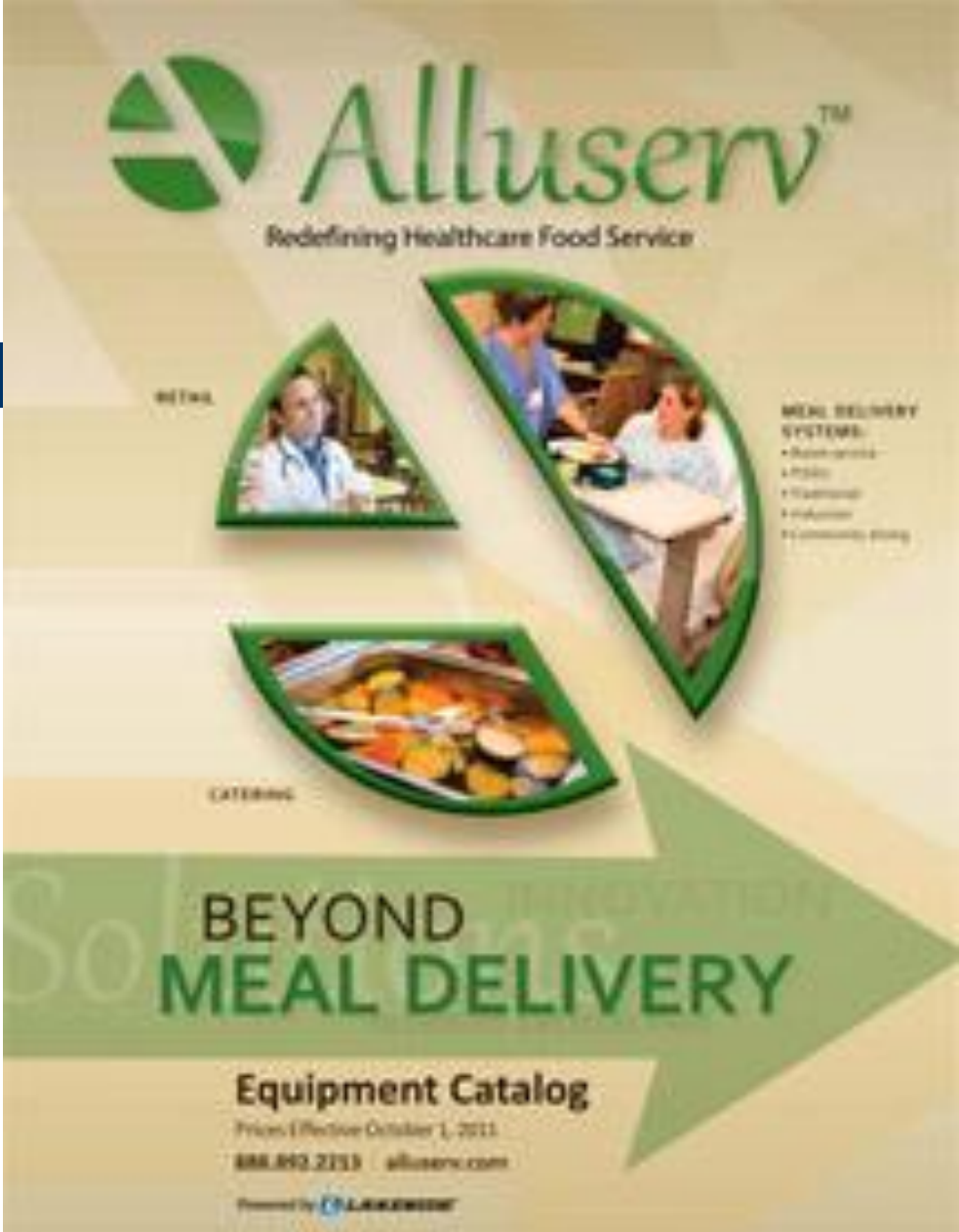


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The image shows the cover of an Alluserv Equipment Catalog. At the top, the Alluserv logo is displayed, consisting of a green stylized 'A' icon followed by the word 'Alluserv' in a green serif font with a trademark symbol. Below the logo is the tagline 'Redefining Healthcare Food Service'. The cover features three green, leaf-shaped frames containing images: a healthcare worker in a white coat, a patient being served at a table, and a tray of food. To the right of these frames is a list of 'MEAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS' including 'Dorm/clinic', 'Acute', 'Outpatient', 'Inpatient', and 'Community dining'. At the bottom, a large green arrow points to the right, containing the text 'BEYOND MEAL DELIVERY' in large green letters. Below the arrow, the text 'Equipment Catalog' is written in bold, followed by 'Prices Effective October 1, 2013', the phone number '888.892.2253', and the website 'alluserv.com'. At the very bottom, it says 'Powered by' followed by the 'LAKEMORE' logo.

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• Acute
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What to Say
TO A
Porcupine



20 HUMOROUS TALES
THAT GET TO THE HEART OF
GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Richard S. Gallagher

What to Say to a Porcupine

Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Customers

Presented by Rich Gallagher,
Point of Contact Group
www.pointofcontactgroup.com

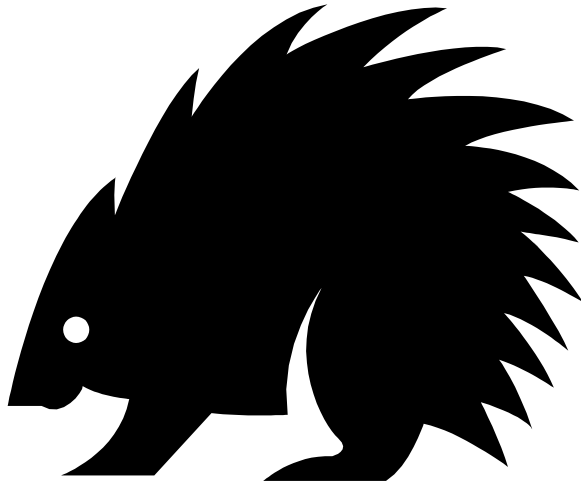
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Who are **your** customers?



- Patients and families
- Visitors
- Employees
- Hospital administration
- Many others
- *Every stakeholder affects your service reputation*

Understanding the prickly customer



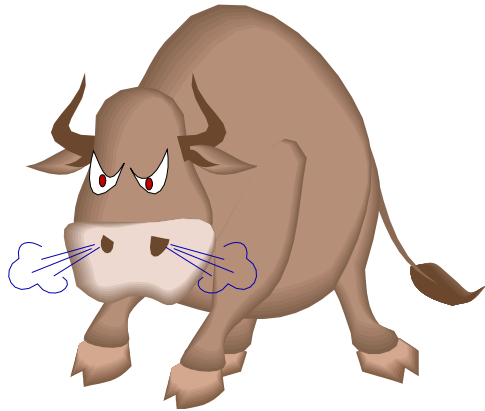
- Encounters with prickly customers can be understood and managed
- There are core communications skills that can defuse almost any interpersonal transaction
- These techniques can be learned and practiced by anyone

Where we are headed today



- What do you say to someone when you have just towed their car away?

Techniques we will cover today



- Specific techniques for handling prickly customers:
 - Reflective listening
 - Delivering feedback or bad news
 - Showing respect and empathy
 - Preventing confrontations
- How to defuse a customer crisis
- Anger is much more easily *prevented* than it is managed

Poll question:

- A patient tells you curtly that her meal was awful. What should you say?
 - a) I'm sorry.
 - b) I understand.
 - c) We had a really high patient census today, and it affected our operations.
 - d) It sounds like you had a really lousy meal. Let's see what we can do to help from here.

The first step: reflective listening

- 1. Give your undivided attention, then respond
- 2. Re-phrase what the other party says before your reply
- 3. Share your knowledge of the situation
- 4. Provide active feedback
- 5. Summarize understanding and obtain buyoff

Poll question:

- Your boss wants you to cater a big event – at the last minute, of course – and you do not have the staffing available to do it. What is the first thing you say?
 - a) We are going to be short-staffed for this
 - b) Let me go through what options we have
 - c) You should have given me more lead time
 - d) I'm afraid we can't do exactly what you want

Delivering bad news: the “staging” approach

- Introduce what you are going to say *before* you say it
- Explain the reason for what you are saying *as* you are saying it
- Empathize with the customer's feelings *after* you have said it

Why staging works

- By *staging* the information you provide a customer, you gain a number of benefits:
 - You help the customer understand why there is a problem
 - You convey the sense that you are doing the best you can on his behalf.
 - You lower the hostility of the customer's reaction, and facilitate working effectively with him to try and find the best solution to this problem.

Showing respect and empathy

- Problems are often "gift-wrapped" with the person's feelings about them:
 - Level of urgency
 - Their expectations for solving the problem
 - How this issue makes them feel
 - How critical the problem is *to them*
- Respect = acknowledging someone's problems *and* the agenda behind them
- Empathy = validating another person's feelings

Techniques for showing respect and empathy

- Playback: rephrase the other person in a way that acknowledges their agenda
 - Because you _____, I am going to _____
 - Because you _____, I recommend _____
- Phrase substitution: change the wording of your standard responses (e.g. “Absolutely” instead of “OK”)
- Normalize feelings: Share common experiences and reaffirm the customer’s emotions (“Many people have the same experience you did.”)

Examples of “respect” phrases

Original statement	Phrase substitution
I can.	I sure can.
I can't.	I wish I could.
This is the best I can do.	I realize you want x, so we're going to come as close as possible by doing y.
Here is the answer.	Given what you've asked for, I'm going to suggest the following solution.

Three “octane levels” of acknowledgment

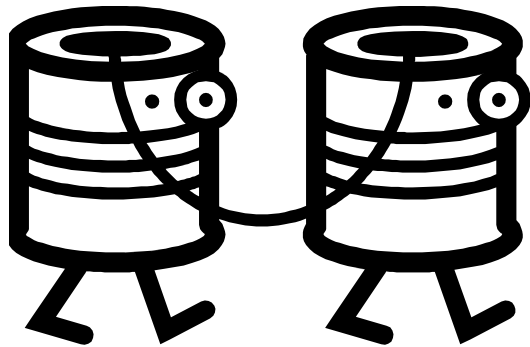


- **Observation:** Observe the other person’s feelings and reactions
 - “I can see how upset you are”
- **Validation:** Acknowledge the other person’s feelings are **valid**. This always involves describing ***other people***
 - “No one likes running out of their favorite meal”
- **Identification:** Identify with the other person’s feelings
 - “That wouldn’t seem fair to me either”

Poll question:

- When is it OK to say "no" to someone?
 - a) When they are making an unrealistic demand.
 - b) When they want you to take responsibility for something that is their fault.
 - c) Anytime you cannot give them what they want.
 - d) Never ever.

Managing another person's demands - doing the “can-can”



- Always respond with what you **can** acknowledge and **can** do - however small
 - Respond to the other person's feelings – feelings are never wrong
 - Focus on what *is* possible
- You can avoid saying “no” much more often than you think

Examples of the “can-can”

Can't	Can-can
I'm not the right person to discuss this problem with	I'm going to put you in touch with the right person
It's the end of my shift.	My partner Sally is going to help you
I can't give you a refund	I can give you a discount
We can't possibly do that	Let's look at some options.

Defusing a crisis – the “Triple A” approach



- **Acknowledgement:** acknowledge feelings and give the problem importance
- **Assessment:** gather facts and assess the situation
- **Alternatives:** set boundaries and sell alternatives

Service recovery phrases

- Service recovery phrases express the same sentiments as “can’t” phrases – but worded from the customer’s perspective
- “I can see how you feel”
- “I would not be happy with that either”
- “I will do everything I can to make this better”
- “Let’s look at some alternatives”

Should you ever walk away?

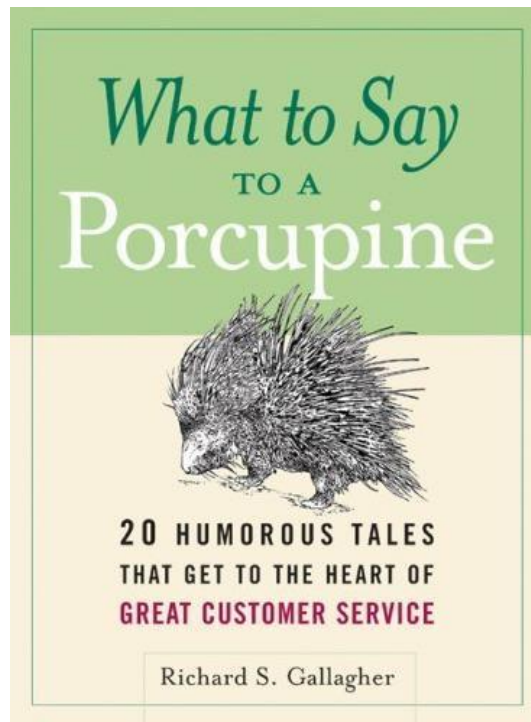
- There is a clear line between angry and abusive
- Abusive situations require special handling. When these happen:
 - Do not argue with the other person
 - Try to get the person's name and phone number for later contact
 - Set limits on abusive behavior
 - Escalate or report clearly abusive incidents proactively to your manager
- Know your boundaries ahead of time

Summing it all up: action items to take back to the workplace



- You can *prevent* or *manage* almost any difficult situation with the right communications skills
- It's all about technique, not "attitude"
- These skills are not human nature, and get better with practice
- These skills translate to *all* of your interactions with people

What to Say to a Porcupine – the book!



- Uses humorous business fables to teach proven customer skills
- National #1 customer service book and finalist for 2008 Business Book of the Year
- Purchase one or more copies and get a free companion mini-course! Send e-mail to info@whattosaytoaporcupine.com

Questions?



Thank you!

To learn more, visit www.WhatToSayToAPorcupine.com

For more information on Rich Gallagher's communications skills training programs, visit www.pointofcontactgroup.com

To contact Rich:
gallagher@pointofcontactgroup.com

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Alluserv is a manufacturer of healthcare foodservice equipment for the meal delivery and retail aspects of healthcare.

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