

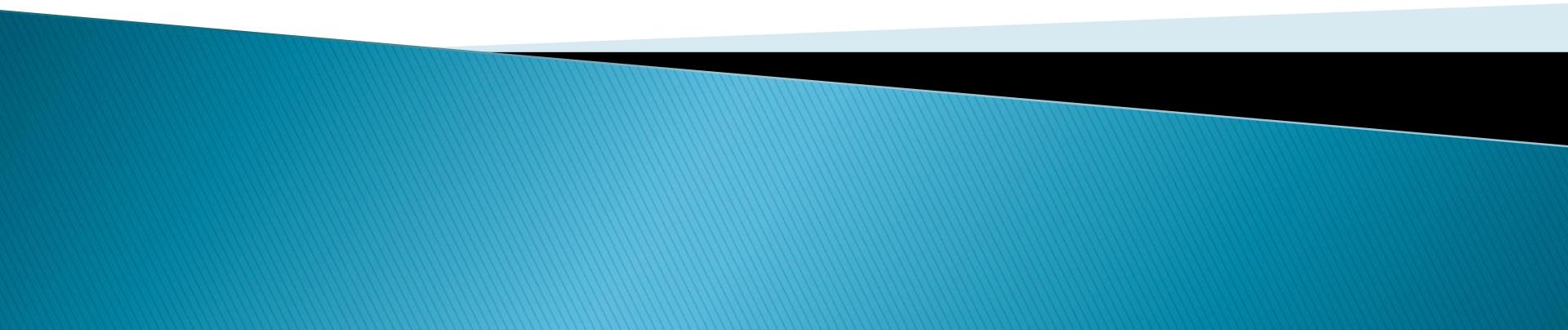
Customer Service

Presented by Scott Holmquist
President, Second Alliance, Inc.

This presentation will begin
at 1:00pm Pacific Time

- Anger
- Manipulation
- Abuse
- Customer Service and Human Service. Doing your job and loving it!

Principles of the Psychology of Anger



1. Anger Precludes Rationality

- ▶ Anger customers cannot rationalize

2. Anger must be acknowledged

- ▶ Do not ignore or tip-toe around anger. Ignoring it breaks the communication chain as this response to anger is a link to communication and breaking that link makes customers think that we do not care and that we do not want to listen, so they tend to raise their voices to try to get through to you. Responding to anger keeps your customer from getting more upset.

3. Work to diffuse anger before going to problem solving

- ▶ Think of it in this perspective. Imagine a cup filled with water. The law of displacement states that no two things can be in the same place at the same time twice. One must make way to make room for the other. Now look at it this way. The customer is the cup and the water in that cup is all the anger and frustration cooped up inside. Problem solving requires informing and educating. Now educating and informing the customer will do no good since he is preoccupied with all these emotions. To get things through we have to diffuse all of that emotion, get it out of his system so that the information can get through to him rationally.

4. The issue is not the issue

- ▶ The way the issue is handled becomes the real issue. The primary issue is how the representative responds and resolves the issue. The customer's reason for seeking help only becomes the secondary issue then.

5. Ventilation is crucial

- ▶ An angry customer can be compared to an erupting volcano. Once a volcano erupts there is nothing you can do to stop it. It has to erupt. When a customer is angry he should have to experience and express this anger. DO not tell him to calm down or stay cool because this is as futile as taming an erupting volcano. Like an erupting volcano, the member would eventually erupt and subside. Your angry customer will eventually vent and calm down.

Diffusing Angry Customers

1. Assume that the Customer has a Right to be Angry

- ▶ Nobody makes mistakes on purpose, but they do happen. If you are working in a call center, behind a counter or in any capacity that directly interfaces with customers then you are going to encounter an irate customer at some time

2. Listen to Emotion without Emotion

- ▶ Listen to the inflections and emphasis that the customer places on specific topics to identify the emotional catalyst. Listen to the emotion as well as the words. This will help you to identify the specific item or items that need primary attention.

3. Be Patient

- ▶ Customer conversations come in waves. When the customer is at the peak of expressing anger, sorrow or distress, be patient and listen. It is not effective to interrupt the customer when he or she is venting combustible sentiments.

4. Speak Softly

- ▶ If you encounter a loud and abusive customer, respond by speaking softly and with a very steady tone. If you try to shout over the customer or interrupt, then the customer will concentrate on the verbal battle for attention and will not pay attention to the importance of your message. If you want your message to be heard, wait for a pause in the customer tirade.

5. Reiterate

- ▶ Make sure that you are addressing the technical, administrative and emotional aspects of the customer concerns. After you have listened carefully to the customer, reiterate the priorities that you believe that you heard from the customer perspective. This will assure that you are focused on the appropriate issues and reassure the customer that you are concentrating on the proper priorities.

6. Own the Problem

- ▶ It does not matter who created the problem or what transpired before the customer got to you. Tell the customer that you own the problem and will apply your personal effort to achieve results.

7. Place the Customer First, Problem Second

- ▶ In most cases there are two conflicting issues that occur simultaneously when dealing with irate customers. The first issue is the customer emotional distress. The second is the technical or administrative issue that caused the emotional distress. While it may seem logical to focus first on the technical or administrative issue that cause the emotional distress, it is important to acknowledge the customer anger first and the technical issue second.

8. Triage

- ▶ Once you have an opportunity to focus on technical and administrative issues, triage the root cause of the problems to determine what went wrong. Analyze the problem and provide corrective measures or detailed information in an effort to avoid duplicating the problem with other customers. It may be necessary to obtain some additional information from your customer to accurately analyze the root cause of the problem.

9. Correct the Issue

- ▶ Correct the issue for the specific customer and also look for long term corrective measures. It may not be feasible to give your customer a guarantee that the correction will resolve all problems permanently, but it may be appropriate to reassure the customer that you will be available to assist in the event that another different problem should occur again.

10. Follow Up

- ▶ When possible, follow-up with the customer after sufficient time has elapsed to demonstrate that the corrective action has been effective. A phone call or a letter demonstrates individual attention and acknowledgement.

Dealing with Manipulative People

1. Denial

- ▶ This is when the aggressor refuses to admit that they've done something harmful or hurtful when they clearly have. It's a way they lie (to themselves as well as to others) about their aggressive intentions. This "Who... Me?" tactic is a way of "playing innocent," and invites the victim to feel unjustified in confronting the aggressor about the inappropriateness of a behavior. It's also the way the aggressor gives him/herself permission to keep right on doing what they want to do.

2. Selective Inattention

- ▶ This tactic is similar to and sometimes mistaken for denial. It's when the aggressor "plays dumb," or acts oblivious. When engaging in this tactic, the aggressor actively ignores the warnings, pleas or wishes of others, and in general, refuses to pay attention to everything and anything that might distract them from pursuing their own agenda.

3. Rationalization

- ▶ A rationalization is the excuse an aggressor tries to offer for engaging in an inappropriate or harmful behavior. It can be an effective tactic, especially when the explanation or justification the aggressor offers makes just enough sense that any reasonably conscientious person is likely to fall for it

4. Diversion

- ▶ A moving target is hard to hit. When we try to pin a manipulator down or try to keep a discussion focused on a single issue or behavior we don't like, he's expert at knowing how to change the subject, dodge the issue or in some way throw us a curve.
Manipulators use distraction and diversion techniques to keep the focus off their behavior, move us off-track, and keep themselves free to promote their self-serving hidden agendas.

5. Lying

- ▶ It's often hard to tell when a person is lying at the time he's doing it. Fortunately, there are times when the truth will come out because circumstances don't bear out somebody's story. But there are also times when you don't know you've been deceived until it's too late.

6. Covert Intimidation

- ▶ Aggressors frequently threaten their victims to keep them anxious, apprehensive and in a one-down position. Covert-aggressives intimidate their victims by making veiled (subtle, indirect or implied) threats. Guilt-tripping and shaming are two of the covert-aggressive's favorite weapons. Both are special intimidation tactics.

7. Guilt-tripping

- ▶ One thing that aggressive personalities know well is that other types of persons have very different consciences than they do. Manipulators are often skilled at using what they know to be the greater conscientiousness of their victims as a means of keeping them in a self-doubting, anxious, and submissive position. The more conscientious the potential victim, the more effective guilt is as a weapon.

8. Shaming

- ▶ This is the technique of using subtle sarcasm and put-downs as a means of increasing fear and self-doubt in others. Covert-aggressives use this tactic to make others feel inadequate or unworthy, and therefore, defer to them. It's an effective way to foster a continued sense of personal inadequacy in the weaker party, thereby allowing an aggressor to maintain a position of dominance.

9. Playing the Victim Role

- ▶ This tactic involves portraying oneself as an innocent victim of circumstances or someone else's behavior in order to gain sympathy, evoke compassion and thereby get something from another. One thing that covert-aggressive personalities count on is the fact that less calloused and less hostile personalities usually can't stand to see anyone suffering. Therefore, the tactic is simple. Convince your victim you're suffering in some way, and they'll try to relieve your distress.

10. Playing the Servant Role

- ▶ Covert-aggressives use this tactic to cloak their self-serving agendas in the guise of service to a more noble cause. It's a common tactic but difficult to recognize. By pretending to be working hard on someone else's behalf, covert-aggressives conceal their own ambition, desire for power, and quest for a position of dominance over others

11. Seduction

- ▶ Covert-aggressive personalities are adept at charming, praising, flattering or overtly supporting others in order to get them to lower their defenses and surrender their trust and loyalty.

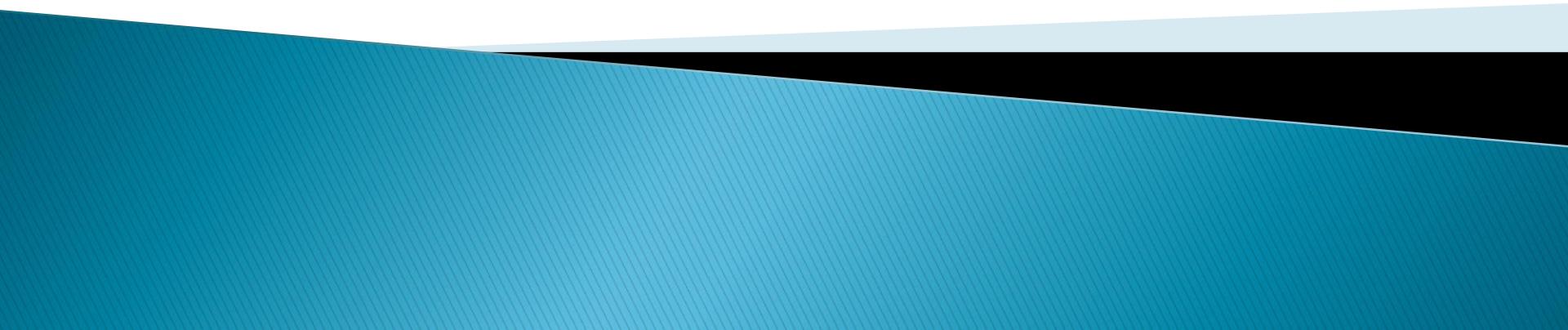
12. Projecting the blame

- ▶ (blaming others) – Aggressive personalities are always looking for a way to shift the blame for their aggressive behavior. Covert-aggressives are not only skilled at finding scapegoats; they're expert at doing so in subtle, hard to detect ways.

13. Minimization

- ▶ This tactic is a unique kind of denial coupled with rationalization. When using this maneuver, the aggressor is attempting to assert that his abusive behavior isn't really as harmful or irresponsible as someone else may be claiming. It's the aggressor's attempt to make a molehill out of a mountain.

Verbally Abusive Customers



1. Manner

- ▶ Always maintain a polite and professional manner during any exchange with a customer. If you are sworn at or exposed to personal attacks on your character, resist the urge to retaliate with abuse or use phrases like "potty mouth" or "didn't your parents teach you any manners."

2. Explain

- ▶ Ask the abusive customer to calm down in a respectful manner and explain that you're there to help. Tell her it's going to be more difficult to resolve the issue while tempers are flared and that you're more likely to be able to address any concerns if any discussion is conducted in a civilized fashion.

3. Empathize

- ▶ Tell your abusive customer that you can understand his frustration and that you would be upset if you were in his position -- if he has a valid complaint. If you feel that his complaint is spurious, empathy will not be necessary.

4. Honesty

- ▶ Be honest about what you can do. If you're unsure about how to deal with the complaint, don't try to bluff your way through the situation. This will only serve to enrage your customer further and could end up getting you into trouble further down the line, either with your boss or legally. Explain that you're unsure of how to deal with the situation and find out from your superiors, colleagues or a lawyer where you stand.

5. Refer to Policies

- ▶ If a customer is complaining about an issue that's covered in any contract you have with him, respectfully refer him to the clause that supports your position. Then, politely explain that it was his responsibility to review the terms and conditions of your relationship before entering into any agreement.

6. Escalate

- ▶ If it becomes clear that you are unable to deal with an abusive customer effectively, don't be afraid of passing the problem on to your manager or a colleague who is more experienced at negotiating with angry clients.

7. Issue a Warning

- ▶ If your customer repeatedly uses foul language and/or threatens you, advise her that you do not have to, nor will you, tolerate being spoken to in such a manner. Explain again that you are there to help, but warn her that you will terminate the call if you're on the phone or call security or the police if you're discussing the situation in person.

8. Silent Treatment

- ▶ Don't try to talk over or interrupt your abusive customer when he's in mid-flow. This is only likely to make him angrier. Let him finish what he is saying. If this involves a long, drawn-out rant, so be it. Remain silent for a few seconds after he's run out of things to say and then state your position. If he interrupts, tell him that you have listened carefully to him and would be grateful if he could extend you the same courtesy.

9. Finally

- ▶ If all else fails and you're unable to get through to your abusive customer, end the discussion. If you're on the phone, explain politely that you feel you can go no further with the conversation and that you're going to hang up. If you're dealing with the customer face to face, ask them to leave your premises.

Human Services vs. Customer Service

- ▶ Students do not see themselves as customers; they see themselves as students and act the way they would act in other school related situations and in most cases the way children and young adults act.

Parents

- ▶ Parents don't see themselves as customers either; they see themselves as parents protecting the interests of their children. Many parents feel entitled to services or special arrangements or exceptions especially if they paid for the child or brought the child into the university.

Confrontation

- ▶ When a student or parent purchases something they feel empowered.
- ▶ When confronted with a problem they feel powerless.
- ▶ When people feel powerless they react differently; usually as a defense mechanism.

Customer Service

- ▶ Day Care
- Nursing Home
- Hospital
- Students

- ▶ You hope people that work in these fields do it because they love the people they serve
- ▶ If you want to teach a culture of customer service remember that this generation will be taking care of you some day.

Young People Know

- ▶ Young people know what you are to them and they know who you are to them.
- ▶ Your tone and presentment is the doorway to influence.

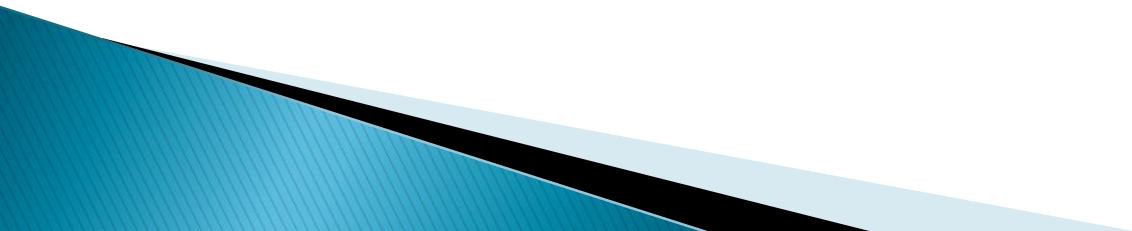
What you do vs. Why you do

- ▶ Do you Love your job?
- ▶ Does it show in the way you communicate?
- ▶ Do you consider yourself to be a good person? Do you think that meeting you is a pleasant experience?

Making a difference

- ▶ To become influential you must first become relatable. This is the gateway to influence.
- ▶ Changing or influencing a culture starts with you and within your department and that begins with empathy and respect

The Human Mind



The Core Self

This is the sum of our experiences and our being. It's all the things we have ever done and all the emotions we've ever felt. It's our journey to date. it's like a hard drive, it hold everything. Even though you thought you deleted something it's sill hanging out in your recycle in. it is all of our everything. Our joy, our love, our fear, our hurt, our pleasure and pain. It's our courage, our integrity, our strength, our lies and deceit. It is you and only you and it is as unique as a snowflake

The Animal Sub-Self

This is the physical body and it is the most difficult to control. Has anybody ever had a “bad hair day?” This is the part that is driven by chemical balances and imbalances; by testosterone, estrogen and hormones. My two favorite movies are Ghandi and Fight Club

The Conscious Mind

This is what we think we are. This is the intellect of the mind summarizing the core self and all of our experiences. Thinking who we are and knowing who we are can be two different things. This is where the conscience mind filters all of the things we want to be and puts aside the things we don't want to be, which, by the way, can't be done. You are who you are. Our conscience mind constantly reminds us of the things we don't want represented in the form of self-consciousness, anxiety, insecurity, thoughts of inadequacy or worst of all shame

The Human Mind External

This is what we think others think of us and is constantly changing by our experiences.
Having this layer in control we will live a reactive lifestyle

The Human Mind Role

This is what we want others to think we are. Our 'Representative.' This layer usually fulfills a need from the core self that needs nurture or attention or it masks a fear that needs to be hidden. This is why we want to be perceived and nice or caring because we want to be treated nicely and cared for. It's also why a bully is mean to people. Usually they hiding the fact that they are terrified inside by something and are usually are the weakest and most vulnerable. A defense mechanism

Others Thoughts of You

Larger than you might think, it's comprised of your existence through the thoughts and memories of others

Sophistication

- ▶ We were never meant to be this sophisticated.
Most of us have the same insecurities, fears
and fragility

Respect

- ▶ Does your come for free or do others have to earn it?

My Job

- ▶ My job is to do my job even if you are not doing your job, everywhere
- ▶ I would do this only if they would do that
- ▶ Our actions affect Everyone and You matter

Caring

- ▶ Being caring, kind or compassionate does not mean being a doormat

Rules to live by

- ▶ Don't take it personally. It's not you, it's the problem.
- ▶ You represent your school. Own it.
- ▶ Know and stick to your job description.
- ▶ Don't be emotional.
- ▶ Empathy.
- ▶ You can't save the world.
- ▶ Bronze Rule. Don't treat others the way you want to be treated. Treat others the way they want to be treated.