

Techniques For Defusing and Calming Down Angry Customers

Are Hostage Negotiation Techniques Similar To Defusing Angry Customers Techniques?

Yes. And no. Some techniques are used in both situations. For example, "building rapport" is used in both, as is the "distraction technique" that I teach. It makes sense that there be overlap since both situations involves some similar elements of communication and human emotion.

Lots of Differences, Though

Hostage takers and angry customers exhibit only SOME of the same psychological dynamics, but they also differ a good deal, as clearly, the situations differ in terms to risk and the mostly difficult outcomes. Failure of a hostage negotiation can result in people dying. Most failures in dealing with angry customers don't even come close to that level of tragedy.

For that reason, hostage negotiators also do things differently. For example, part of the "rules" of hostage negotiation involves NOT giving up anything to the hostage taker, at least without some corresponding "giving" on his or her part. That reflects trying to establish a particular kind of relationship between negotiator and hostage taker, and that relationship is simply different than between employee and angry customer.

So, in customer service, and with angry customers, you'll often find it suggested that a customer service rep actually offer up something to the customer. This is an example where the guidelines between the two situations differ.

Can We Learn From Hostage Negotiators How To Deal With Angry Customers?

Indeed. A few of the techniques I teach, while not drawn from the area of hostage negotiations, are almost exactly the same. And, provided we're careful about determining what fits both contexts, and not just one, we can learn a great deal.

For some documents on hostage negotiation, click on the link -->[Do You Have Resources For Hostage Negotiation?](#)

Unique solution ID: #1020

Author: Robert Bacal

Last update: 2014-03-31 14:32