

What Do You Say?

When Your Guest Won't Let You Help

Your guest doesn't trust you...

The most difficult part of interacting with a guest who doesn't trust you is trying not to get defensive. You know you're qualified. You know your stuff. You're confident you can handle almost any question or problem that comes your way. ***But why won't your guest give you a chance?***

The simplest approach to this type of guest is to rise to the challenge. Be pleasant. Be professional and try asking for permission to help. Asking for permission to help gives your guests the control they crave. And that may be all you need to show them you're right for the job. So consider the following when a guest comes to you and says:

“ ‘Can you help me?’ I don't know; can you? What are you... 12?”

Agreed, this is one of those types of comments that might be said jokingly, but really isn't funny. It's inappropriate and it's rude, but you can rise above it. Hey, take it as a compliment. You may be young, but you know your job, you know your products and services...and, best of all, you know how to turn a grumpy “old” guest into a satisfied guest. So even though you ***may*** want to say, *“Well, as you so beautifully illustrate, age doesn't equal intelligence,”* you might just smile and say,

“Well, regardless of my age, it's my job to know about our products and services and I'm good at my job. So how can I help you?”

Or

“Regardless of my age, my first priority is to see that you get all the help you need today. What can I do for you?”

“Any guys work here?”

“You think I can talk with someone older?”

“Can I talk with someone who has been working here for awhile?”

Sometimes you just don't fit the predetermined image that your guests have in mind when they walk into your business. That's OK. You know that you're qualified for your job, so just keep your response friendly and non-defensive by saying something like,

“Sure, but maybe it's something that I could help you with as well. I'd sure like to try.”

If your customer still balks, that really is his problem—not yours. Politely take him over to another team member and hand him off.

“Jake, this gentleman would like your help today. Thank you.”

“Can I speak to a manager?”

“Is there anyone else I can talk to?”

“Certainly, but would you be willing to let me try to resolve your problem first? Then if the solution is not to your satisfaction, I'd be happy to get my supervisor for you.”

It's important to try this first, for a couple of reasons. For one thing, you truly may be able to help. But if not, your guest may feel a bit better simply after talking, and you will have some back-ground information

to share with your supervisor. Most customers will agree to your request, but if they don't, the best thing to do is politely and quickly transfer them to your manager by saying something like,

“Certainly, sir. May I have your name, please, and I will be happy to transfer you to my supervisor.”

Or, if your guest is in front of you, say something like,

“Certainly sir. I’ll get my supervisor for you now.”

Your guest is just grumpy ...

“You are the fourth person who’s asked me, and I don’t want any help.”

“I’m sorry. Let me know if you have any questions. My name is _____.”

“You are the third person who’s called me, and I said no the first time.”

“I apologize for the interruption. Would you like me to write your name down on our ‘do not call’ list?”

“I don’t need a reminder call. Do you think I have Alzheimer’s?”

“I’m sorry if I’ve interrupted you. We call all of our clients a day ahead of time, so no one will get charged if they forget their appointment. As long as you are aware of that fact, I could write a note not to give you a reminder call next time if you would prefer.”

Then whether your customer says “yes” or “no”, you can end the conversation by saying,

“Thanks again for your patience and we will see you tomorrow.”

“Let me get this straight. You are calling me, at my home, to tell me about an upcoming sale?”

“I’m sorry my call upset you. Some of our preferred customers appreciate learning about an upcoming promotion before the general public. But I can put you on our ‘do not call’ list, if you’d like.”

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