



**INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
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**Good Customer Service**

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Managers and front-line staff are ones who often have first contact with most visitor, client, vendor, or customer-contact interactions.

Most people are cooperative when it comes to showing their identification (ID), signing visitor logs, or waiting for services. A small percentage of people can be impatient, manipulative, obnoxious, and even threatening.

Many frontline customer-contact employees know how to deal with reasonable people, but they sometimes lose their focus, or their tempers, or become flustered when dealing with aggressive or threatening people who want to circumvent usual policies or security procedures for visiting and access control.

It's important that such staff members ask themselves a series of important question about these types of people before things escalate:

- Does their behavior violate our visitor expectations, business practice / security policies, or is it moving in that direction?
- Does their behavior hurt our business or impact what we're trying to do here in a negative way?
- What do my instincts or my intuition tell me about how I should respond?
- Do I need to get help to change the "ratio of confrontation," (get additional staff to assist) or can I handle this myself?
- Have other coworkers or customers complained about this person's behavior?
- Are other people suddenly afraid of this person because the situation is escalating?
- Am I right in attempting to set limits and boundaries on this person's behavior, like denying him or her access or asking him or her to leave?
- Am I being "reasonable" in my interactions with this person?
- Might I need to call additional staff, security help or even law enforcement to help safely deal with this person?
- Am I being firm, fair, consistent, and assertive when interacting with this person to best protect the company, the facility, my coworkers, and myself?

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**Types of Challenging Behavior Problems**

- Smoking in the building
- Solicitors
- Threats or assaults
- Intimidation

- Not following the rules
- Violating temporary restraining orders
- Sexual behaviors
- Leaving children unattended
- Theft
- Trespassing
- Comfort animal's vs. service animals
- Prohibited or contraband items
- Blocking aisles, stairways, etc.
- Misusing equipment
- Mask issues

### **Types of Difficult People**

- **Angry Clients**
  - Let them vent allowing them to be heard or allows time for you to think of options or supervisor to come
  - Validate their concerns
- **Threatening Clients**
  - Try to de-escalate
  - Ask to leave
  - May need to ask for assistance, if you feel intimidated
  - May need police assistance
- **“Entitled” Clients**
  - Want to feel important
  - Raise their voice
  - Unhappy with their lives, take it out on others
  - Don't match their tone
  - Stand your ground
  - May need your supervisor
- **Needy Clients**
  - May be odd, needy, desperate
  - Not usually threatening or dangerous
  - Won't take no for an answer
  - Set limits
  - Keep repeating options you suggest
- **Vandals**
  - Make frequent eye contact
  - Give the message “You're watching them”
  - Call the police
- **Gangs**
  - Don't embarrass or disrespect them
  - Be assertive, polite, fair

- Substance Abusers
  - Ask them to leave, call police, call an ambulance
  - Do not argue or try to reason with them
  - Use space, distance, barriers between you and them
- Mentally Ill
  - Keep your distance, don't touch them or their belongings
  - Give simple questions, directions, commands
  - Ask them to leave for the day
  - May need to contact security or police
- Code of Conduct, Rule Violators
  - Be firm, fair consistent, assertive
  - Must have consequences
- Domestic Violence Perpetrators or Stalkers
  - One person calling, harassing, intimidating another person
  - Feeling of fear for one's safety
  - May involve police involvement

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## **Customer Service Approaches**

- Be neutral, friendly, polite
- People can hear boredom, condescension, rudeness
- Pay attention to tone
- Be firm, fair, consistent
- Set boundaries for patron's bad behavior, give one warning
- If behavior continues, change the "ratio of confrontation"
- Exit

### **Code of Quality Service**

- Greet each patron immediately
- Give each patron your complete attention
- Make the first 30 seconds count
- Show sincere friendliness
- Be the patron's "problem solver"
- Use your common sense
- Bend the rules if the situation calls for it
- Make the last 30 seconds count
- Take good care of yourself so you can be your best

### **Rules of Engagement**

- Stay firm, fair, consistent, assertive
- Let people vent, while you validate their words
- Leave their dignity in tact

- Stay out of the fact-to-face zone, keep your distance, stand at an angle
- Use proxemics barriers
- Use the Assertive Whisper, talk quietly, be approachable, friendly, neutral in tone
- Set boundaries and limits as to the time, information, physical presence spent with the individual
- Change the ratio of confrontation

## Introduce / Explain / Ask\*

One low-key customer service model that gets good results is **Introduce/Explain/Ask**.

**Introduce** yourself. Try to get the person's name.

**Explain** why you came over or what you need the visitor, vendor, or customer to know.

- "I noticed that you didn't ...."
- "The reason I'm here is ...."
- "I'm sure you already know this, but ...."
- "Our usual policy is to ...."

**Ask** for his or her understanding, cooperation, or compliance.

- "I need to ask you to ...."
- "Could you please step over here and ...."
- "I'm sorry, but you can't do that if you want to go past this point ...."

It may be necessary for the customer-contact employee to go through this three-part cycle more than once, since some self-important or angry people don't hear these questions the first time.

These phrases tend to work better with angry people since they attempt to build empathy:

- "I hear you and I'm ready to help you ..."
- "I can see you're upset ..."
- "I'm sorry ..."
- "I'm not trying to make you mad ..."
- "You could be right ..."
- "It's not me, it's the computer ..."
- "Please help me do my job for you ..."
- "I can take your name and cell number ..."

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