

THE LATER METHOD

How to avoid escalating conflict with hot-under-the-collar customers.



LISTEN

Get all the info, listen to what they have to say, avoid interrupting, don't make assumptions and avoid the temptation to defend yourself – realise that it's about them not you. Just be an active listener.



ACKNOWLEDGE & APOLOGISE

It's okay to say a genuine sorry if something at your end has missed the mark, even if it wasn't your mistake. Showing you can relate to and understand a person's problem can go a long way to building a bridge.



THANK YOU

Not many people would bother complaining TO you, rather complaining ABOUT you to everyone else, ruining your name. So if you do nothing else, just say thank you. Thank them for taking the time to let you know of the issue and for allowing you the opportunity to fix it!



EXPECTATIONS

Now is the time to properly manage expectations. Give the customer an idea of what will happen next, and realistic timeframes for a resolution. If there is no solution to their issue, be upfront and honest about it. Customers prefer the truth over lies.



RESOLVE & REVIEW

At this point, if you've followed the steps above make sure you bring closure to the issue. Once the dust has settled take a minute to reflect and determine if changes are needed to improve processes or systems to ensure similar issues don't arise again.