



Communication Fundamentals #2: Positive

Instructions: Take up to five minutes to read through your sheet. After five minutes, your Trainer will direct each person in your group to “teach” their subject.

The person in your group who traveled the longest distance to get to work today will go first.

Positive (versus provoking)

Note from Myra Golden: Here are some actual examples of provoking things I've heard when listening to customer service calls:

"That would be something you'd have to speak to your local provider about. I have no way of knowing this information."

"So, we're just the lab. We don't work directly with patients."

"My supervisor would just tell you the same thing that I'm telling you."

When words come off as provoking, like the above statements, customers may push back and even escalate.



The customer escalates because the provoking language created a barrier in their mind. And the only way around this **barrier is to push back.**

From Provoking to Positive

Work to keep interactions positive, even when you're giving bad news or telling the customer what they don't want to hear. You can be more positive by offering explanations or options.

Instead of "There's nothing we can do," Say something like, ***"One thing we can try is..."*** Even if there's no guarantee that the option will work, customers tend to calm down when they sense a real effort on your part.

Rather than: "That's something you need to speak to the local provider about."

How about an explanation: ***"Any specific details on your treatment will come directly from your dentist. We don't have access to your medical records."***

When you communicate positively, you reduce customer frustration, pre-empt escalations, and interactions go more smoothly. So, always look for a positive slant when giving bad news.