

What Should I Do When A Customer...

When An Angry Customer Refuses To Leave?

It can be scary when you are dealing with a customer who won't take no for an answer, and refuses to leave, particularly if the customer is abusive. In the following excerpt from [Perfect Phrases For Customer Service](#), we'll provide some advice and even a sample dialogue.

The Situation: Customer Won't Leave

While it's rare, you may find yourself in a situation where you've exhausted all constructive mechanisms of conversation and have decided to terminate the conversation with a customer. You politely ask the customer to leave, but he or she refuses. What do you do?

TECHNIQUES USED IN THE EXAMPLE

- Set Limits (1)
- Disengage (2)
- Contact Security/Authorities/Management (3)

DIALOGUE

This situation occurs in the office of the employee. The customer is angry at not getting what he wants and has become abusive. The employee sets some limits, indicating that unless the customer ceases his abusive behavior, the employee will ask him to leave. The customer responds abusively.

Employee: I don't think we can continue this conversation, so I'm going to ask you to leave.

Customer: I told you I'm not leaving until I get what I want. I'd like to see you try to make me leave.

Employee: I'm not going to force you to leave, but I'm not going to continue with you. I'm going to leave.

Customer: Well, I'm not going anywhere.

Employee: Fine. If you're still here when we close our office in 20 minutes, we'll have to contact the authorities to escort you out of the building. I don't think anyone wants that.

Customer: I'm not moving.

Employee: [Leaves the office and informs manager and/or security of the problem] (3).

EXPLANATIONS

The employee recognizes it isn't his job to remove the customer and chooses the path of least resistance. Since there is no immediate safety threat and the customer is not actively interfering with the business of others, the

employee decides to let the customer sit in the office.

Faced with refusal to leave, the employee sets forth the limits and consequences if the customer stays (1) and

then disengages by leaving the office (2).

When the customer realizes he's sitting in an office by himself, without anyone to talk to, he may choose to

leave on his own, understanding the whole process has become pointless. If he tries to stay beyond closing, then there's no choice but to contact security or the authorities to have him

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removed.

This situation is a potentially serious one that may impact safety and security, so it's important that the employee, upon leaving the office, inform his or her supervisor or security immediately, so he or she can decide on the best course of action.

HINTS

In this example, the employee could have checked back with the customer after allowing him to sit by himself for 5 or 10 minutes. For example, "**Mr. Smith, if you're willing to discuss your situation in a quiet manner, I'm willing to do that.**" Sometimes an angry customer will reconsider after having had a few minutes by him- or herself and either act more civilly or choose to leave.

There is no magic solution to this kind of situation that guarantees everyone wins. Keep safety and security firmly in mind and don't escalate or raise the stakes. **Above all, don't take on the responsibilities of the police or security.**

Unique solution ID: #1137

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Last update: 2014-03-17 21:24