

# Personal Selling and Customer Service

Handling difficult customers and customers' attitudes

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# Difficult customer?

- Defense mechanisms

- Part of the natural self-regulation: healthy and unhealthy consequences
- Activate in difficult and unpleasant situations

1. Pathological: (psychotic) denial, delusional projection, distortion...
2. Immature: passive aggression, acting out, projection...
3. Neurotic: intellectualization, reaction formation, displacement...
4. Mature: humour, sublimation, suppression, altruism...

# Pathological defense mechanisms

- DENIAL: You completely reject the thought or feeling.

*“Coronavirus is not in this country.”*

*“I am not angry with him”.*

- DELUSIONAL PROJECTION: Delusions about external reality.

*“Coronavirus is a conspiracy by NASA”*

- DISTORTION: A gross reshaping of external reality to meet internal needs.

*“Coronavirus is like any other flu.”*

# Immature defense mechanisms

- ACTING OUT: Direct expression of an unconscious wish or impulse in action, without conscious awareness of the emotion that drives the expressive behavior.

*“\*slam\*”*

- PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR: Indirect expression of hostility.

*“Maybe you should do it since you are so good at it...”*

- PROJECTION: You think someone else has your thought or feeling.

*“He hates me!”*

# Neurotic defense mechanisms

- INTELLECTUALIZATION: A type of rational angerization, only more intellectualized.

*"Nietzsche said that.is ontological despair."*

- REACTION FORMATION: You turn the feeling into its opposite.

*"I think he's really great!"*

- DISPLACEMENT: You redirect your feelings to another target.

*"I hate that secretary."*

# Mature defense mechanisms

- HUMOR: Posting funny memes about corona.
- SUBLIMATION: You redirect the feeling into socially productive activity.

*"I'm going to write a poem about anger."*

- SUPPRESSION: You are vaguely aware of the thought or feeling, but try to hide it.

*"I'm going to try to be nice to him."*

- ALTRUISM: E.g. helping others who are put to quarantine.

# Reflection in small groups

1. In which situations you have noticed activation of defense mechanisms?
  - Your own defense mechanisms?
  - Observing someones defense mechanisms activated?

☐ Back together with everyone for short comments.
2. Exercise: case study text about lunch
  - Try to find 11 different defense mechanisms in the text.

☐ Back togethet for results.

# Difficult customer?

- Recognizing own defense mechanisms
  - Emotional reactions ☐ accepting those reactions ☐ altering own behavior
  - "Go to the balcony"
- Customer service representative = role you play
- Why customer is being difficult?
  - ☐ Listening!  
The whole story uninterrupted. Let customer run out of anger.
  - ☐ Taking feedback.  
.. and appreciating it. Really.



# Managing conflicts with CARP-model

## 1. Control

- Take control of the situation. Take responsibility and be for real.

## 2. Acknowledge

- Customer may be wrong, but his feelings and experience cannot be wrong. Be empathic.

## 3. Refocus

- Lead customer in to thinking about solution and compensation. Involve customer in defining the compensation.

## 4. Problem solving

- Agreement about direct solution and making sure customer is happy with that solution.

# Attitudes in sales & service situation

- Customer's attitude towards
  - Sales person
  - Product
  - Company
- Can appear in any part of the selling cycle
- Can be stated or latent attitude
  - No matter which one, tackle instantly

# Types of attitudes

## Suspicion

- Customer is doubting the benefits.  
*“I doubt whether the battery will last whole day”*

## Misunderstanding

- Customer has misunderstood the product information, the offer...  
*“I thought you could only buy in store”*

## Complaint

- The customer is dissatisfied with the product or service.  
*“The product got broken in three days”*

# Types of attitudes

## Objection

- The customer states reasons or explanations of how he/she disagrees the offered solution or has different opinion of the features and benefits.

*"I really can't understand why your product is 30% more expensive"*

## Negligence

- The customer doesn't feel the need for the product/service.

*"Just leave your card. We don't need anything right now."*

## Acceptance

- Customer gives positive comments or is willing to close the deal.

*"Could you send me the product for tomorrow"*

# Handling the attitudes

- Clarify the claims and ask for more information.
- Propose a solution/explanation and explain the benefits
  - Value propositions
  - PFB-statements
  - Comparison
- Show evidence and build credibility if needed
  - Recommendations
  - Technical information
  - Demonstration