



How to Deal with Difficult Clients and Discussions

Course Outline



Your business outcomes are our priority. Proving impact in real time.

Course Overview: What does this course involve?

This workshop equips client-facing staff with the communication and assertiveness skills to handle difficult customers and tense discussions professionally. Participants learn to separate reality from perception, defuse common “difficult customer” situations, and turn complaints into opportunities to strengthen the client relationship – all while staying calm, ethical and in control.

The customer is not an interruption to our day – they are the reason for it.

Who Should Attend this Course?

This course is ideal for frontline and client-facing staff – customer service consultants, call centre agents, sales and account teams, and anyone who regularly handles client queries, complaints or difficult conversations on behalf of the organisation.

Duration: Full-Day

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Apply the principles of good customer care in every client interaction.
- Analyse their own behaviour against the criteria for good customer care.
- Separate reality from perception when a client interaction feels tense, and respond rather than react.
- Use assertive, unemotional language (DESC / BEEF) to raise and resolve difficult issues.
- Recognise common “difficult customer” types and apply the calming technique suited to each.

Content

The Foundations of Great Client Care	We build a shared understanding of what customers actually value, and why attitude – more than aptitude – determines the quality of every client interaction. Participants also learn to recognise different communication styles so they can flex their approach to the person in front of them. Topics include: • What clients expect from good service, and why it matters • Attitude versus aptitude in client-facing roles • Recognising different personality and communication styles
Why Clients Become Difficult	Here we unpack what actually drives difficult behaviour, giving participants a simple framework for separating fact from assumption before responding – and a practical method for identifying the real issue behind a complaint. Topics include: • Separating reality, perception and reaction • Why clients become difficult in the first place • Defining the real point of contention behind a complaint
Reading and Responding to Difficult Customers	Using real, recognisable customer profiles – the shouter, the detail-obsessed, the quietly sarcastic and more – participants build a practical playbook for staying in control and de-escalating rather than reacting. Topics include: • Recognising common difficult-customer types • Practical techniques for calming an escalated client • Staying in control of yourself under pressure

Assertive & Collaborative Communication	This module gives participants a repeatable, unemotional language for raising concerns and reaching agreement – the assertiveness and listening skills that turn a confrontation into a resolved, collaborative conversation. Topics include: • Assertive expression using the DESC / BEEF techniques • Active listening and presenting a solution with confidence • Building a collaborative habit to reach agreement
Staying Resilient Under Pressure	We close by helping participants keep communication simple and proportionate, so small issues stay small – and by building the personal resilience to handle repeated difficult interactions without it wearing them down. Topics include: • The KISS principle – keeping client communication short and simple • Not sweating the small stuff: keeping perspective under pressure • A practical polarity exercise for balancing competing demands

Why Choose This Course?

Individual Benefit: Participants gain the confidence and practical language to handle difficult clients calmly, reducing personal stress in confrontational situations.

Team Benefit: A shared, consistent approach – the same assertive techniques and calming methods – so colleagues handle escalations the same way and can support one another with tricky clients.

Organisational Benefit: A more capable, resilient client-facing team that protects client relationships and company reputation during difficult interactions.

Continue reading to learn more about our optional add-on's, and to find the outline for this course's specific Afterburner. Contact us should you have any queries or need assistance, we're standing by to take your call!

Optional Purchases

When ROI and Implementation Matter

At Staff Training, we understand that each individual and/or organisation has unique needs and goals. We have developed a range of valuable, but optional purchases to maximise your training outcomes:

SETA Accredited Training Options

Most of our workshops are aligned with SETA Accredited unit standards, or you can opt for the fully accredited version of your workshop choice. This includes a certificate of competence when successfully completed. All other certificates are certificates of attendance.

The Afterburner

Afterburners are additions to selected workshops. These continued learning courses include a re-cap of material covered during the workshop and continue to expand on both knowledge and skills development for the workplace.

Skills Check

Skills Checks are extremely useful in the measurement of ROI of soft skills training. This tool is structured to help the learner improve on the implementation of new skills through a goal-driven process of accountability and reflection.

LevelUp Coaching

A 2-hour, one-on-one coaching option for those who would like to address and build on the knowledge they gained during training. Converting theory into practice under the tutelage of an experienced coach.

PowerPath Coaching

A powerful investment into your future leaders. One-on-one leadership coaching with the globally acclaimed Enneagram as the self-mastery tool.

Staff Training is an accredited IEQ9 Provider. Our Enneagram offerings include a SETA Accredited version of a leadership development workshop as well as an emotional intelligence and Enneagram combination. You can also explore our specialist hybrid offerings of workshops and coaching below.

[Enneagram Group Coaching Journey](#)

[Enneagram: Insight to Action](#)

