

Connecting Advocates

Newsletter

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<https://ccc-cultivatingcommunityconnections.net>

Uniting community members to transform our neighborhoods is at the heart of what we do.



Stronger Together

Understanding Agency Representatives' Point of View

Knowing how we might be perceived can lead to a productive course of action.

As community leaders, we are often advocating for our residents by interacting with various governmental agency representatives. Many of our concerns are the result of complex community situations that residents were unable to resolve on their own. Therefore, by definition, when community leaders get involved, it is often from the position of a difficult customer. In most cases, the agency representative has been trained in how to deal with difficult constituents. If we understand the agency representatives' training about dealing with difficult "customers", we can better analyze our most productive course of action.

On page 2 is a summary of the key points from an article written for businesses on how to deal with difficult customers.

8 Remarkably Effective Ways to Cope With an Unreasonable Customer

What do you do when "just say no" is not an attractive option? by Minda Zetlin (Click on the link below to read the article.)

<https://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/8-remarkably-effective-ways-to-cope-with-an-unreasonable-customer.html>

On page 2 and 3 we charted the 8 points in the article and our effective actions. Our recommended actions are based on the assumption that all parties enter the discussion desiring a positive outcome. Even if we suspect that the other party isn't entirely committed to serving our needs, assuming the best about their intentions is the most useful starting point.

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Empathy is Key

Please visit our web site at:

<https://ccc-cultivatingcommunityconnections.net>

Contact Us At:

CultivatingCommunityConn@gmail.com

**Knowledge
is great.
How you use it
is power!**

What Do You Think?

Cultivating Community Connections would like to know about the people in your community that are making a difference. Tell us who they are and what they are doing.

Email us at:
CultivatingCommunityConn@gmail.com

Our Leadership Team

Carol Jenkins- founder

Jeff Jenkins- co-founder

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Thank you for supporting CCC's efforts to strengthen communities.

8 Remarkably Effective Ways to Cope With an Unreasonable Customer

What do you do when "just say no" is not an attractive option?

By Minda Zetlin

Representatives' Training <i>Excerpts from 8 Remarkably Effective Ways to Cope With an Unreasonable Customer</i>	Effective Advocate Action <i>A guide to productive interactions with agency representatives.</i>
<p>1. Empathize. He or she believes that the unreasonable request is in fact quite reasonable. This is because customers know less about your business than you do. If they knew more, you might be their customer instead. To turn this situation around, you have to begin by standing in your customer's shoes for just a moment. Knowing what they know-and not what you know-why does this seem like a reasonable request?</p>	<p>When we are the customer, talking to a representative, we can help start the conversation on a positive tract. Ask them a question that shows that we understand that there are factors that affect operational decisions that are not always apparent to the public. Ask them to educate us as to factors that prevent our desired outcome.</p>
<p>2. Lift the veil. Once you understand your customer's point of view you also need to help them understand yours. One of the best ways to do this is to share inside information.</p>	<p>We started with allowing this step to happen. Ask follow-up questions to gain deeper understanding.</p>
<p>3. Ask why. What problem do they have that's led to this request, and how else might you help them solve it?</p>	<p>At this point, we are ready to explain the problem from our perspective. If we have a solution in mind, this is the time to present a possible solution, which opens the door for the next step.</p>
<p>4. Explore alternatives. Start looking for solutions that will work for both of you.</p>	<p>If the agency seems unable to offer new solutions, begin asking about other avenues such as legislative, legal, prevention, education, etc. Focus on non-confrontational, mutually beneficial solutions.</p>
<p>5. Weigh the consequences. If what they've asked is flat-out impossible, and you fail to find an acceptable alternative, then you won't have a choice. Every calculation and every situation is different, and there will be a different right answer in every situation</p>	<p>We know that government agencies are not going to lose a sale, so they have less to lose if we aren't satisfied. If no progress is being made, regroup with trusted colleagues and discuss alternate approaches.</p>



Representatives' Training <i>(Con't. from p. 1)</i>	Effective Advocate Action
<p>6. Consider a one-time deal. Tell them you can provide special consideration in view of your history together.</p>	<p>We have all been on the receiving end of promises from a public relations person. The best defense is a good offense. As you get ready to end the conversation, try to set up a follow-up meeting to check on progress.</p>
<p>7. Apologize. If you just can't say yes to the unreasonable demand, then make sure to apologize. After all, you are genuinely regretful that you can't make them happy. And an apology can go a long way toward preserving a relationship.</p>	<p>While we are wrapping up, apologizing isn't necessary—hopefully. Rather, circle back to empathizing and appreciate any attempt that has been made to satisfy your position.</p>
<p>8. Say thank you. Even if your customer is being unreasonable, even if he or she is leaving for bad reasons, you have a history together. Honor that history and preserve your connection by thanking the customer for all your past business.</p>	<p>We also need to be aware that every interaction builds a relationship. If future cooperation will benefit our community, then showing appreciation for time spent working on the problem and setting up a follow-up meeting are the most effective courses of action. End on a positive note, if at all possible.</p>

Empathy plays a big role in strengthening communities!
Readers of this newsletter have shown that they have empathy. People who care about strengthening their community do so out of a concern for the greater good and caring for others. But, do community leaders have a role to play in developing empathy in other members of the community?

Empathy: You've Got It. How Can Others Get It?

A quote from Understanding Empathy by John Shuford
<http://thetransformer.us/08-3.pdf>

“Empathy is important because it is what facilitates our interactions and connections with others. It is the foundation for building community. Without this sense of connection—this ability to consider other people’s views or feelings—we would experience much conflict.”

If we are trying to strengthen our community, the more we can do to increase residents’ sense of connection to the community, as a whole, and to each other, in particular, the less conflicts will escalate. Obviously, our empathy for the needs of the residents who voice concerns is important. But have we done enough to discuss with our local groups how we can go deeper by working to connect more people to their own community?

Community leadership is the courage, creativity and capacity to inspire participation, development and sustainability for strong communities.
— Gustav Nossal —