



### USE OF ENGLISH IN CALL CENTERS

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#### ABSTRACT

*The present article would be talking about the English used in a call center to achieve the intended results and give the customer delight. Politeness of English language as well as the way the employee uses the words with customer to make him feel good. One of the greatest, if not the greatest, concepts in modern economics is the idea of supply and demand. If something is in great supply and low demand, it will economically fail. And vice versa if something is in great demand and low supply, it will succeed. The key is that creating demand in any given market is necessary in order to have a viable business. Part of the process of creating that demand is ensuring that you not only have great products but also excellent service. Every moment that you neglect a customer, fail to utilize skills that you have been taught, or do not capitalize on the fact that you could enhance the mood and experience of a consumer is a moment that will cost either you or your industry vast amounts of time, money, and effort. Because of this, we as professionals in the IT support industry have to be aware that we must take into account the effect everything we say and do will have on the image of the company we represent. If you are ever having trouble along the way, but if you fail, there will always be ways to recover in the eyes of the customer.*

#### INTRODUCTION

Before, I begin discussing any type of interoffice, general, or business communication, I have to point out one very important fact. This fact is that, whether you realize it or not, the foundation of all IT and general communication in the professional world is based on customer interaction. This is because a customer is much more than just a person you deal with in a retail environment. A customer is any person you interact with who could stand to grant you and your company potential benefits. This includes consumers, other businesses, service providers, consultants, and a myriad of other individuals.

**Remember:** A large portion of your exam is going to be on customer interaction, and it will probably involve situations that are similar to those listed here. It is a good idea to read about the interaction, collect your own thoughts on how the situation could best be resolved, and then take the suggestions and analysis into consideration.



This paper has been divided into the following two different scenarios, each dealing with some of the most commonly occurring issues in professional communication:

**Scenario 1: The Angry Customer**

**Scenario 2: The Challenged Customer**

**The Angry Customer:**

Here is the hard-and-fast truth: no matter what you are doing, whether you are in information technology, business, support, engineering, or working at a fast-food restaurant; chances are that you' are going to run into an angry customer. As much as we do not like to deal with angry people, they are just one of those tough facts of life that we as IT technicians have to learn to deal with. Fortunately, the trick to dealing with angry people is that most of the time they are upset, frustrated, angry, or just generally agitated, but not with us. They are agitated with the *situation*. In this scenario, you're going to see what it' is like to deal with an angry customer, how best to resolve the situation, and how you can turn an angry customer into a friend of your organization for life.

**Scenario:**

It is 9A.M. and you have just opened the gates to a local computer store where you have recently been placed into a position of authority. As the sole A+ Certified Technician, not only are you in charge of ensuring that all of your technical tickets and requests are fulfilled, but you are also responsible for customer support issues involving technical matters that the normal customer Service representatives cannot field.

After setting up your work area and greeting two of your newly arriving co-workers, you are disturbed from the assembly room by a frantic and frightened co-worker who bursts into your back room, breathlessly saying, "There is someone at the front counter screaming at the top of his lungs and demanding to speak with a person who knows what he is doing! Surprised, you walk out to the sales floor to investigate. After having arrived at the sales floor, you immediately notice an incredibly large and furious-looking man, hunching over a sales terminal and glaring at your second co-worker. This co-worker is equally frightened as the first, turns to you for support with a pleading look on his face. The customer catches on to this instantly and turns to address you, yelling, "You better know what the hail you are talking about!" Stunned, you stammer for just a second, but you are able to get out, "Yes, sir. How is it that I can help you?" Barely, allowing you to get your statement out, the customer yells, "I have had a really bad night and your piece of junk computer is broken. What are you going to do about it?" He then stares at you directly, further urging on a confrontation and intimidating other co-workers in your store.

**Background**

Although we would like them to be the exception, angry customers in the modern workplace have become sort of the norm. When unfortunate events happen to people, they tend to react negatively towards the people who are the closest to them. In this particular case, it is happening in a retail or personal contact-oriented business. However, this happens even more often on the phone or via distance (as in an e-mail), because although only a few people might have the courage to approach you with an "I'm angry!" attitude, many more people feel that not seeing someone face to face allows them to vent their anger at will. Therefore, it's



important to remember that while customers like this might require the most attention and the gentlest of kid gloves when you' are interacting with them, these ideas should be put into practice when you're dealing with all of your customers. It will help your customer performance evaluations and might just make someone who's boiling on the inside feel a bit better.

### **Overview:**

Before, I talk about being in the position of dealing with an angry person, put yourself in the shoes of **Mayank**, the angry customer. **Mayank** has just bought a brand-new laptop from Super Company X. The laptop is fast and stylish, and it' has got every new features **Mayank** could ever ask for. To top it off, this laptop even comes with a nice briefcase he can use to carry it back and forth to work.

Unfortunately, last night **Mayank** spent his entire night preparing a business presentation for his company. After he had spent three hours writing the presentation, the computer screen went blank and the computer refused to turn back on. Panicked, **Mayank** has come to your computer store. At this point, his hardware, work, and job are on the line. He'is tired, scared, and more than a little frustrated.

As stated before, **Mayank** is not necessarily angry with you or your company. In fact, it's the opposite of that. **Mayank** is actually hopeful that your company will be able to help him with this problem that he has encountered. In reality, **Mayank** is angry with the company that manufactured the product and is upset with said product's usability. He has the sincerest hope that your company, and more importantly you, will be able to help him. That's the first thing you have to reassure him about.

### **Key Concepts:**

When most people without certification training are presented with this situation, they naturally respond with one of four options. These options generally depend on the type of person, but they can be broken down into:

**Lecturing  
Fighting**

**Resolving  
Helping**

None of these thoughts is necessarily illogical, but one of them is certainly the best approach for dealing with an angry person. Let's consider all these options and discuss why each of them is or is not a good idea.

### **Lecturing Mayank about His Tone:**

Of all the options presented here, this is by far the worst one. When people are angry, they don't want to hear that they are sounding angry. They want to hear that their anger has gotten the attention that they desire and that you are going to help them with their problem. Furthermore, this doesn't let the customer know that you're going to try to help him, which is what he really wants.



### **Fighting Fire with Fire:**

If you respond rudely to rudeness, you are not going to help anyone, especially yourself. Most people who respond with this attitude to a situation believe that whoever is addressing them in this fashion is insulting them. This isn't necessarily true. One could actually argue that when someone is angry with an employee in a retail or remote situation it is because the person believes that the employee is capable of helping them but unwilling. This indicates a great deal of unspoken respect.

### **Getting Straight to the Issue:**

Of the options discussed so far, this would seem like the most appropriate one; however, it has some flaws. First, it doesn't necessarily tell the customer that you are going to help him out. In fact, it indicates to the customer that you are already classifying him along with hundreds of other cases you have already seen. Second, the customer hasn't explained the problem yet. He has barely begun to discuss it. Already asking questions indicates that you believe you have already solved the problem and, in his view, are insulting his intelligence.

### **Telling him you will help:**

Although it may seem fairly obvious, the best thing you can tell an angry person is that his problem is going to be fixed. Truth be told, he does not want to be there and you do not want him to be upset. After you 'have established this, the customer can feel comforted in you as a person and begin to tell you what you need to know to help him.

### **Resolution:**

Most frustrated and angry customers just want to have their issue resolved. Furthermore, they want you to address them in a way that they find comforting and to investigate their issue with concern. This simple tactic and mind-set can save you hundreds of hours of argument, frustration, headaches, and annoyance, as well as making someone a friendly customer of yours for life. However, there are a lot of additional tactics you can use, including using passive voice and speaking in a pleasant tone.

### **Passive Voice:**

The simplest way to remove blame from any situation is to discuss the problem as if it just happened by chance. This is accomplished by using passive voice. Simply defined, passive voice is voice that is not active but acted upon. Although that may not seem immediately clear, it' is actually fairly simple to understand. It means that whenever you speak about action involving a subject, you speak as if the subject has had an action impressed upon it, versus making the action itself. To clarify, consider these few examples:

### **Active (Normal) Voice:**

"So, you disconnected the motherboard from the power supply?"

### **Passive Voice:**

"So, the power supply was disconnected from the motherboard?"

### **Active (Normal) Voice:**

"Did you buy the right type of DIMM for your motherboard?"

### **Passive Voice:**

"Is the DIMM that was bought the correct type?"

This tactic succeeds in removing any type of personal blame and instead places the blame on an unknown entity. Although in reality it's normally still the user's fault or issue, the language used removes any personal liability.

### **Pleasant Tone:**

Remember the old Saying, "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar"? It's true. Customers who are angry always respond better to people who are polite and courteous. It takes away any ammo they have to become angrier. If you think back to the times when you were extremely irate and were calmed down, chances are that the person you were dealing with was very understanding and spoke in a way that you found soothing in some form or another. It' is important to understand the effect this can have on customers in a retail or remote environment and to affect a semblance of it on a day-to-day basis. You'll find that it goes a long way toward making not only your customers a bit easier to deal with, but also your friends and family.

### **Skills for handling the customer:**

Here is an example of the type of questions you will see about angry customers:

**1).A furious customer** slams his hands down on the desk in front of you and demands that you pay for the computer that he believes you broke. Which of the following is the best statement to calm the customer?

- OK, sir. Let me see if it has broken and we'll go from there.
- I will be certain to let my management know to help you.
- OK, sir. How much does that product cost? Maybe we could help.
- Sir, I' am more than willing to help. Let me see what I can do to fix the situation.
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Answer A: Incorrect. This answer leads the customer to become angry. He will think, "What do you mean you' ll CHECK to see if it' has broken?"

Answer B: Incorrect. This answer makes the customer believe that you can not help him with anything and that he should be speaking with your manager.

Answer C: Incorrect. This answer makes the customer think that your company is cheap and will only help him if it's in the budget.

Answer D: Correct. This informs the customer that you are willing to help and try your best. That 'is all the customer can really ever hope for.

### **2) The Challenged Customer:**

Dealing with a disability is difficult for both the person with the disability and the person who has to adjust their behaviour because of it. Whether the problem is physical, mental, or emotional, a disability can often imply some type of communication issue that inhibits your ability to understand the customer's needs. However, as an IT professional, it' is your responsibility to overcome that problem and understand what the needs of the individual actually are. The only problem is that doing so can prove to be quite difficult.

### **Scenario:**

In the middle of the day a customer walks into your retail store and indicates with her hands that she would like to speak with you. This is odd, because most customers usually indicate to



you that they would like to speak by calling out your name or saying “Excuse me.” Furthermore, you have been working underneath the counter arranging some of the inventory and you couldn’t see the person waving at you, so she must have been waving for at least a few seconds, if not a few minutes. Regardless, you immediately make your way over to the customer and greet her professionally with a polite “Good afternoon, Madam, how can I help you?”

The customer responds with a polite nod and then begins to wave her hands in odd directions again. At first, you aren’t sure what she’s indicating, so you interrupt with a brief “Pardon, Madam? I’ am not sure I understand.” Then, as soon as you say that, the customer screams in an almost piercingly loud voice and yells out something absolutely unintelligible. After recoiling from the impact of the sound, you ask the customer to politely repeat her request, and she again screams something that you do not understand. A bit intimidated, you ask her to repeat herself one more time. Unfortunately, she doesn’t respond to this well. She begins to look very upset and starts waving her hands even more frantically, continuing to scream.

### **Background:**

It’s a bit hard when you don’t have a disability to remember that there are literally millions of people in this world who live day to day with a life-altering illness, infirmity, or impairment. However, in the workplace, disability is an important factor to consider when you’re providing customer service, because it is your duty to provide service not just to healthy and fully functioning people but to people who are challenged as well. What this means to you as an IT professional is that you need to be able to easily identify when someone has a disability and you need to know the ways to cope with it and there are many. Although you may not be intimately familiar with all of them, this scenario will familiarize you with some of the most common ways to communicate to someone who has a disability that presents a barrier to their communication.

### **Overview:**

Some of the indications that you can look for to determine whether a customer has a disability are as follows:

**Physical Movements** Does the person have a limp? Is there some impediment in their motor functions that is recurring?

**Visual Comprehension Levels** Does the person you’re dealing with seem to understand everything you’re telling them?

**Inanimate Accompaniments** Does the person have a hearing aid? , A cane? Are they in a wheelchair? These are just a few of the things you can look for. Table 1.1 in the next section will further illustrate some of the communicative techniques that you can use when you’re communicating with individuals who have easily diagnosable problems.



### **Key Concepts:**

This is a tough situation. The customer obviously wants something and it is your inability to understand, not her inability to communicate that is causing the issue. Fortunately, there are some pretty safe procedures that you can use to deal with this sort of scenario.

### **Step 1: Diagnose the Disability Sensitively**

Believe me when I say that this is a very difficult thing to do politically. What you are doing in this first step is trying to discover what the customer's disability is and figure out ways to overcome it in a way that does not make the customer feel embarrassed. Here are some of the best ways to determine the nature of a customer's disability:

### **Body Language**

Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing will usually try to make sudden movements to attempt to convey their meaning. Additionally, people who are incapable of speech will generally use more refined movements to indicate what it is that they desire. In this case, a customer is moving her hands rapidly and seemingly randomly, which usually indicates that the customer is hearing-impaired.

### **Speech Patterns:**

People who have disabilities tend to speak in different manners. Some people have difficulty enunciating terms or speaking in complex sentences. Sometimes, people who are hearing impaired will speak in unusual tones because they don't know what their voice truly sounds like. Understanding what to look for in these types of disabilities is a key to discovering how to communicate.

### **Step 2: Attempt a New Mode of Communication**

This is the easy part. Once you have diagnosed someone's problem, it's fairly easy to find a way to communicate with them. Check out Table 1.1 for a list of good communication recommendations for disabled customers

**TABLE 1.1 Communication Methods for Disabled Customers:**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Communication Method</b>
Hearing-impaired	Use illustrations and written communication.
Visually impaired/blind	Use descriptive language and the sense of touch
Mentally disabled	Be patient and understanding, and try to make things simple to understand.
Physically disabled	Don't ask to assist; just assist with moving and finding things as if it were standard customer service.

### **Resolution:**

When dealing with disabled individuals, it is important to remember to be patient and understand that they are not stupid or inept; they are simply disabled. The best thing you can do as an IT professional in a difficult situation like this is to remember that it is your job to communicate.



It is your job to make the customer pleased with your service and responsibility. Watching their body language, understanding their alternative forms of communication, and readily keeping communication tools, such as a pad and paper, at your disposal to help with the occasional situation not only will help you quickly diagnose their problem, but also will quickly impress the person and maybe even impress your superiors.

### Skills for handling the customer:

Here is an example of the type of questions you will see about disabled customers

1. A customer who happens to be visually impaired asks you if you can help him identify what is wrong with his laptop computer. Immediately upon inspection of his laptop, you realize that the plastic has been broken on the bottom of the computer and exposed to the elements, ruining the equipment. What is the best procedure?

- A. Inform the customer of the broken plastic professionally and offer alternatives.
- B. Attempt to make light of the situation and say that it looks like something accidentally broke the Computer.
- C. Speak very slowly to the customer and ask him if he understands.
- D. Apologize repeatedly and say that the problem will never happen again.

**Answer A: Correct.** This is the absolute best thing you can do. You need to be straightforward, Honest and professional in a situation like this, just as you would be for someone who is not visually impaired.

**Answer B: Incorrect.** You should never make light of a customer's disability. It is rude and insulting, And will probably result in disciplinary action.

**Answer C: Incorrect.** The customer is not hearing-impaired, and it is not a good tactic to use, even if he were.

**Answer D: Incorrect.** You have nothing to apologize for. You did nothing wrong.

### Conclusion:

Jumping into IT is not an easy thing to do. It is common to get bogged down or intimidated by the sheer amount of paths, information, and technical capabilities that some of the people in the world possess. As you start down this road, you are going to feel a bit torn as you feel your technical interests pull toward one specific area or another, but don't fret this is normal. When you're reviewing this article, just keep in mind that while the technology may change, the business world may adapt, and the industry as a whole may have a different face in the future, good communication practices aren't going anywhere.

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