

Why People Interrupt and What To Do About It.

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One of the most frustrating aspects of the job of a technical support or customer care representative is being interrupted before finishing an explanation. Customers interrupt for a variety of reasons. If you pay attention to why, you can better manage the situation. Consider the following possibilities.

- 1. Do you speak with technical jargon?** If you assume everyone knows what a router is or even what a modem is, you are mistaken. When customers don't get what you are saying, they interrupt. I have heard customers ask the representative to speak English when the technical explanation went over their heads. By paying attention to the words a customer uses or doesn't use, you can learn just how savvy he or she is and change the way you explain a particular issue.
- 2. Are your explanations clear?** Look at it from the customer's vantage. Does what you say make sense as a solution? Are you leaving anything out? It is a good idea when making a recommendation to tell the customer why. It will alleviate their need for more information.
- 3. Are you long winded?** If so, get to the point. Keep your comments as brief as possible. Long explanations invite interruptions. Your customers are very busy people and often very impatient. They just want you to fix the problem as quickly as possible so that they can get back to their jobs.
- 4. Do you pay attention to what your customers say?** Granted it is hard to concentrate on every call, but customers will notice

when you are not attentive. When they find you asking the same questions over and over, they get frustrated and cut you short. If you are fully present every time you take a call, the payoff will be worth the effort.

- 5. Do you speak quickly?** If you have ever received feedback that you are a "fast talker," chances are your customer will interrupt you to slow you down. Many want to take notes, particularly if the call is related to a technical issue. The slower you speak; the easier it will be for them to follow your instructions. Pause for one or two seconds between your statements. It's a good idea for you to wait for your customers to ask you questions. If you begin talking too soon after your explanation, customers will not have a chance to digest what you have said. Before they will allow you to move on, they will interrupt.
- 6. Do you mumble? Do the endings of your sentences fade? Can people hear you? Do you have an accent?** If customers can't hear you or understand you, they will interrupt. Tape your voice or use your internal voice mail system to assess any issues with your voice. Each of us has a cash voice and a voice that friends and family enjoy. The cash voice is the one that earns us a living. It is the one we need to use on the job. The cash voice should be loud enough for anyone to hear, and crystal clear. Enunciation and articulation should be sharp. If the voice you use on the job isn't what you would like it to be, practice by reading articles into a tape recorder. The more you pause while reading or speaking, the more the lips, teeth and tongue can get into the right parking position in your mouth so that you can say the words clearly.

Interrupting can be annoying to anyone who works on the phones because it affects our train of thought. The next time your customer interrupts you, ask yourself why. Then adjust your approach accordingly. If you do, your customers will be more satisfied. You will get them off the phone more quickly, and there is less likelihood that they will be calling

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back with the same problem. In addition, your job will be less stressful.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.