

Delivering Bad News Planning Questions

What (if anything) do you fear about having to talk to a customer about a delay, or a mistake?

How might you overcome this fear?

Knowing yourself and your experience in giving bad news, what potential pitfalls do you need to overcome to talk to a customer about lousy news confidently?

Delivering Bad News Planning Questions Continued

How, precisely, will you overcome these pitfalls?

Who, in this (virtual) room, do you consider to be confident and successful when it comes to giving bad news to customers?

What's one thing they do that you can try?

Delivering Bad News Preparation Form

Write out your plan in the left column. Refer to the right column for guidance.

Key 1: Clearly explain the issue	<p><i>How: Explain the issue.</i></p> <p><i>Be brief - No preamble, no fluff, no excessive apology.</i></p> <p><i>Be assertive -not passive, not aggressive/defensive.</i></p> <p><i>Be confident in your delivery.</i></p>
Key 2: Acknowledge the impact	<p>Why: Recognizing the customer's concern helps you preempt escalation and move the person from the emotional right-brain to a focus on resolving the issue.</p> <p>How: One sentence to recognize the inconvenience:</p> <p><i>"I know this delay throws off your entire day/schedule..."</i></p> <p><i>"I realize this puts you in a bind."</i></p> <p><i>"This is no more acceptable to us than it is to you."</i></p>
Key 3: Let the person respond	<p>Why:</p> <p><i>Pausing to let the customer respond protects you from over-explaining or losing confidence, and it gives them a chance to express emotions or ask questions.</i></p> <p>How:</p> <p><i>After key action 2, pause.</i></p>

Key 4: Manage expectations

Why:

To protect the relationship, you must seek to prevent further disappointment by establishing what you can realistically achieve.

How:

Be transparent

Avoid assumptions

Keep customer apprised

Pitfalls to watch for:

Over-promising

Letting customer push you into commitments you can't keep

Key 5: Follow-up

Why:

To ensure satisfaction, restore customer confidence, and protect the relationships.

Follow-up to keep customers apprised and to make sure you made good on the promise.

How:

Face-to-face or telephone

Pitfalls to watch for:

Letting the customer down again

Avoiding follow-up out of fear of having a tough conversation