

Diffusing a Difficult Customer

Negative customer interactions in any industry can be detrimental to a company's reputation. Follow these suggestions to help diffuse a hostile situation with a customer.

Be an Active Listener



So what you're saying is...

RESTATE
their concerns in your own words



Ask them to
CONFIRM
if your understanding is correct



CLARIFY
any possible misunderstandings

Nonverbal Communication



Maintain a professional appearance



Open your posture and lean toward the customer



Maintain eye contact

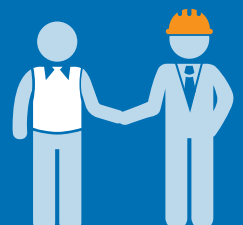
RELAX!

Best Practices



Inform the customer:

- What work is necessary
- When it will be performed
- What the tree will look like when completed
- Why the work is necessary
- Whether there are safety issues



Be empathetic

- Remember, every property owner is unique; there is no script to follow
- Document anything that could be important
- Keep property owners in the loop about work plans
- Seek to understand and then to be understood
- Encourage customers to ask questions
- Summarize your conversation and next steps
- Leave the customer with a positive impression of the company

Extreme Customers



Don't
take it personally



Don't
apologize for the work that needs done, only for the inconvenience



Don't
reciprocate their anger



Do
walk away if necessary