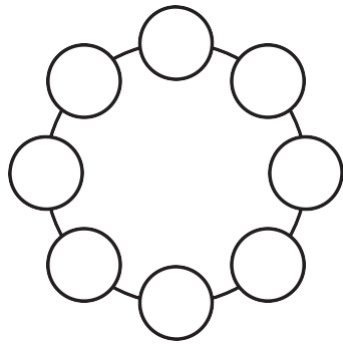
Participant Book Question 3: How much of losing your cool was based on what the employees you interacted with did? How much was based on outside factors? How much was based on any personal struggles?

Try to group the reactions accordingly and remember these answers as examples for use during the next exercise.

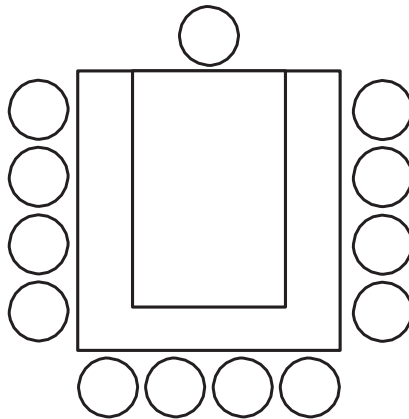
IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

Audience Size

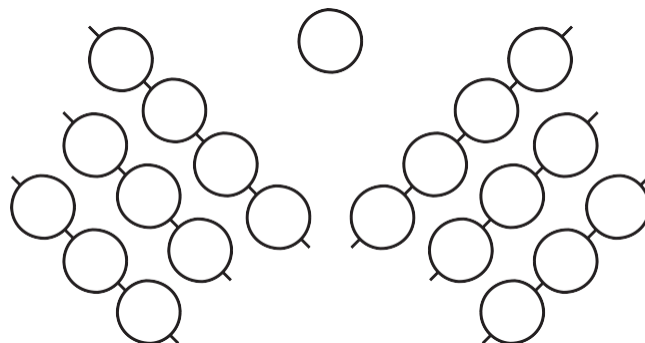
8 – 12 participants — ideal for new Group Leaders



12 – 15 participants — the optimum size



16 – 25 participants — fine, but require experienced Group Leaders



How a Leader Handles Questions

The best way to handle questions from the group is to answer with another question. Remember, the objective is to get participants to discuss, interact, and debate so that they learn by emotionally connecting with the issues. As a leader, your role is to keep the discussion going and drive the concepts. The best leader never answers questions. When you answer questions you avoid huge opportunities for interactive discussion. Moderate the discussions and try to get all participants involved. Keep control of the discussion, but don't be afraid of heated exchanges or excitement. If you're ever stuck, here are a few ways to promote group interaction:

Handling questions

- Reword the question.
- Pass the question to another participant.
- Don't disagree when a response is out of line. Ask another participant who would probably have a different approach.

- *Return the question to the questioner by rewording it, asking for specifics. For example: "Julian, you asked how your attitude during irate customer encounters can have negative effect on success. Can you share an example of when a customer responded poorly to your efforts? How did that make you feel?" Or: "Serena, you asked why diffusing the situation is so important. How would you feel when a tense and stressful situation in your life is calmed?"*
- *Pass the question to another participant. For example: "Kenny has asked how to deal with the deficiencies in his situational-assessment. Melanie, do you have any experience with that type of situation?"*
- *When a participant gives a response that is out of line or runs counter to the Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations strategy, don't argue or disagree. Ask another participant, whom you know would probably have a different approach, for their ideas. For example: "Cal, do you agree with Sasha's approach?" or "Malea, could you give us your opinion on what we should do when we face situations like the ones Braylon mentioned?"*

HANDLING IRATE CUSTOMERS AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Performance Standards

Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations provides the attitude and skill training necessary for improved attitude and personal performance. This Performance Standards form allows executives and managers to evaluate employee skills, attitude, and performance.

Scoring and Rating

The scoring and rating schedule can be adjusted to fit your organization. We suggest you use our scoring and rating system until you have developed and designed your own system. Repetitive use of the concepts will improve employee scores and ratings. Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations will make the biggest impact on the attitude and performance of productive employees.

Frequency of Use

New Employees:

Schedule their participation in the next program. Evaluate their work with the Performance Standards after 30 days on the job even if they haven't attended the Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations program yet. Employees with below-average performance ratings or who are on probation should participate in the next program as soon as possible. These employees should be reevaluated 30 days after completing the program. If there hasn't been significant improvement on their performance ratings, then a discussion should be conducted regarding their continued employment in their present position.

Existing Employees:

It is in the best interest of the organization to conduct frequent ratings of employees. Those who show a decline in performance ratings should be scheduled for the next Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations program. Employees should be rated every six to twelve months.

Below-Average Existing Employees:

Employees with ratings of 19–23 should be put on probation and then carefully observed. These employees need to go through the Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations program again to try to improve their attitude, skills, and job performance. Evaluate them again after 30 days.

Employees with ratings of 24–31 exhibit poor attitude, diminishing skills and marginal performance. These employees should go through the Handling

Irate Customers and Difficult Situations program again to improve their efficiency and effectiveness on the job. Evaluate these employees every six to twelve months until ratings improve or help them find a different career or position. Helping non-performers move out is critical to your organization's success.

Measurement

The Performance Standards form can be used to show increases in positive behavior and responsiveness to job demands. The results should be tracked every 3 to 6 months. Repetitive use of the Performance Standards throughout the year is necessary for measurable improvement. Turnover caused by removal of employees with low scores should also be measured.

Handling Performance Reviews

Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations Performance Reviews, when handled well, can motivate employees. By making an employee aware that the employer is concerned about their welfare, and building and developing the employee into a stronger person, a performance review can give a better image of the employer and also encourage improved productivity.

Performance reviews should not only affect salary changes, but also correct deficiencies in job performance and/or personal conduct. A performance review lets an employee know how they can improve or could be doing a better job for the organization.

An employer needs to advise its employees how to strengthen their weak areas and continue to develop their strong areas. A supervisor should handle performance reviews in the privacy of a closed office with a personnel officer or manager present when necessary.

Making expectations clear and specific enables an organization to better facilitate productivity. Communicating these expectations and the relative performance levels in meeting them benefits the employee, the manager, and the organization.

Documenting Performance

Documentation is critical when you need to justify the termination of an employee, not giving a salary increase, promoting a person, or giving one employee a new position instead of someone else. The personnel file, reflecting the documentation of prior ratings and performance standard reviews, holds the key to the steps and reasons for personnel changes. The Performance Standards form is an excellent documentation vehicle.

HANDLING IRATE CUSTOMERS AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Performance Period:

30 days from _____ to _____

6 months from _____ to _____

12 months from _____ to _____

Evaluator: _____

Evaluator's Position: _____

Employee: _____

Position: _____

Average hours _____ per _____ week: _____

Date attended _____ last _____ program: _____

Date of last review: _____

(New employees should be evaluated after 30 days; regular employees with frequent customer contact every six months; and those with less contact every twelve months.)

Instructions: In every category circle the number for the statement that best describes the behavior or attitude of this employee.

Section I: Attitude

Attitude (Overall):

- 1 Bored, eager to go home, pessimistic
- 2 Distracted, but upbeat and positive
- 3 Enthusiastic, confident, well prepared

Comments

Attitude (To Customers):

- 1 Indifferent, confrontational, defensive
- 2 Desires to be helpful, but not proficient
- 3 Attentive, caring, calm, efficient

Comments

Calm:

- 1 Jumpy, negatively affected by intense situations
- 2 Mostly calm, but can be pushed over the edge by random stimuli
- 3 Even keel and thoughtful during all work-related interactions

Comments

Compassionate:

- 1 Uncaring and disconnected
- 2 Shows some concern, but occasionally aloof
- 3 Kind-hearted and attentive to the needs of others

Comments

Confident:

- 1 Displays no self-confidence, easily discouraged by missteps or failures
- 2 Distracted, but upbeat and positive
- 3 Enthusiastic, confident, well prepared

Comments

Competent:

- 1 Often ill-informed and rash
- 2 Capable, but requires vigilant oversight
- 3 Knowledgeable and well-prepared

Comments

Subtotal

Section II: Irate Customers

Understands the Importance of Customer Interactions:

- 1 Does not care if they succeed or fail during a customer interaction
- 2 Unsure of the significance of interacting with customers
- 3 Considers every customer encounter to be as significant as any other

Comments

Awareness of customer needs:

- 1 Shows little concern
- 2 Takes steps to try to improve
- 3 Consistently aware of customer needs and attempts to improve performance

Comments

Diffusing Skills:

- 1 Does not attempt to diffuse confrontations
- 2 Has some success calming irate customers
- 3 Consistently able to diffuse difficult situations while staying calm and compassionate

Comments

Training: 1 Does not retain or use training information 2 Understands enough processes and procedures to get by 3 Stays up-to-date and on top of new information and processes for managing customer interactions	Comments
Sincerity: 1 Insincere with customers; pays little attention during interactions 2 Shows some concern 3 Displays a commitment to their customers	Comments
Active Listening: 1 Ignores verbal cues and information 2 Listens intently, but does not translate understanding into action 3 Actively listens and processes relevant information accordingly	Comments
Offering Alternatives: 1 Does not offer alternatives 2 Shows a willingness to provide suggestions, but often unsure of available options 3 Imaginative and resourceful when coming up with alternative outcomes	Comments
Empathy: 1 Does not empathize with or desire to understand their customer's concerns 2 Has some insight into their customers' state of mind, but rarely acts on it 3 Possess a deep understanding of the feelings and needs of their customers	Comments
Effective Questioning: 1 Does not ask questions; often ignores information gathering steps 2 Asks questions, but often off topic or ineffective 3 Stays on task and asks questions that are to the point	Comments
Problem Solving: 1 Ineffective problem solver; often creates new problems without oversight 2 Wants to be an effective problem solver, but needs further training and confidence 3 Assertive problem solver; makes well-informed decisions that lead to success	Comments
Subtotal	
Section III: Problem Situations	
Overcome Obstacles: 1 Routinely gives up or passes a customer off to someone else 2 Tries to overcome barriers with sporadic success 3 Consistently avoids and overcomes obstacles	Comments
Partnering With Co-workers: 1 Confrontational and defensive when working with others 2 Eager to work with co-workers, but unwilling to take a leadership role 3 Seeks out others for assistance; eager to lead; dependable and trustworthy team member	Comments
Ability to Handle Stress: 1 Freezes when asked to perform under pressure 2 Performs adequately, but requires constant reassurance and feedback 3 Works independently and makes empowered decisions based on available information	Comments
Acting Quickly: 1 Slow, plodding, and misguided 2 Thoughtful, but deliberate, wary, and insecure 3 Makes effective and efficient decisions on the fly; actively works toward success without prodding	Comments
Accountability: 1 Places blame on the customer 2 Recognizes the part they play during an interaction, but doesn't respond properly 3 Takes full responsibility for customer interactions and resolutions	Comments
Empowered Decision-making: 1 Does not make decisions 2 Attempts to make choices, but routinely relies on others 3 Consistently makes informed decisions that benefit customer interactions	Comments

Compensation and Service Recovery: 1 Provides little to no compensation; does not understand the necessity of service recovery 2 Ineffectively over- or under-compensates based on the situation 3 Utilizes successful service recovery strategies to win over customers	Comments
Subtotal	
Section IV: Recovery	
Recovery: 1 Does not recover well following difficult situations; bothered by events for the rest of the day 2 Attempts to recover, but is still adversely affected 3 Recovers well and uses past performance to benefit future interactions	Comments
Evaluation: 1 Never evaluates their performance; unable to articulate how they compare to standards 2 Routinely undergoes evaluations, but has a hard time implementing improvement strategies 3 Utilizes self-evaluations and management evaluations as a professional development tool	Comments
Self-Esteem: 1 Does not have a high opinion of themselves or their abilities 2 Feels good about themselves, but can be adversely affected with on-the-job incidents 3 Strong sense of self that; seeks to continually strengthen self-esteem through learning opportunities	Comments
Positive Self-Talk: 1 Avoids positive self-talk; embarrassed by the technique 2 Uses positive self-talk only when feeling desperate or pessimistic 3 Constantly uses positive self-talk phrases to pump themselves up and improve performance	Comments
Subtotal	
Section V: Overall	
Quality of Performance: 1 Performs at or below minimum requirements with irate customers and problem situations 2 Generally handles customers well, but needs to do better; displays a desire to improve 3 Fast, efficient, and reliable with all customer encounters and stressful situations	Comments
Ability to Deal with Irate Customers: 1 Acts frustrated and makes no attempt to go above and beyond for the customers 2 Attempts to deal with irate customers, but is not completely successful 3 Consistently able to diffuse situations and solve customer problems	Comments
Ability to Handle Problem Situations: 1 Participation often makes a situation worse 2 Ready to lend a hand, but shies away from responsibility 3 Someone that others look to for input, and empowered decisions during stressful times	Comments
Over-Delivers on Expectations: 1 Does not make promises and does not over-deliver 2 Usually meets customer expectations 3 Routinely over-delivers and exceeds expectations	Comments
Displays Trust in Company/Management 1 Shows a complete lack of trust in superiors 2 Unsure of company support 3 Trusts the organization and is confident it will support his/her decisions	Comments
Opportunities for Improvement: 1 Does not try to improve 2 Seeks improvement but seems unsure how to go about it 3 Recognizes areas where improvement is necessary and actively works to get there	Comments
Subtotal	

Overall Assessment**Number of Points**

Section I:

Section II:

Section III:

Section IV:

Section V:

TOTAL**Assessment Standards**

Score	Rating	Evaluation
33–45	Below Standard	Requires frequent supervision and direction. Not ready to deal with irate customers or problem situations without assistance.
46–59	Occasionally Below Standard	Needs more training and practice. Can work with irate customers, but should call on others for help when necessary. Should review the Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations practice standards.
60–73	Standard	Performance expected of an experienced employee. Satisfactorily deals with irate customers and problem situations. Builds on positive experiences and consistently meets performance standards.
74–86	Excellent	Consistently exceeds job requirements with above average quality. Handles irate customers and stressful situations with calm and confidence. Could be a good team leader or management candidate.
87–99	Outstanding	Demonstrates exceptional attitude, skills, and judgment. Sees irate customer encounters as a development opportunity. Outstanding performance on a level not frequently achieved by others.

Assessment Date: _____

sample

SECTION 3:

KEEPING YOUR COOL AND DIFFUSING THE SITUATION

LEADER TEXT: Keeping your cool when dealing with an irate customer is essential. It helps you stay calm, diffuse the situation and make rational, empowered decisions.

VIDEO SCRIPT OF SESSION 1: SECTION 3

Running Time: 4 minutes, 50 seconds

NARRATOR: Handling irate customers can be difficult for even the most seasoned employees in any industry and at any organization. It drains you physically and emotionally, and can test the absolute limits of your skills and fortitude.

Keeping your cool is the single most important thing you can do to affect a potential positive outcome. It gives you the best opportunity to diffuse the situation, and positions you as a calm and collected employee willing to work toward a solution.

When you lose your cool in the face of adversity then all is lost.

Customer: I don't understand. What do you mean it isn't there?

Employee: It's just not there. Are you sure you deposited it?

Customer: Am I sure? It's direct deposit. This happens every month like clockwork.

Employee: Well it doesn't seem to have happened this month.

Customer: Are you stupid or something?

sample

EXERCISE 4:

Format: Large Group

Equipment Needed: None

Exercise 4 is found on Page 102 in the Participant Book.

Purpose of Exercise 4: Designed to introduce participants to the importance of staying calm and collected in order to diffuse an irate customer encounter.

Participant Book Question 1: What went wrong in the first section of the video? How well do you think the employee handled the situation? What could the employee have done differently?

Participant Book Question 2: What went right in the second section of the video? What did the employee do to positively affect the outcome? How did this differ from the previous scenario?

Compare and contrast the two scenarios and allow the participants to point out each instance where the employees differed. Fill in any gaps that you notice and discuss the impact that those differences had on the irate customer.

Participant Book Question 3: Have you ever lost your cool or witnessed another co-worker lose their cool with a customer?

Elicit real world experiences from the participants and include an example from your own experience to break the ice and get the ball rolling. Try to focus on the idea that it is completely normal to occasionally lose control, but that it almost always loses a customer. What triggered the outburst?

What was the result? How did it make you feel about yourself, your job, or the customer? If describing an experience where a participant witnessed a co-worker lose their cool, try to get the participant to talk about how they felt watching the scene unfold. Did it make you feel uncomfortable? Did you see it coming? Did you notice any triggers that may have set your co-worker off? Could you have done anything to help calm the situation before it got out of control?

Participant Book Question 4: As an employee, when you lose control of your emotions with a customer, what is usually the result?

Poll the group. Answers should trend negative. Most customers do not respond positively to being screamed at or treated disrespectfully at their already heightened emotional state. As satisfying as shouting back can be, what is really accomplished? Would anything else satisfy that urge to act out? Would turning around the situation and solving the problem be as emotionally rewarding? Why or why not? Try to get the participants thinking about the personal rewards and organizational success associated with conquering these negative feelings.

Participant Book Question 5: Why is it important to stay calm and collected when dealing with an irate customer?

Diffusing the situation is as much about calming the employee down as it is about calming the irate customer. Staying calm and collected allows the employee to order their thoughts, make rational decisions based on available information, and take a little bit more time to work things out. Refocus participants if they start to get off topic or personal. No one likes to be screamed at, but try to get to the heart of the practicalities of diffusing and calming an irate customer. What does it feel like to work with someone screaming and glaring at you versus someone still annoyed but willing to listen and work with you on a solution? Which would you prefer?

END OF EXERCISE 4

PREVIEW

HANDLING IRATE CUSTOMERS

AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

PARTICIPANT BOOK

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION



Welcome!

Congratulations on being selected to participate in Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations, a valuable program designed to help you overcome one of the most difficult aspects of any service oriented industry... dealing with irate customers and overcoming problem situations. The lessons and techniques described in this program can help you improve your interactions with your customers, develop a routine for overcoming difficult situations that arise on the job, and recover following stressful encounters. In addition, this program offers a management approach to help distinguish your organization from the competition.

Successful companies set themselves apart with the service they provide to their clients and customers even at the most difficult times. The training and techniques outlined in this program can help you improve your interactions with everyone at your organization from your customers and co-workers to your supervisors. In addition, the skills necessary to succeed under pressure will help you take that next step up the ladder within your organization.

Facing off with a screaming, unreasonable, irrational customer represents the ultimate test of any employee's service skills. It can take you to your breaking point if you are not aware and careful. Staying grounded and above the fray requires you to find inner strength and persevere beyond the initial difficulties. You may not even know if you possess that strength, but this program will help draw it out of you.

Dealing with irate customers is among the most pressure packed experiences you will ever encounter on any job. When you can perform with the odds stacked against you people will take notice. Co-workers will trip over themselves to work with you on an upcoming project, supervisors will put you in charge, and your customers will happily allow you to help them, knowing you will do whatever it takes to satisfy their needs.

Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations provides concrete exercises to help you better diffuse and manage angry customer encounters. It also offers strategies you can use to affect success in those instances when a situation spirals out of control. It also explores the importance of staying calm and controlled and projecting an even demeanor and sound expertise during those difficult situations.

Handling Irate Customers & Difficult Situations is all about

- *Compassion,*
- *Confidence, and*
- *Calm,*
- *Competence.*

During this program you will learn how to look at situations and even yourself differently. We invite you to evaluate your attitude, your actions, and your skills on the job. Think about how you interact with customers when things get tough. How do you respond to customer complaints? How do you react to personal attacks? As a customer yourself, have you ever been in a difficult situation? How did you respond? How was the situation resolved? This introspection will help you focus on those difficult encounters and use them to learn, grow, and succeed in the workplace.

Program Objectives

In this program you will learn:

- *Who is the irate customer and what is their mindset?*
- *The importance of diffusing the situation*
- *6 steps for handling irate customers*
- *Tools you can use to recover from stressful encounters and then to evaluate your performance*



- *What are difficult situations?*
- *The importance of remembering and relying on your training*
- *4 steps for dealing with problem situations*
- *What to do when things get even worse*
- *How to rebuild your self esteem and sense of self-worth*

Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations requires skills beyond simply navigating a nerve-wracking encounter with a screaming customer. It demands that you build a strong sense of self-esteem. It requires that you possess the confidence to rely on your skills and training to overcome any situation. So often employees faced with an irate customer crumble under the intensity of the moment. They don't feel strong enough to handle the abusive language, or sure enough of themselves to solve the problem appropriately. This program aims to give you that strength, little by little, but in the end strength is something that must come from you. It's a product of your confidence.

Your group leader will direct you through each section of the program and facilitate a series of discussions over the next two sessions. The success of Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations hinges on the openness and sincerity of each and every participant. Ask questions as often as possible, and try to provide honest answers based on your personal experiences - there are no right or wrong answers or questions.

During each section of the program, you will see a series of video presentations that depict common scenarios that you may encounter on the job. You will also perform a few written assignments and participate in valuable role-play exercises.

The Participant Book

Your Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations participant book guides you through each session and section of the program. Use it to follow along, take notes, and locate presentation material and exercises. Once you complete the program, keep the participant book for future reference and practice. Use this book to capture important notes and tips, it will prove to be a valuable resource when your memory of the workshop itself has faded. So take notes, capture your thoughts and remember what you learn.

You may be familiar with some of the themes we will discuss. Others may be new to you. When we are done you will have the knowledge and skills you need to confidently and effectively handle any irate customer encounter you might face on the job.

Handling irate customers can be difficult and take an extraordinary amount of patience and time, but in the end it benefits everyone in your organization, and your customers as well.



CHAPTER 1

REVIEW: Points to Remember

- *Dealing with irate customers is among the most pressure packed experiences on any job.*
- *Successful companies set themselves apart with the service they provide to their clients and customers even at the most difficult times.*
- *Techniques can help you improve your interactions with everyone at your organization.*
- *The skills necessary to succeed under pressure will help you take that next step up the ladder within your organization.*
- *Handling irate customers requires:*
 - *Compassion*
 - *Calm*
 - *Confidence*
 - *Competence*

**Handling Irate Customers and Difficult Situations
Certificate of Accomplishment**

**HANDLING
IRATE
CUSTOMERS**
AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION THIS

**CERTIFICATE OF
ACCOMPLISHMENT**

is awarded to:

ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____

EXECUTIVE



FACILITATOR