

Customer Service Toolkit

Be Our Guest at the Desk:

Delivering Five-Diamond Customer Service in Libraries



The Customer Service Matrix

	1-3 Diamonds (Good) 	4 Diamonds (Great) 	5 Diamonds (Wow!) 
Person to Person Customer Service			
Person to Space Customer Service			
The Library as Service Provider			
Service to the Community			

*Adapted from the Darien Library's Customer Service Matrix

Tips for Tough Patron Interactions

Listen. Let the patron tell you what the problem is, and do not interrupt. Listen carefully for the real issue.

In action: Ask questions pertinent to their situation. Pay attention to what is being expressed and what may be *unexpressed*.

Breathe. Inhale slowly and deeply, and exhale out long. Do this a couple times while the patron is talking, and right after they leave.

In action: Perhaps it seems funny to include this but you want to stay as clear-minded as possible in the situation as well as for your next patron.

Pay attention. No matter what is going on around you, make certain the patron knows you are giving them your undivided attention. Spend as much time as needed until the issue is addressed.

In action: Be sure to clue in to what expressions the patron is using, hand gestures, etc. These may all give you better clues as to how best to help them.

Lower your voice. Keep your voice calm, and when or if the patron raises their voice, lower yours even more.

In action: This will often cause them to lower their voices too – intentionally or unintentionally. This can also help to non-confrontationally deescalate a patron who may be upset.

Watch body language. Stay calm, but also show concern on your face (or with masks, with your eyes!). This will show the patron that you are concerned and interested in what is happening.

In action: In a stressful situation, don't panic, because if a patron sees you panic, they will panic. Show confidence, even if you don't feel it!

Call for backup. Do call for assistance from the person in-charge, if things escalate.

In action: Sometimes just having the chance to vent some more, can help the patron to calm down and allow you all to get to a resolution faster.

Exercises for Constructive Confrontation

This is a highly useful tactic to address troublesome or even abusive behavior during a patron interaction. It is used in various industries and areas for deescalating issues. It is not a directive nor an order, however, it encourages the person being asked, to make the choice of changing their behavior of their own volition.

The general formula:

If I can do _____ for you, will you _____ for me?

or use of the reverse statement

If you don't _____, then I cannot _____.

Since constructive confrontation poses an "if ... then" approach, it can be helpful to practice what such a statement might look like under certain circumstances.

Examples:

- 1) "If you want me to help you, then I need you to be respectful and not speak to me in that manner"
- 2) "If you do not stop raising your voice, then I cannot help you"

Try some with scenarios you have experienced:

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