

THE BLAME GAME

In every organization, there will be customers who want to blame someone else for their troubles.

Who's *actually* to blame for the problem is totally irrelevant. If you are in customer service and have to deal with the Blamer, remember that your role with them is to be the scapegoat, and your mission is to serve them by telling them whatever they need to hear so they can get un-stuck, and you can move along to the next customer while feeling good about the experience you had with the Blamer. The reason feeling good is so important is because everything you do is infused with the consciousness with which you do it. **After work is over, you'll go home and be with the most important people in your life, and how you treat them will be affected by how you treated your customers throughout the day.**

There are four bottom line things a Blamer is looking for (apart from something free, which is not going to happen in the following scenario) to keep their egos intact:

- **They want someone to validate their story**
- **They want someone to take responsibility**
- **They want to know "what you're going to do about it,"**
- **They want to know it won't happen again**

The professional's number-one goal is to give the customers what they want. This can be challenging when you're dealing with difficult and demanding customers, especially if you know the story they're telling you isn't true.

For example, let's say a customer's utilities have been cut off, and that person is upset, claiming he or she never got the bill.

The savvy professional can achieve the goal of giving the customer what they want, while maintaining their professional demeanor, and keeping their ego in tact **all at the same time**, simply by using the passive voice, and a simple 4-step process:

1) Acknowledge the possibility that it happened as the customer says it happened.

For example: "It certainly is possible that a mistake was made." or "I understand sometimes things don't show up in the mail." Now their ego has been validated, (even though you didn't say a mistake **was** made) and they'll be ready for you to...

2) Take responsibility.

For example: "But you're in luck...my name's Dan, and regardless of what happened to get us here, (notice you're "with" the customer) you've found the right person. I'm the one who can help you with this." Now they feel confident in your abilities, know you're *with* them, and are ready to hear you...

3) Take corrective action.

For example: "What we can do now is get this last bill paid, which will bring the account current." And now that you're in the process of "fixing" the problem...

4) Suggest preventative action.

For example: "In the future, if it's the 5th of the month, and you still haven't received a bill, just come down or call us, and we'll be able to help you take care of your monthly balance so that this never happens again."

Of course, many customers will struggle and squirm a bit before getting un-stuck, and when they do, remember that **you are totally in control of the situation**, and **don't take the bait**. Simply use the **broken record**, and keep repeating steps 3 and 4 until the customer realizes that you are going to stand your ground, **and** maintain your professional demeanor. It's easy and more effective as long as you use strategies rather than just winging it.

When we have strategies such as this one to help us deal with demanding or difficult customers, we will enjoy a more stress-free day at work, and be more present and positive with those we love--*after* work.