Connecting Advocates

Newsletter

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https://ccccultivatingcommunityconnecti ons.net Uniting community members to transform our neighborhoods is at the heart of what we do.

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Please visit our web site at:

https://ccccultivatingcommunitycon nections.net

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Stronger Together

Understanding Agency Representatives' Point of View

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

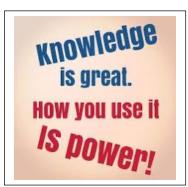
As community leaders, we are often advocating for our residents by interacting with various governmental agency representatives. Many of our concerns are the result of complex community situations that residents were unable to resolve on their own. Therefore, by definition, when community leaders get 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.



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@gm ailcom

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

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

By Minda Zetlin Representatives' Training **Effective Advocate Action** Excerpts from 8 Remarkably Effective A guide to productive interactions Ways to Cope With an Unreasonable with agency representatives. Customer 1. Empathize. When we are the customer, talking He or she believes that the to a representative, we can help unreasonable request is in fact quite start the conversation on a positive reasonable. This is because customers tract. Ask them a question that know less about your business than shows that we understand that there you do. If they knew more, you might are factors that affect operational be their customer instead. To turn this decisions that are not always situation around, you have to begin by apparent to the public. Ask them to standing in your customer's shoes for educate us as to factors that just a moment. Knowing what they prevent our desired outcome. know-and not what you know-why does this seem like a reasonable request? 2. Lift the veil. We started with allowing this step to Once you understand your customer's happen. Ask follow-up questions to point of view you also need to help gain deeper understanding. them understand yours. One of the best ways to do this is to share inside information. 3. Ask why. At this point, we are ready to What problem do they have that's led explain the problem from our to this request, and how else might perspective. If we have a solution you help them solve it? in mind, this is the time to present a possible solution, which opens the door for the next step. 4. Explore alternatives. If the agency seems unable to offer Start looking for solutions that will work new solutions, begin asking about for both of you. other avenues such as legislative, legal, prevention, education, etc. Focus on non-confrontational. mutually beneficial solutions.

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

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.



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?

business.

Representatives' Training (Con't. from p. 1)	Effective Advocate Action
6. Consider a one-time deal. Tell them you can provide special consideration in view of your history together.	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.
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.	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.
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	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

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

effective courses of action. End on

a positive note, if at all possible.

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 —