

Communicating With Customers

How Do You Use The Non-Verbal Stop Sign With Angry Customers?

The non-verbal stop sign is a technique used to convey to customers who are going on and on, and not allowing you to enter into a conversation, that you want them to stop, at least for a moment.

Do you need to get an in-person customer to stop and listen?

You can use the nonverbal stop sign to indicate you'd like to say something. The technique is simple, but you need to execute it correctly .Hold up your hand toward the customer, with the palm facing half toward the floor and half toward the customer. **In other words, your hand should be at about a 45-degree angle.**

Ensure that you are far enough away from the customer that there will be **no risk of physical contact**. Keep your hand no higher than the customer's chest level, not in his or her face. This technique should not be used with any customer who appears potentially violent. Also, the stop sign should be raised slowly, not abruptly, and it can be coupled with a simple verbal request, such as, "Hold on a sec."

Keep in mind that we always want to try to get control over an angry interaction (i.e. that the customer starts to listen) in the least noticeable way. That's one reason it's often better to try the non-verbal stop sign, before coming out and asking the customer to stop talking.

Before you object to this technique (some people do), if you do it properly, the customer won't even notice you are using it effectively. It's not obvious, and it does work. But you need to do it properly, as is the case with all defusing customer techniques.

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Author: Rob Bacal

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