

TEN WORDS TO AVOID WHEN SERVING CUSTOMER NEEDS

1. **No.** Customers come to you to solve their problem. Saying no is the same as sending them elsewhere. Better: “Yes”.
2. **Can’t.** Worse than “no”. It implies that you *could* do something but you are unable. Better: “Can”.
3. **Impossible.** The same as “no”, but with an exclamation point. There is ALWAYS a solution. Better: “Here is how I can help...”
4. **Why?** “Why” questions carry a suspicious tone and do nothing to focus on the present. Better: “Can you help me understand...?”
5. **What?** Makes customers repeat themselves, and in the worst case, the tone implies that you doubt them. Better: “Excuse me?” (or in Cincinnati, “Please?”)
6. **Policy.** Customers see “policy” as a dodge. Better: Mission.
7. **Listen!** Interrupting a customer is not an effective way to get them to listen to you. Better: “I understand.”
8. **Wait.** Who wants to wait? For anything? Better: “Let’s move forward”
9. **Wrong.** Blame never leads to solutions. Better: “Our solution is...”
10. **Should have.** It is always too late to “should have”. Had they known they “should have” at the time, they would have. Deal with the present. Better: “Here is what can be done now...”