

# cto

corporate training options

## About Us

Our mission at CTO is empowering people through learning that drives lasting growth and organisational success.

With that focus, we provide high-quality, practical training designed to help individuals and organisations build skills, improve performance and adapt to an ever changing business environment.

With experienced trainers and flexible delivery options, CTO provides engaging, results-focused learning designed to strengthen capability and support long-term business success.

*“Hope is NOT a  
Development Plan.”*

## Handling Difficult People & Situations

### Other Customer Service Courses

- Calming Upset Customers
- Customer Service Excellence
- Beyond Customer Service - Effective Programs to Retain Your Customers
- Telephone Courtesy & Customer Service Skills
- Call Centre Success - Essential Skills
- Customer Satisfaction
- Customer Service in the Information Age
- Professional Telephone Skills

*Skills that Win -  
Build Teams that Win*

## Contact Us

*We would love to collaborate with you*



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*Our trainers are located all across  
Australia.*

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## Customer Service: Handling Difficult People & Situations

### The Challenge

Difficult people and challenging situations are inevitable in customer service, but they don't have to derail your day or damage customer relationships. Without strategies to manage these interactions, staff become frustrated, stressed and less effective. The ability to handle difficult people professionally is a skill that separates good service providers from great ones.

Educate, Elevate and Empower -

## What you will Learn

- ✓ Identify different types of difficult customers and what drives their behavior
- ✓ Stay calm and professional when faced with aggression or hostility
- ✓ Use communication techniques that de-escalate rather than inflame situations
- ✓ Set appropriate boundaries while maintaining customer relationships
- ✓ Handle unreasonable demands and expectations confidently
- ✓ Know when and how to involve management or escalate issues
- ✓ Protect your wellbeing while dealing with challenging interactions

## Who should Attend

This course is valuable for anyone who encounters difficult people as part of their role, particularly in customer-facing positions. Ideal participants include:

- Customer service and support teams
- Retail and hospitality staff
- Healthcare and social services professionals
- Anyone dealing with complaints or challenging clients

## Course Delivery

- Online via Microsoft Teams
- Onsite at your Workplace
- Hybrid (combination of both)

## Duration

- Full Day Course

## Group Sizes

Our prices are based on group sizes and not per person (the more the merrier)

- 1 - 3 trainees
- 4 - 15 trainees
- 16 - 20 trainees

## Pre Requisites

None - Open to all

# Course Modules

## Module 1. Understanding difficult people - what is really driving the behaviour

- Why customers become difficult - the underlying needs, fears and frustrations behind the behaviour
- The most common types of difficult customers and what each one actually needs from you
- Why labelling someone as difficult is less useful than understanding what is making them that way
- Shifting from reacting to the behaviour to responding to the person behind it

## Module 2. Staying calm and professional when faced with aggression or hostility

- Understanding your own triggers - what gets under your skin and why it matters
- The physiological response to conflict and how to interrupt it before it controls your reaction
- Projecting calm and confidence even when the interaction feels anything but calm inside
- Why your composure is your most powerful tool in any difficult interaction

## Module 3. Reading the room - identifying what kind of difficult you are dealing with

- The difference between a customer who is genuinely upset & one who is deliberately difficult
- Recognising patterns of manipulation, entitlement, aggression and chronic dissatisfaction early
- Adjusting your approach in real time based on what the behaviour is telling you
- Why a one-size-fits-all response to difficult people rarely works and what to do instead

## Module 4. Communication techniques that de-escalate rather than inflame

- The language patterns that calm difficult interactions and the ones that make them worse
- How tone, pacing and word choice either reduce or amplify tension in high-pressure moments
- Asking questions that shift the dynamic from confrontation to conversation
- Keeping your communication clear, steady and professional when the other person is not

## Module 5. Setting boundaries while keeping the relationship intact

- Why boundaries are not about being unhelpful — they are about protecting both parties
- How to hold a firm position without being dismissive, cold or defensive
- Language that communicates limits clearly and respectfully without triggering further escalation
- The difference between what you can do, what you will do and what you will not

## Module 6. Handling Unreasonable demands and impossible expectations

- Why some customers make demands that cannot and should not be met and what is behind it
- Saying no in a way that still makes the customer feel heard, respected and valued
- Offering alternatives that redirect conversation without simply caving or shutting down
- Managing expectations from the start of an interaction

## Module 7. Knowing when and how to escalate - involving management

- Recognising the point at which an interaction is beyond what you should manage alone
- How to involve a manager or colleague in a way that does not inflame the customer further
- Handing over a difficult interaction clearly and professionally
- Following up after escalation

## Module 8. Protecting your wellbeing when the work get hard

- The cumulative impact of difficult interactions on frontline staff
- Practical strategies for staying grounded during and immediately after a challenging encounter
- Drawing a clear line between taking your work seriously and taking it personally
- Building the resilience and daily habits that make difficult interactions manageable

Elevate and Empower - Educate