

## **Communicating with the Public; Providing Customer Service**

Interacting with the public in your community is often times a critical agency function. Whether we are on the job or not, we are ambassadors of the Division of Highways. Therefore, effective communication skills and customer service are the keys to success in our professional lives, and even our personal lives. The right strategy, carefully chosen words, and respect extended through effective communication can be the making of a team or an individual. Communication and the public are the very things that support our agency

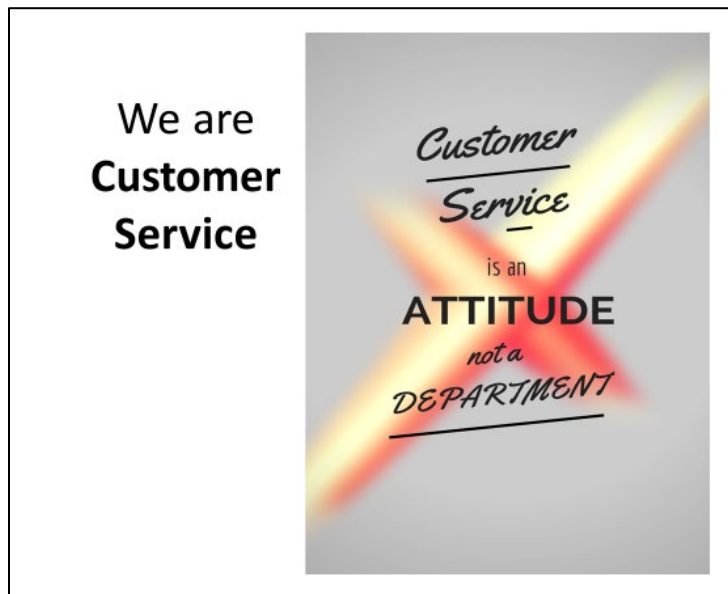
Better service enhances productivity and treating customers right can save time and money. Satisfying the public reduces the likelihood that irate citizens will take their complaints to higher sources, or to a public forum



where negative word-of-mouth can be damaging. In many contexts, government agencies have seen outsourcing and privatizing as solutions to poor customer service and inefficiency. But outsourcing has failed on many occasions. Customer service initiatives can improve government service as well as public perception of government agencies.

Communicating with the public is an essential skill for government workers and for life in general. Today's training objective are:

A smile can make a world of difference to how a customer feels about their treatment, and about



the business in general. Having a smile on your face makes you look more welcoming. If you were to walk into a store and saw two sales assistants – one looked cheerful and open and one who looked like they had just opened an overdue credit card bill – instinct would dictate that you approach the cheerful one should you have an enquiry about the item you want to buy. So, it is worth making the effort to put a smile on your face however you are feeling.

We can't control all of the problems and irritations that come up during the day. We can control our attitude

and how we react to the situation, remember: you need to be happy with the reflection in the mirror.

Tips on staying positive:

- View negative situations as a training session for your future, use them to your benefit, they may help you later in life.
- Find ways to spend more time on tasks you enjoy
- Look for opportunities to learn new things
- Realize that you can find positives in any negative situation.

Albert Einstein said: *"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."*

Most of us have spent time with positive and negative people. Although those who are negative may be so for perfectly good reasons – past experience may have seen them consistently fail to get what they want – they can be difficult to deal with, even to the point where they seem to sap

the positivity from those who have it in supply. Having a bright outlook can be difficult, especially when luck seems to be in short supply, but this is what separates good workers from bad ones.

Outlook and attitude are essential in any job, but particularly in one where you will be dealing with the public. It may seem that the day is not going your way, and that you are permanently going to be frustrated, but the essential thing to remember is that if you project this mood on to the customers, you will certainly have a bad time.

Positivity is hard to manufacture out of nothing, so sometimes you have to project it when you are not necessarily feeling it. Eventually, if you keep this faux positivity running for long enough, it will create the conditions for real positivity to take hold and thrive. Of course, if you already feel it so much the better – as far as possible you should share it and allow it to become a prevailing condition.

In providing customer service, the priorities of your organization should match the priorities of your customers. At a minimum, you should be sure that you are meeting customers' basic needs.

**Friendliness:** Friendliness is the most basic of all customer's needs, usually associated with being greeted graciously and with a smile. We all want to be acknowledged and welcomed by someone who is glad to see us. A customer should never feel they are an intrusion on your workday.

**Understanding and empathy:** Customers need to feel that you understand and appreciate their circumstances without criticism or judgment.

**Fairness:** We all need to feel we are being treated fairly. Customers may get annoyed and defensive when they feel they are subject to unfair treatment.

**Control:** Control represents the customers' need to feel they have an impact on the way things turn out.

**Information:** Customers need to be educated and informed about our products and services, and they don't want us leaving anything out!

Every customer who steps through the door of your organization provides you with a chance to provide excellent customer service. Every customer will have certain needs that have to be met in order to feel that they can walk away satisfied. This is something that the best staff will look to achieve at every opportunity.

The customer will remember their experience more positively if you are prepared to smile at them and treat their needs as though you consider them every bit as important as any other

### Basic Needs

Basic Needs

- Friendliness
- Understanding and empathy
- Fairness
- Control
- Information

customer's. If they were happy with how you dealt with them before, chances are that they will seek you out again.


As effective communicators, it is our job to provide the correct meaning to the words and body language that we use. If what we are saying does not match our facial expressions, gestures,

intonation, etc., miscommunication can and will occur. Similarly, to effectively communicate it is our responsibility to ensure that the recipient hears, sees, or otherwise understands the messages that we are giving. If we are not stimulating the correct meaning, we are not communicating effectively.

For example: Imagine that you and a co-worker are competitors for the newly posted job. You really want this new position; however, your co-worker is selected over you.

## Communication

- Communication is the process by which we stimulate meaning in the mind of another person using verbal and nonverbal messages.




- How do you feel? (Angry you didn't get the job? Happy for them? Don't really care either way?)
- What do you say to your co-worker? (Sour grapes and say nothing? Congratulate them but without a smile?)
- Is it hard to smile and pretend to look happy? (Try it, your face will give you away!)
- How can your co-worker figure out that you are truly not happy? (Watch your body language, it may be telling the story!)

Think about a presidential election

## How do we communicate?

- Non-Verbal Communication
- Verbal Communication



- When the president-elect is called as the winner, how does the losing candidate act?

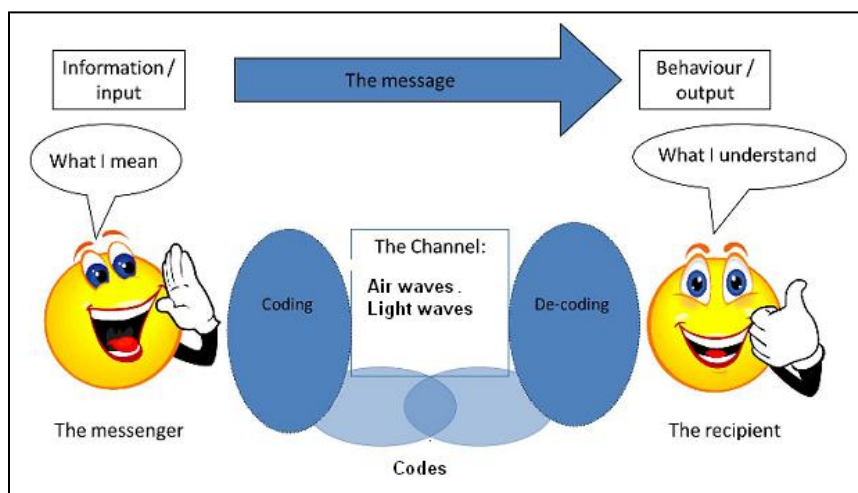
- Can you figure out by hearing and seeing that happiness is not the true emotion that this person is feeling regardless of the words coming out of his/her mouth?
- Do you think that the losing candidate has planned and more than likely rehearsed the concession speech?
- Can you think of a time at work when you have had to pretend to be happy as an employee of the DOH when you truly feel lousy?

While verbal communication is much studied and is the focus of much applied attention in areas ranging from journalism to governance to entertainment, the fact is that human beings communicate more through nonverbal means. Some researchers estimate that non-verbal communication accounts for 93 percent of human communication; while the specific words only account for 7 percent. Research conclusions may vary a bit, but the consensus is quite clear: Nonverbal communication is extremely important in human interaction.

Nonverbal communication also is bound to culture. In particular, there are differences among cultures and nationalities about the relative value of speech versus silence, the relative value of talk versus action, the social role of small talk or gossip, and the role of animation, rhyme and exaggeration in speech. Because of these differences, the study of verbal and nonverbal communication always must be done within a social or cultural context.

Note: Nonverbal communication may be vocal (focusing on vocal characteristics such as pitch, rate, and so on) or non-vocal (focusing on body language, environment, attire, and the like).

### **A Model of Communication:**



1. The Sender is encoding and sending a message to the Receiver who hears and then decodes this message.

2. To respond the Receiver encodes and sends a message back to the Sender, who hears then decodes the message.

3. Both the Sender and Receiver may have thoughts, feelings, and emotions going on in their minds called “noise”.

There are constant messages and feedback going back and forth during the process of interpersonal communication.

“Noise” can be anything in the internal environment of the sender and receiver that may enhance or mar the meaning of the message and feedback: perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and emotions. Internally, the sender or receiver may also have sensory issues such as visual or hearing difficulties which creates similar issues with the message and feedback. To make the process of communication even more complex, the message and/or feedback themselves may be distorted by the delivery method or medium, i.e. phone, text, newspaper, etc.

First, understand the actions described here do not always indicate the behavior stated. As an example, a person having his/her arms and legs tightly folded or the rubbing of hands together could simply be cold. Are these not also actions commonly seen of a person who is trying to warm up?

Read the following sentence using the body language given below. Can you feel the difference in your words and actions?

***John Smith was criticizing my performance during my 6 month evaluation***

- Hands clasped at chin, elbows on table – dreaming, happy
- Hand over mouth – shocked, afraid
- Chewing tips of fingers – nervous, anxious
- Tightly folded arms and crossed feet – closed off to listening
- Chin stroking – contemplating next move
- Fist on cheek, index finger pointing upward – thinking,

## Basics of Body Language

- Hands clasped at chin, elbows on table
- Hand over mouth
- Chewing tips of fingers
- Tightly folded arms and crossed feet
- Chin stroking
- Fist on cheek, index finger pointing upward

**\* Body Language is not coded and, therefore, is not always the same for all people. \***



Smiles and frowns speak a million words. A raised eyebrow can mean inquisitiveness, curiosity, or disbelief. Chewing one's lips can indicate thinking, or it can be a sign of boredom, anxiety, or nervousness."



*Some of the most common facial expressions are:*

Happiness, Sadness, Contempt, Disgust, Fear, Anger, Surprise, and Neutral

You need to pay special attention to the forehead, brows, nose, cheeks, lips and chin as they give the sign to facial expressions.

Can you guess the facial expressions in the pictures on

this page? Don't peek, answers are on the next page.

The answers are:

1. **Anger**- look at those 2 horizontal lines between the brows, the raised brows and the open mouth, those are sure expressions of anger.
2. **Disgust** – see the rolling eyes and the snarled lip?
3. **Happy** - the turned-up mouth, full teeth smile and apple cheeks are a give away

Facial Management Techniques are ways that we use our facial expressions to communicate. We can mask our feelings when it is not appropriate to show an emotion (masking). An example would be when we attend a formal event or a funeral.

Have you ever used a poker face? Why would you want to neutralize your expression?

Have you ever made your expression more intense (Intensification)? Why would you want to do that? Maybe glaring at someone?

Have you ever been with someone and suddenly had the feeling that you just missed something in his facial expression? That can happen when we are trying to hide our feelings. They will leak out somewhere and that can be in the expression. It may only be for a millisecond, but it leaves us wondering what just happened. These are called Micro-expressions.

Oh, the expression found on this page is Bored to Death!

## Facial Expressions





## Case Study: What did I do wrong?

*Read the case study below. Then, analyze the case to determine what went wrong.*

You are an Transportation Crew Supervisor in your home town in West Virginia. As this is your first supervisory job and you are quite young, you are very excited about doing everything right to help the community have nice, smooth roads.

One of your first responsibilities involved inspecting the road in front of the local nursing home about which many employees and several family members of the residents called the district headquarters to complain. Mrs. Jones, the facility's director, was the most vocal having called three times already. You schedule an appointment with Mrs. Jones who wants to personally show you the broken pavement, and you arrive just a few minutes after your appointment time. Mrs. Jones keeps you waiting for ten minutes more before seeing you.

After exchanging initial pleasantries, Mrs. Jones, who appears to be in her early sixties, takes you on a quick tour of the facility's grounds and introduces you to the residents that you meet along the way. As Mrs. Jones introduces you, she takes time to chat with the residents, whom she addresses by first name. Following her lead, you chat briefly with the residents, also addressing them by first name. For the remainder of your time there, you notice that Mrs. Jones has little to say, but that doesn't bother you. It gives you time to think about the possible issue with the road and the remedy.

After inspecting the base of the road, you see the problem and are very excited because of the plan about which you have been thinking. When you return to Mr. Jones' office, you immediately begin telling her the improvements needed and how entering and exiting traffic will have to be re-routed. Imagine your surprise when the look she gives you stops you in your tracks.

### Questions:

1. What was the first mistake that the new Transportation Crew Supervisor made?
2. Why do you think Mrs. Jones had little to say after you met and chatted with the residents?
3. Why might Mrs. Jones have stopped you in your tracks when you immediately returned to her office?
4. What might you learn from this experience?
5. Can you think of an example when you or someone else may have offended the public? Give your example, if so.


No matter how prepared you are or how much experience you have in public speaking, there are barriers that can affect your communication.

Have you ever had to communicate something about which you had little knowledge or information? For instance, your supervisor has been called away to a meeting and you have been asked to explain the status on the project your team is working on. How to you proceed when you don't have all the information about the progress of the project? You might feel dumped on, but in emergency situations like these can happen. You can easily see how not having all the information can be a barrier to communicating effectively.

Have you ever had to communicate something when you lacked time or were otherwise

### Barriers to Effective Communication

- Lack of Information/Knowledge
- Distractions and/or Lack of Time
- Inability to tell THE TRUTH - ?!?
- Lack of Interest
- Lack of Listening skills



distracted? I once attended a monthly meeting when a 30-minute presentation about the previous month's news was to be presented along with a new ID badge policy presentation. The ID Badge Policy was presented and explained in the middle of the meeting. All the participants could think and wanted to talk about for the rest of the meeting was the new policy. That was a real distraction.

Other possible Distractions

– Audible noise, bad lighting, negative body language, illness, tiredness, or otherwise challenging environment for speaking or listening. You get the idea.

Have you ever had to communicate something about which you were not able to tell the whole truth or give detailed information? What about the road maintenance schedule? I know there were lots of calls and questions made" Are you fixing my road?" "When will you be fixing my road?" Maybe you were not free to give that information at the time as schedules were not completed and posted yet.

What about when you or the person with whom you are trying to communicate has little interest in the conversation. Can that be a barrier? When one party is not paying attention, that is definitely a barrier to communication.

Or when the person with whom you are speaking interrupts, is busy doing other things, or is paying no attention. Yes, another barrier.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT THE AVERAGE ADULT HAS AN ATTENTION SPAN OF ONLY 7 MINUTES?**

**Willingness to Listen Measure**

Directions: The following twenty-four statements refer to your willingness to listen. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I dislike listening to boring speakers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Generally, I can listen to a boring speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am bored and tired while listening to a boring speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I will listen when the content of a speech is boring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Listening to boring speakers about boring content makes me tired, sleepy, and bored.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I am willing to listen to boring speakers about boring content.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Generally, I am unwilling to listen when there is noise during a speaker's presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Usually, I am willing to listen when there is noise during a speaker's presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I am accepting and willing to listen to speakers who do not adapt to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I am unwilling to listen to speakers who do not do some adaptation to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Being preoccupied with other things makes me less willing to listen to a speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I am willing to listen to a speaker even if I have other things on my mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. While being occupied with other things on my mind, I am unwilling to listen to a speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I have a willingness to listen to a speaker, even if other important things are on my mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Generally, I will not listen to a speaker who is disorganized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Generally, I will try to listen to a speaker who is disorganized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. While listening to a nonimmediate, nonresponsive speaker, I feel relaxed with the speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. While listening to a nonimmediate, nonresponsive speaker, I feel distant and cold toward that speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I can listen to a nonimmediate, nonresponsive speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I am unwilling to listen to a nonimmediate, nonresponsive speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I am willing to listen to a speaker with views different from mine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I am unwilling to listen to a speaker with views different from mine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I am willing to listen to a speaker who is not clear about what he or she wants to say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I am unwilling to listen to a speaker who is not clear, not credible, and abstract.

**SCORING:**

Your score can range from 24 to 120.

Step 1: Add scores for items 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, and 23 \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Add scores for items 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, and 24 \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: WLM = 64 – Total from Step 1 + Total from Step 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Scores above 80 indicate a high willingness to listen.

Scores below 50 indicate a low willingness to listen.

Source: Richmond, V. P., & Hickson, M. III. (2001). *Going public: A practical guide to public talk*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

According to research, approximately 20 percent of the public's dissatisfaction is caused by employee actions, 40 percent by services and processes that do not meet expectations, and up to 40 percent is the result of public mistakes or incorrect expectations.

So often we feel we can't help a customer. We know they look or sound distressed in some way, BUT this is where listening comes in. IT REALLY HELPS! Both the customer and our ability to be the classy,

effective professional we strive to be. It can be easy to lose sight of just how therapeutic it is for customers to be fully listened to. Just having someone listen to us, fulfills some our needs when we need to:

- Release feelings or "vent"
- Diffuse emotional situations
- Build deeper relationships
- Be validated and boost our self-esteem



Customers don't necessarily need answers, action or problem-solving – the process of being heard is highly validating and trust-building and can often lead to customers working things out for themselves.

**Active Listening** is the ability to focus completely on a speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information and respond thoughtfully. Unlike passive listening, which is the act



## Active Listening

- Desire to fully understand
- Create trust and a positive relationship

of hearing a speaker without retaining their message, this highly valued interpersonal communication skill ensures you're able to engage and later recall specific details without needing information repeated.

Listening actively means to listen with the intent of understanding how the speaker feels, in addition to understanding his or her message.

The goal of active listening is to enable the speaker to share his or her emotions without being judged or criticized.

The formula for effective active listening involves acknowledging the speaker, reflecting his or her feeling, and describing the facts or situation as you hear it.

The chart on this screen list the skills used in active listening. Active listeners use verbal and non-verbal techniques to show and keep their attention on the speaker. This not only supports your ability to focus, but also helps ensure the speaker can see that you are focused and engaged. Instead of thinking about and mentally rehearsing what you might say when the speaker is done, an active listener carefully considers the speaker's words and commits the information to memory.



Some non-verbal active listening skills not on the chart above include:

**Nod.** Offering the speaker a few simple nods shows you understand what they're saying. A nod is a helpful, supportive cue, and doesn't necessarily communicate that you agree with the speaker—only that you're able to process the meaning of their message.

**Smile.** Like a nod, a small smile encourages a speaker to continue. However, unlike a nod, it communicates you agree with their message or you're happy about what they have to say. A smile can take the place of a short verbal affirmation in helping to diffuse any tension and ensure the speaker feels comfortable.

**Avoid distracted movements.** Being still can communicate focus. To do this, try and avoid movements like glancing at your watch or phone, audibly sighing, doodling or tapping a pen. You should also avoid exchanging verbal or non-verbal communications with others listening to the speaker. This can make the speaker feel frustrated and uncomfortable.

**Maintain eye contact.** Always keep your eyes on the speaker and avoid looking at other people or objects in the room. Just be sure to keep your gaze natural, using nods and smiles to ensure you're encouraging them rather than making the speaker feel intimidated or uneasy.

### **Discussion questions:**

Do you believe that listening is as powerful as talking in the process of communication? Why or why not?

Is listening more important than talking in the communication process? Why do you think so?

When you are at work, do most of the disgruntled people with whom you deal want answers or someone who will simply listen to them?

***"Listening well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well."***




**- John Marshall**

One of the hardest challenges customer service staff face is dealing with difficult customers. Sometimes customers have a legitimate reason to be upset and sometimes they don't. In either case, customer service staff needs to be prepared for dealing with difficult customers and finding ways to win them back.



No matter which method you are using to provide customer service, it is almost inevitable that at times you will have to deal with an angry customer. This is the case in even the best-run

Dealing with Difficult Customers	
	<p><b>Descalating Anger</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show some empathy</li> <li>• Make it clear that you want to help.</li> </ul>


businesses, and for the best customer service individuals. Sometimes, whether justifiably or otherwise, customers will get annoyed with the company and will wish to vent that anger at the first available representative. It will frequently be quite powerful anger which may boil over into verbal abuse, but the job of a customer service provider is to accept that it will happen and get on with solving the problem. The first step in doing this is to try and calm the customer down;

because it will be difficult to solve a problem if they are boiling with fury, whether their anger is justified or not.

The first thing you must do is speak to the customer in a calm manner and get straight the nature of the problem. It may be the case that they want to scream and shout a bit to vent their fury, and it is up to you how long you give them to do this. Your opening gambit should be something along the lines of “I can tell this is obviously a matter of some importance to you – I’d like to do what I can to help you”. Saying “please, calm down” or refusing to help until they have stopped shouting will simply escalate their anger.

Very often, anger arises as the result of a misunderstanding. In these cases it is essential to get to the source of the misunderstanding as quickly as possible. You should speak to the customer and allow them to see that you realize the matter is important. Do not

say “I understand” or “I sympathize” – they do not want your sympathy and they will doubt that you understand. Getting the problem laid out, so that you can move forward, depends on getting

De-escalating Anger	
<p>The first step in dealing with difficult customers is to lower the emotional temperature of the situation so that you can have a rational discussion.</p>	

the customer to see that you are willing to help. From that point, they will be a lot more ready to calm down and proceed.

When your job entails dealing with customers, it is inevitable that from time to time some of those with whom you deal will be dissatisfied and in something of a mood. Your job in this case –

## **Establishing Common Ground**

How to establish common ground:

1. Let the customer vent
2. Express empathy
3. Make sure you understand the problem. Ask questions if you don't.
4. Find a solution
5. Ask the customer to agree to the solution
6. Follow up

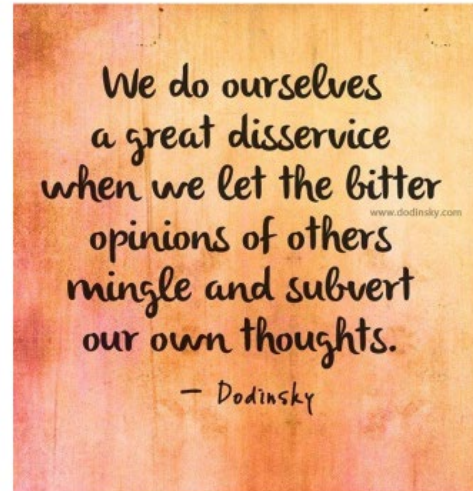
as in all cases of customer service – is to ensure that the issues are dealt with promptly and efficiently. If this should mean that you have to listen to some ranting first of all, then it is worth accepting that this will be the case, and allowing a customer to say what they feel they have to say before getting to the heart of the problem. When all is said and done, you will be seeking to get the point across to the customer that you both have a common goal – the resolution of their problem.

It stands to reason, as a result of the circumstances, that the customer will display signs of anger towards you initially. You, to them, are a symbol of the company for whom you work, which is also the company with which they have an issue. In the customer's eyes, you will be an opponent, and someone to be overcome. Your task is seeing to it that they realize that this is not the case. You are both on the same side here, as people who want to find an end to their problem. Of course, they will not see it that way at the beginning and this is where you will need to employ good customer service. Ask questions about the problem, to demonstrate that you are taking it seriously. Begin to formulate a solution and explain what that will be. Allow the customer to be part of this process, and you will gain their confidence.

In the long run, what you are looking for is a solution that the customer will be happy with. They may have begun your interaction by making known their dissatisfaction and being somewhat hostile towards you, but the fact of the matter is that as long as you maintain a calm demeanor and address their problem seriously, looking to work with them as you go, they will recognize you as an ally rather than an adversary, and will be a lot more ready to work with you on the issue. Once the issue is solved, they will remember you as a person who helped them and will see you and the company in a more positive light.

## Managing Your Own Emotions

### REMEMBER IT'S NOT PERSONAL



When dealing with a customer who is angry, it can sometimes be difficult to maintain your own composure in the face of their protests. Your job as a customer service provider is to try and solve their problem and to avoid getting agitated yourself. However, the fact is that we are all human and we all have our limits and Achilles heels. Sometimes you may well feel that you want to respond to a customer's goading by getting angry at them. This should be avoided as it escalates the situation. Instead you should try to remain calm and bring the customer towards your level of calm.

Focus on these points to maintain control of your emotions when dealing with an agitated customer:

- Understand how you typically respond to situations like this.
- Don't allow yourself to get angry or defensive. That will only make the situation worse.
- Show empathy for the customer.
- Turn the course of the interaction from negative to positive.

In many cases, the extent of the customer's anger will be that they have had a problem with one of your projects or policies and they want to see it repaired. They will be angry because they've contributed money or time on something which, in their view, was not worth it. Your job in this case is to try and calm them down by allowing them to see that you will do whatever you can to help them. Rather than being a faceless, nameless representative of a company which has given them a problem, you are a human being. As much as possible, you should present this human face when talking to a dissatisfied customer; manage your emotions, and although it may be difficult it is worth doing.

Sometimes customers will seek to provoke a reaction from you, as they enjoy arguing the point and feel that seeing you get angry will prove that they are right. Try putting yourself in the shoes of the customer and think about how you would respond to such a situation, and what you would want to hear. Reaching an understanding may take time and effort, but it is worth doing nonetheless – particularly as getting angry can lead to getting fired.

When communicating with a member of the public, it is important to make sure that you understand the question being asked, the complaint, or the compliment. These times it is important to practice your active listening. Remember to use body language that expresses

interest in the subject at hand.

### Responding to the Public

- Monitor your body language
- Actively Listen
  - Restate
  - Rephrase
  - Reflect
- Speak thoughtfully, clearly, concisely

As we cannot always anticipate a question or message, we cannot prepare a response. That is why it is important to speak thoughtfully, clearly, and concisely.

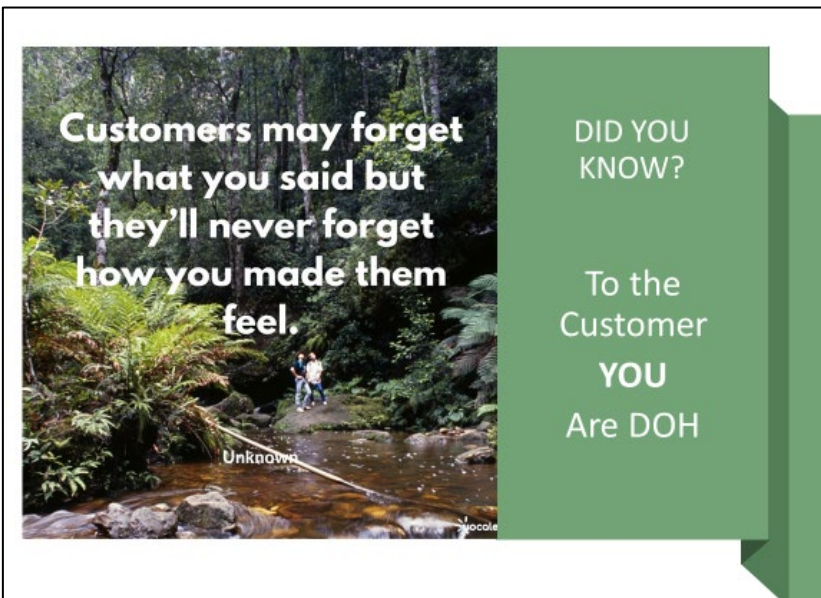
If you are unable to answer their question or accept the message, do not leave the person hanging. Find out the answer or lead him/her to

the right person who can answer or help. It is better to admit that you do not know an answer than to give a incorrect answer.

The Division of Highways is a public service agency, and as an employee part of our jobs are to serve the public. We should then be thinking of ourselves as similar to customer service specialists. With that responsibility there are certain do's and don'ts we should heed.

When we are working or speaking to the public, or a coworker, we should never project the following;

- You are not welcome here.
- I do not like you.
- Your question(s) are stupid.
- This job bores me.
- I would rather be doing other things.



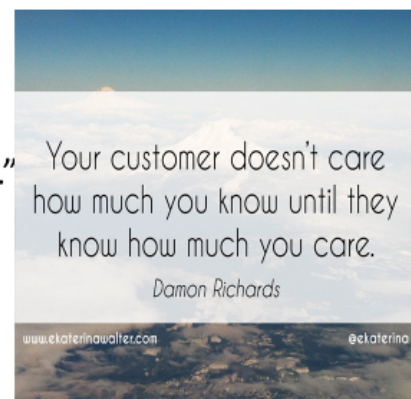
Have you been through the grocery store line and the checkout clerks are too busy talking to each other and complaining about their jobs, their work schedule, their supervisor to acknowledge you the customer? How would that situation make you feel?

Look over the list on this screen and think of how you might react if you were treated or spoken to by an employee in a local store in one of these ways. How would you feel? What would be your initial reaction?

- "I don't know and I don't care!"
- "Those are the rules. I don't make them."
- "Well, it wasn't ME!"
- "Because I said so."
- "Read the sign."
- "I already told you that."
- "Get a move on!"


"I don't know, and I don't care!"

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- "Get a move on!"





You can easily see without a doubt how these comments are frowned upon for those who work in the more traditional customer service realm of business. That is why DOH doesn't approve of them either.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Responding to the Public</h2> 	<p>The proverb, which originated with a 17th-century carving of the “three wise monkeys” over a door of a shrine in Nikkō, Japan, has been variously interpreted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Among Buddhists, the proverb means to be of good mind, speech and action.</li><li>• In the Western world, both the proverb and the image are often used to refer to a lack of moral responsibility on the part of people who look the other way on evil deeds.</li><li>• And, within organized crime, it can signify a code of silence.</li></ul>
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How do you think this proverb might relate to ‘Responding to the Public’, and more specifically in the Division of Highways?

- SPEAK no evil
- SEE no evil
- HEAR no evil

Keep in mind that the public is much more likely to speak, see, and hear about the “bad” in a government agency than the speak, see, or hear the good. When you are the customer, are you more likely to complain or compliment for the service you receive?

We have plenty of good things happening at DOH. We just need to let them show thru our communications with our customers, both internal and external, co-workers and the public.

**Complete the assessment on the following page.**



**Communicating with the Public;**  
**Providing Customer Service**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

***Don't forget to return this answer sheet with your telework log***

1. What two skills help support our agency?
  - a. Data entry and CPR
  - b. Crew supervision and EPS's
  - c. Communication and Customer Service
  - d. Equipment Maintenance and CDL
2. Communication is the process by which we \_\_\_\_\_ in the mind of another person.
  - a. Stimulate meaning
  - b. Discuss possibilities
  - c. Stimulate conversation
  - d. Stimulate telepathically
3. Verbal communication counts for what percent of all communication?
  - a. 93%
  - b. 28%
  - c. 15%
  - d. 7%
4. Which are considered active listening skills?
  - a. Open-ended questions
  - b. Nodding your head
  - c. Paraphrasing
  - d. All the above
5. An important step to remember when working with angry customers is;
  - a. Don't respond to their questions
  - b. Remember it's not your fault
  - c. Tell them you can't help them
  - d. Send them to someone else for help
6. When dealing with a difficult customer, you should try to
  - a. Make it clear that you want to help
  - b. Remain silent and hope they give up
  - c. Show some empathy
  - d. Both a and d