

20 Phrases That Make Customers Explode (And What To Say Instead)

Customer conflict is often triggered by a small number of phrases that make people feel dismissed, ignored, blamed, or powerless. Use this guide to train your team to replace reactive language with solutions-focused communication.

1. Avoid: That's our policy.

Instead Say: Let me explain how that works and what options we have.

2. Avoid: There's nothing I can do.

Instead Say: Here's what I can do to help.

3. Avoid: You'll have to call someone else.

Instead Say: I'll connect you with the right person.

4. Avoid: That's not my department.

Instead Say: Let me take ownership and find the answer.

5. Avoid: You should have read the terms and conditions.

Instead Say: Let me clarify that for you.

6. Avoid: We've never had that complaint before.

Instead Say: Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

7. Avoid: Everyone else is fine with it.

Instead Say: I understand your concern.

8. Avoid: Calm down.

Instead Say: I can see this situation is frustrating.

9. Avoid: You're not listening.

Instead Say: Let me make sure I've understood correctly.

10. Avoid: That's your fault.

Instead Say: Let's work through what happened together.

11. Avoid: I already explained that.

Instead Say: Let me explain it another way.

12. Avoid: You'll just have to wait.

Instead Say: Here's the quickest path forward.

13. Avoid: It's company policy.

Instead Say: Let me explain why that process exists.

14. Avoid: There's no point arguing.

Instead Say: Let's focus on finding a solution.

15. Avoid: That's impossible.

Instead Say: Let me investigate further.

16. Avoid: I don't make the rules.

Instead Say: Let me see what flexibility we have.

17. Avoid: Take it or leave it.

Instead Say: Here are the available options.

18. Avoid: You're wrong.

Instead Say: I can understand why you'd see it that way.

19. Avoid: That's not our problem.

Instead Say: Let's see how we can help.

20. Avoid: It is what it is.

Instead Say: Here's what we can do next.

The 5 Golden Rules of De-Escalation

- Acknowledge emotions before discussing solutions.
- Take ownership, even if the issue wasn't caused by you.
- Focus on what can be done, not what cannot be done.
- Never blame the customer, policy, or another department.
- Keep communication calm, clear, and solutions-focused.

Team Training Reminder

Customers rarely become upset because of a policy. They become upset because of how the policy is communicated. Train your team to demonstrate empathy, ownership, and a genuine desire to help.