

# Psychology of The Angry Customer

## How To Build Rapport During The Customer Greeting?

### Tactic 15: Generating Rapport During Customer Greetings

When a client approaches you, your greeting should be short and to the point. Sometimes, it is more appropriate to spend a bit of time in conversation before getting down to business. We call this generating rapport.

What we mean by this is that you spend a minute or two asking questions or talking on subjects other than the reason for the conversation. It's about relationship building, or in the case of an existing relationship, it's about maintaining a positive relationship.

There are two situations where this is particularly appropriate. One is when you approach the customer. The second is when you have worked with the client before. Let's look at two examples:

Colleen works as a health inspector visiting restaurants. Her job is to look for health and safety violations. Not surprisingly, many people are not overly pleased to see her. She enters a restaurant and approaches the manager/owner, Mr. Jasper. She has met him several times before (relationship already exists).

**Colleen:** *Good morning Mr. Jasper. How are you today? I hope you've been getting some of the convention business this month?*

**Jasper:** *Ya, it's been OK.*

**Colleen:** *It's nice to see restaurants like yours doing well. I guess you know why I'm here. I need to take a look for the usual health and safety issues, but you've always done well in the past.*

**Jasper:** *OK, where would you like to start?*

In the example, note that Colleen asks a question about business, showing that she is interested. This is a simple way to generate rapport -- ask a greeting question about something you know is important to the client, and is likely to be a positive thing to talk about.

By the way, if this had been Colleen's first visit, she would also have had to introduce herself and provide some information to the manager. She still might have asked some rapport building questions like:

*So, how have the first few months been in the business?*

*Been very busy?*

In the next example, the employee and the customer have worked together before. Mr. Smith, the customer, comes into the office at least once a month. Janet Wilson, the employee, has helped the customer before, but also knows that Mr. Smith is often annoyed or hostile. Janet handles the greeting like this:

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**Janet:** *Good morning, Mr. Smith. I hope you got your problem from last month sorted out .. how did that work out?*

**Mr. Wilson:** *Well, I didn't get what I wanted, but at least I spoke to your boss.*

**Janet:** *Well, at least you had your say. What can I do for you today ?*

In this example, Janet refers to the last time she met with the client. This shows he is important enough to remember, and expresses interest. It helps create rapport so that Mr. Wilson is less likely to be hostile.

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