

# What to Do When the Customer Won't Let You Talk

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How many times have you had customers who seem like they are on a rampage? They won't let you talk or try to resolve the problem. They seem to repeat the same story over and over. Understanding why that happens is the first step to dealing with the issue. Typically, it is the result of four critical missteps on the part of the customer service or technical support person.

1. **You didn't take ownership of the problem.** You never apologized for their inconvenience. You skipped an important step. You simply went right to accessing account information and details about what happened. When this happens customers assume you must not have heard. They start all over again, expecting you to say, "I am so sorry that happened to you." Until you do, they may continue.
2. **You got defensive.** Instead of commiserating, you said something like, "We don't guarantee shipping. You'll have to call the carrier." The last thing a customer wants is to make multiple calls. If you make the mistake of ever saying, "No one here would have ever said that," the customer will automatically get combative and defensive. The person will continue to make his case again and again, each time becoming stronger and louder.
3. **You said "No."** Customers hate hearing "No." In this day and age, most customers feel we need to negotiate. Saying "No" without saying what you can do for them is deadly.
4. **You seemed cold, non-caring.** Tone of voice means everything to customers. If you seem aloof and only interested in getting on to the next call, they may continue to vent.

When you do have a customer that won't let you talk, subliminal comments, such as "Oh, Umm, My

Goodness or Wow," work wonders and start to make the customer want to listen to you. They are door openers. When there is an opportunity, definitely enter the conversation with a statement such as, "That must be so frustrating" OR "You must be so upset. I am definitely going to help you." You may need to repeat your offer to help several times during your conversation. When the customer gets that now you are listening and tuned into them, they start to become receptive.

It is a mistake to think that the only thing that matters is fixing the problem quickly. Customers first need you to hear them and understand their pain. Once you do that, you will see your conversation become productive and satisfying for both you and them.

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