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Stock Market Today The Dow finished flat as a pancake as the stock market continues to stall against all-time highs, but Bitcoin continued building a head of steam. By Kyle Woodley • Published 19 February 21 No matter what your business, your customers are your greatest asset. Which is why keeping them happy is critical. It's natural for your customers to become frustrated or upset from time-to-time when dealing with an issue related to your business — but how your customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation of the situation is vital for customer service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles are service team handles and de-escalates the situation is vital for customer service team handles are service team h techniques. In this post, we'll dive into five de-escalation techniques, and why they work. Why De-Escalation Matters in Customer Service Recently, I had an upsetting experience with a member of their service team, only to hear: "I'm sorry, ma'am, but there's nothing I can do for you." Now, I'm not blaming this airline, or this service rep. But one thing I learned throughout the encounter was how much empathy mattered to me. I didn't necessarily need the rep to give me exactly what I wanted: I just needed to feel heard and understood. And, apparently, so does everyone else. In a recent survey I conducted to 100 consumers across the U.S., "listening carefully, understanding the problem, and demonstrating empathy" was the most popular response to the question, "Think of a time when you were upset at a company and customer service helped you have a positive outcome. What did they do to make the experience positive?" Listening and demonstrating empathy exceeded even "they offered me a refund, upgrade, or promo code". In other words: People care more about a service rep's behaviors than they do a rep's actions. All of which is to say: The way your reps behave when a customer is upset could make-or-break that customers' loyalty. So it's a critical component of long-term customer retention. Let's dive into five of the most effective de-escalation techniques, next. How Consumers React to 5 De-Escalation techniques and demonstrate empathy. 46% of respondents rated active listening and empathy as the most important de-escalation technique practiced by service reps. Improving your communication will help prevent misunderstandings from occurring, and will help you to de-escalate them when they do. Active listening requires you to actually listen to the other person, rather than interrupting them, or spending the time in your head plotting out what you'll say next. When you listen to the other person, they feel heard and appreciated, and their anger will begin to subside. Asking questions (and listening to the actual root of the problem. Remember that there are always three sides to a story: yours, theirs, and what actually happened. Be open to hearing how they have interpreted something and how it may be different than how you intended it. As HubSpot Senior Inbound Consultant Bradlee McKibben told me, "When I encounter escalation situations during consulting calls, the first thing I do is lay a strong foundation of listening, by way of asking strategic questions and giving the customer the space to air their frustrations and their needs. My goal is to dig deeper into what the actual root problem is, as sometimes frustrations can be misaligned. Everyone encounters roadblocks and challenges; customers simply want to know we understand the why and are here to help." Showing empathy by putting yourself in their shoes will help deescalate the situation at-hand. Once they know you're going to try and do what's best for them, they can calm down and you two can work together to get their issue resolved. 2. Offer refunds, upgrades, or promos to make up for an issue. Money can often be a major cause of contention. If your customers feel they've lost or wasted money and haven't received the full package in-return, it makes sense for them to feel frustrated or angry. Oftentimes, then, money can also be the answer. In fact, roughly one-third of respondents marked this as the de-escalation technique that led to a positive customer service experience. While it can feel painful to offer anything for 'free' to a customer, you'll want to keep in mind that it's much more expensive to acquire a new customer than keep an existing one. Of course, you'll want to abide by your company's refund policies whenever possible, but speak to your manager to understand what you can offer an unhappy customer if you're unable to resolve their issue. In the situation with the airline, I felt much better about purchasing another ticket from them once a service rep had offered me a refund on my cancelled flight. It provide a refund, consider offering a promotion or discount on a future purchase. 3. Don't say no; instead, tell your customer how you'll work to resolve their issue. There's nothing more frustrating than hearing "No," "I don't know", "I cannot", or "It is not within my power" from a customer service rep — so, to truly de-escalate an issue, avoid these terms. Instead, you might say phrases like, "I will investigate this issue," "I will try to resolve this issue," or "I'm digging into this." If possible, explain specifically how you're planning to help resolve the customer's issue. For instance, you might explain that you're going to send their ticket to your IT team so they can dig into an issue with your software. Tell them they can expect a follow-up from you within the next 48-hours, and you'll pause payments in the meantime until the issue is resolved. As McKibben puts it, "Sometimes I encounter escalation situations that are outside my role's scope. I make sure to clearly explain to the customer how my expertise isn't best suited to solve the problem, but that I will take the following steps: loop in the correct point of contact, file a roadblock with our product team, and/or follow up with the Support rep who is handling the ticket." She adds, "I make sure my follow-up is timely, actionable, and detailed so that the customers have tackled similar issues, if applicable." 4. Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep. HubSpot's Senior Customer Success Manager Jen Berenguer told me honesty is her number one de-escalation technique. She says, "Firstly, because it aligns with HubSpot's value of transparency, but mainly because managing expectations is one of the most important aspects of my role. When I'm honest with how much I care about a customer's problem, the steps I'm taking to help, and more importantly what I won't be able to do, it helps them understand the complexity of the matter, and how feasible it is to get to their desired outcome." "Most of the times, honesty leads to a stronger relationship with my clients, even when we have a problem that can't be solved." Lying to your customers to make them happy might seem like an easy solution for de-escalating a situation, but it will ultimately backfire by creating a major sense of distrust. Personally, I wouldn't want to work with a business that encouraged or enabled its support reps to lie at all costs — would you? Rather than lying or over-promising when you're unsure whether you'll be able to deliver, simply ask for time to explore the issue further. Instead of saying, "I can promise you we can help you," you might say something like, "I can promise you I'll try my best to help you." Customers know when you're lying, and promising you can help is a lie unless you've already found a surefire solution. 5. Stay calm, even when your customer is frustrated. While it can be tempting to raise your voice or become equally emotional when speaking to an angry customer, it won't de-escalate the issue and might even make it much worse. Instead, it's critical you remain calm. Breathing can help with this — When an argument begins, our bodies are forced into a fight, flight, or freeze mode. Our breathing becomes labored, our heart rate increases, and we're literally ready to fight our "attacker" or flee the situation in multiple ways. First, taking a deep breath calms your nervous system, allowing you to think (and respond) clearly and calmly. With focused breathing, you can lower your heart rate and your blood pressure, and take yourself out of this common stress response. Second, a few moments of deep breathing can give you the time you need to collect your thoughts so you don't say or do anything that could cause lasting damage. 6. Tell customers you value and appreciate them. While only 16% of respondents rated this as important for de-escalation, it's undoubtedly a nice extra step you can take once you've de-escalated a situation. However, you'll want to time this one wisely: Telling your customer you value them before providing a solution to their problem could seem disingenuous, especially if they're upset. Once you've identified a solution, however, it's a good idea to emphasize that you truly appreciate the customer's business. The Benefits of De-Escalation in a Company Learning de-escalation techniques and training your entire team from HR, to managers, to your frontline workers can have a multitude of benefits for your organization. These include (but are not limited to): Minimizing Conflict. When team members can communicate better and work out disagreements before they become full-blown battles, you'll see less conflict and less drama. Improving Teamwork. When employees respect one another and can work peacefully with one another, they work better and accomplish goals faster. You'll have an actual team at your disposal as opposed to individuals working in silos. Increasing your Bottom Line. When people work better together, they work faster, accomplish more, and earn more money for your organization. Reducing Turnover. Happy employees who have high levels of job satisfaction rarely jump ship in search of new opportunities. Rather than constantly trying to replace valuable team members, you'll hold on to the employees that are moving your organization forward. Whenever you have different personalities coming together to complete a common goal, misunderstandings are bound to happen. With the right de-escalation training, you can ensure that when minor issues arise, they don't turn into major battles that ruin relationships and damage your bottom line.

