



Bacal & Associates

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Dear Reader:

Thank you for your interest in our book, Defusing Hostile Customers For The Public Sector.

In this chapter (Chapter 1), we cover how and why government is different from the private sector in terms of customer service issues, and why serving government customers has become more difficult over the years.

We will be posting the book, chapter by chapter, on our site, <http://angrycustomer.org>

Purchasing Information:

You can purchase this book in a number of formats, including the complete downloadable version, or the printed version. Here are your options.

Downloadable Version: If you are in a hurry and want your copy right away, and want to save some money, [get the downloadable version](#). It's easy and fast. [Go to our web store](#), add the book to your cart, and then checkout. We accept all major credit cards. You'll be given the link to download the entire book.

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Sincerely yours

Robert Bacal

Robert Bacal



Defusing Hostile and Angry Customers Seminar Fact Sheet

Some of Our Government Clients For This Seminar

Ontario Registrar General
City of Pickering
Alberta Student Finance Board
Alberta Department of Labour
Alberta Environmental Protection
Alberta Department of Education
Alberta Human Rights
Alberta Advanced Education
Alberta Bureau of Public Affairs
Saskatchewan Legal Aid
Saskatchewan Dept. of Education
Saskatchewan Post Secondary Ed.
Saskatchewan Dept. of Labour
Manitoba Driver Licensing
Manitoba Housing
Manitoba Public Insurance
Manitoba Worker's Compensation
Manitoba Motor Vehicles Branch
Manitoba Liquor Control Comm.
Manitoba Residential Tenancies
Manitoba Crop Insurance
Manitoba Land Titles
Assiniboine Community College
Immigration Canada
Training & Development Canada
Mb. Canada Business Centre
Winnipeg Property Assessment
City of Pickering

Who Will Benefit From This Seminar

Employees (including supervisors or managers) who deal with difficult, angry and volatile clientele in person or on the phone.

Benefits & Outcomes

- More complaints & problems can be dealt with without managerial involvement.
- Reduction of time needed to manage or resolve difficult situations by applying non-argumentative techniques to help clientele "hear"
- Increases workplace safety through prevention.
- Increases staff confidence dealing with volatile situations.

Special Seminar Features

- Built from the ground up for government staff and situations but custom designed for other sectors
- All seminars custom-designed and use examples and cases from your workplace
- Uses script analysis techniques to provide practice opportunities - a low stress approach.
- Builds both specific skills and understanding of angry and hostile dynamics, so participants can continue to improve "on the job".
- Seminar manual serves as both workbook and reference book.
- Cost effective. Costs can be as little as \$90.00 per person for customized seminars.
- By training all staff in your workplace, allows staff and managers to work together as defusing teams.

Seminar Options

- Available in half-day, one day, two

day formats.

- One day seminar can be split into two half-day seminars delivered on consecutive days.

What Do Participants Learn?

- ◆ How to prevent small conflicts from becoming time-eating, stress-provoking situations
- ◆ How to maintain self-control amidst the insults and threats.
- ◆ How to time and sequence responses so clients will listen.
- ◆ How to counter the physically intimidating person.
- ◆ How to use language to prevent escalation and increase cooperation.
- ◆ How to use techniques to get angry or hostile people to listen and stop arguing.
- ◆ How to avoid sounding bureaucratic.
- ◆ How to set and enforce limits when client behaviour is unacceptable.
- ◆ How to terminate conversations properly and effectively.
- ◆ How to deal with telephone hostility.
- ◆ How to work with supervisor to deal with situations more quickly.
- ◆ How to defuse as a team.
- ◆ How to provide for "face-saving" outs for clients.
- ◆ Managing involvement of supervisor/manager.
- ◆ Using time-out tactics with adults.
- ◆ Dealing with audience situations.

Can't arrange a seminar? Order our self-instructional workbook designed specifically for government (please turn over)



What's Inside? Key Topics

Introduction

The Nature of Angry, Hostile & Abusive Behaviour

Overview of The Defusing Process

The Art of Self Control

Starting Off Successfully

The Art of Cooperative Language (Preventing Conflict Through The Words We Use)

Verbal Self-Defense Techniques

Acknowledgement Tactics

Countering Non Verbal Intimidation

Referral Techniques

Time-Out!

Problem Solving

Assertive Limit Setting

For Supervisors & Managers

Special Situations

Telephone Hostility

Intoxicated People

The Environment

Audience Situations

Team Defusing

Dealing With Threats

Cultural Issues & Conflict

Closing Comments

Most chapters include hands-on practice opportunities, and the chance to compare answers to the correct ones provided. On-the-job application exercises are also included.

Defusing Hostile Customers Workbook For Public Sector

Introduction:

Government staff have to deal with all manner of hostile and angry behaviour from members of the public. It's not fair but it comes with the territory. When hostile and volatile situations occur it is YOUR behaviour, and that of your staff that will help determine whether the situation escalates, or whether it cools down so something positive and constructive can happen. While some people have developed some skills in defusing, very few people are able to consistently use the many strategies and skills needed to build bridges across stormy waters.

Now in its third edition, this "seminar in a book" has been lauded by government clients throughout North America, for its uniqueness, completeness and applicability to the public sector.

Defusing Hostile Customers Workbook For The Public Sector is chock full of specific techniques that can be used on the job immediately to shorten abusive interactions and reduce complaints "up the line". It presents a basic framework for understanding manipulative and angry people. At 200+ pages, it walks you through the defusing process and teaches you the "uncommon skills of defusing". Based on our popular seminar, it includes exercises and assignments people can use to practice the skills so they are available when really needed.

Who Will Benefit From This Workbook

Any government employees (including supervisors or managers) who deal with difficult, angry and volatile clientele in person or on the phone.

Special Features:

- Based on our popular seminar for government staff. Can be used in addition to, or instead of seminar attendance.
- Only book on the market intended exclusively for government staff.
- Can be read through, or used as a workbook.

- Exercises for extensive practice and application are included for each set of skills.
- Has been used by every provincial government and the federal government.
- Practice exercises included are accompanied by examples and explanations so users can assess their progress.

Ordering Information

Available in traditional book form, and in instantly downloadable Adobe Acrobat format.

- Buy single copies directly from us at our online store at <http://bacalassociates.com> or via amazon.
- If you prefer NOT to order online, call us at (613) 764-0241 or email at ceo@work911.com

Multiple copy pricing can save you up to 50% off the unit price, but the ordering process is different. Please call or email for details.

Steve Katz (MN Government) Amazon Review: The *Defusing Hostile Customers Workbook (Third Edition 2010)* by Robert Bacal is the best material I've ever seen on this subject. It gives the government worker everything he or she needs to defuse hostile customers. I can unequivocally recommend this book for any government worker who regularly deals with hostile customers. The business case for buying this book is that angry customers eat up lots of organizational time and energy, particularly when they decide to climb the organizational ladder with their complaints.

Autumn Bell Amazon Review: Robert Bacal has filled a niche that has been empty for too long...and written exercises in each section help readers apply the material. We have tried these techniques here at work and the results have been outstanding. I highly recommend this book for anyone who encounters customers, clients, patients, students, or members of the public - whether you work in the public or the private sector. This is the best source on handling customers you can find!

Benjamin Schiltz (Ontario) Amazon Review: A MUST READ! for anyone who is a government employee or call centre rep who deal with people on a daily basis. I am about to work for a call centre and I find this book easy to understand and easy to learn. I am one very satisfied customer indeed. thank you.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, we discuss the difference between working in the private and public sectors, and how to use this workbook to improve your defusing hostility skills.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

A casual observer of our society might conclude that we become more aggressive, more abusive, and less tolerant of frustration over time. As a government employee you probably wonder what the heck is happening with people. It seems that angry, hostile and abusive behavior is increasing, and government employees are convenient targets for the frustrated and angry.

Severe situations are occurring more often -- hostage takings, threats of violence, and physical violence are increasing, although they are still rare. Verbal abuse of employees is on the rise, and while we don't see this kind of abuse reported in the media, it is becoming more common. It's a hidden form of abuse. For those in adversarial or regulatory roles with respect to customers, verbal abuse is often an everyday occurrence.

This trend is likely to continue and it gets worse when the economy is bumpy.

THE GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

There is no question that government staff work under different constraints than those in the private sector. You may be in an enforcement position, obliged to identify breaches of legislation or government regulations. You may be in the position of determining financial benefits for people that will have an effect on the well-being of those people and their families. Or, perhaps you work in an administrative job within a department that carries out tasks that annoy the public.

It certainly appears that angry, hostile and abusive behavior is increasing, and that government employees have become convenient targets for the frustrated and angry.

Government departments have far more impact on people's lives than, let's say, a Zellers, or a Canadian Tire. As such, those that work in government operate as magnets for hostility, both from direct customers, and from the media. These days, each city seems to have a self-appointed champion of the people who "investigates" government decisions. Every talk show host takes "shots" at some aspect of government. Government "bashing" has become a favorite pastime of both print and radio journalists.

Apart from being under the microscope, you don't have the flexibility of private sector employees. While Wal-Mart can take the position that the "customer is always right", your customers are not always right, and you

can't always meet their requests without breaking the laws you may be charged to enforce. You don't give refunds on purchases, or replace a product if the customer doesn't like it. Often you can't forward their comments and suggestions to senior government officials and politicians because you don't have the access. In a bureaucratic hierarchy, the policy makers and decision makers are not easily accessible to government employees who deal directly with the public.

It's a tough situation. The public seems to want more even though staff and other resources are being cut. Governments and those that work in them are blamed for everything. Chances are that your customers have to wait longer to receive service. Or, your department may no longer offer the service that customers expect. Or, you now charge for services that used to be free.

People don't like it, and they take it out on you because you're handy and the "face" of the government with which they are angry.

WHO PAYS THE PRICE?

Employees on the "firing line" deal with the stresses, great and small, resulting from dealing with angry, frustrated customers. Angry customers eat up lots of organizational time and energy, particularly when they decide to climb the organizational ladder with their complaints. Employee safety can be threatened by angry customers. It just isn't fun, and it's no laughing matter. You pay the price. As do your co-workers, managers, and even other customers who are delayed by angry customers.

You can get better at it, and reap the benefits. There are few things more satisfying than successfully dealing with an angry customer so they leave relatively satisfied.

YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

It may seem you can do little to defuse the anger and hostility of customers. It seems to be set off by the smallest things, it seems unpredictable. The truth of the matter is that employees *can* do things to defuse the anger and reduce abusive behavior. People *can* learn to act in ways that reduce this kind of behavior, and ensure that they **don't do anything that will result in an unpleasant situation** going ballistic.

That's what this book is about. It was written to help you deal more capably with hostile situations so you can **reduce your stress levels, protect your time**, reduce the occurrences of crisis situations, and enhance the reputation of your organization.

You should know that it takes some time to learn how to deal with these situations and it takes diligence and effort, but it isn't hard. Most people can learn the defusing skills, and put them into effect. Our goal is to become practiced in defusing hostility so it becomes second nature. Over time effective defusing responses replace less effective ones.

USING THE WORKBOOK


The material in this book is drawn from a number of sources, not the least of which is the experience of several thousand public sector employees who have participated in my seminar called **Defusing Hostility Customers**.

The book you are holding will provide you with a better understanding of angry behavior, and will present a number of strategies and tactics you can use with hostile people. Most chapters include exercises you can do to “practice” the thinking skills needed to use these strategies and tactics. We have provided answers for many of the exercises so you can evaluate your own progress. These can be found in Appendix A at the back of the book.

Keep in mind that many of the exercises can have several “right answers”. While your answer may be different than the one provided at the back of the book, it may not be “wrong”.

So we recommend the following:

- always read the relevant chapter in this book before trying the exercises that follow each chapter.
- do the exercises! You will learn and retain more if you actually write out your answers to the exercises.
- read only a chapter or two at a time before doing the exercises. We suggest that you read a chapter, make some notes, then do the exercises for the chapter. Don’t overload yourself. Retention is best if you do a bit at a time.



**There is no
magic solution,
no cookbook
approach that
works each
time.**

CAVEATS

There are no hard rules that you apply “automatically” to defuse angry customers. Each hostile situation is different. You must use your own judgment to determine what you ought to do. There is no magic solution, no cookbook approach that works each time. This book includes tactics and techniques you can use, but you must decide when and how to implement the techniques when the time comes. I can’t do that for you.

You can get better at it, and reap the benefits. There are few things more satisfying than successfully dealing with an angry customer so they leave relatively satisfied.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON SAFETY

It is important -- very important -- that you consider safety as a bottom line. Your safety and the safety of other staff, customers and members of the public is paramount. There will be times when it will be impossible to defuse someone, particularly if he or she is prone to violence, or mental instability. While I can sit at my keyboard extolling the virtues of gentle approaches to defusing hostility, you must always be concerned with safety, and must do what is necessary to keep everyone safe. Always err on the side of safety!

FINAL NOTE

I hope you will find this material useful. If you require more assistance, consider taking the *Defusing Hostile Customers* seminar. For more information, or if you have comments and suggestions, I can be contacted at:

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