

## Chapter 10: How to Handle Challenges

Stressful situations are bound to come up in your daily activities as a distributor. The circumstances that cause stress can pop up at a moment's notice, which makes them difficult to handle. The best way to keep stress in check is to limit the possibility of it ever occurring. To keep your success level high and your stress level low, there are a number of things you can do to minimize problems.

### **Deal with the Best Suppliers**

There are more than 3,000 suppliers exhibiting at shows or offering products online. Make sure you are only working with top-notch suppliers to lessen the chance for problems to arise! You want suppliers who can process error-free orders quickly.

*Action Step:* When attending trade shows, interview suppliers the same way you would new employees. Ask them how their products fit into the marketplace, what their delivery schedules are and how effective their customer service is.

### **Handle Mistakes**

When it comes to mistakes, be honest. Some mistakes are unavoidable, and good suppliers will gladly take the steps to make them right. To make sure you are not the cause of mistakes, take the steps and care necessary to submit orders correctly. Whenever there are snafus, I always contact the client immediately and let them know what happened. Most of the time, quick action on my part defuses the situation and I have the opportunity to work out a solution.

Always remember: never run from mistakes. Taking action quickly and handling errors has created stronger bonds with my clients. People respect honesty and often reward others for being straightforward with them.

*Action Step:* Write up orders and put them aside. After a short time, proof them to make sure everything is correct. When you place an order, always ask for pre-production proofs to be sent to you by fax or email. Never take any chances.

### **Set Customer Service Expectations**

If you've never done business with a supplier before, then you don't know what their customer service policies might be. Sometimes distributors don't find out until it's too late that the company they placed an order with doesn't return correspondence as quickly as expected, or doesn't prepare imprint proofs as they should. It's hard enough to close sales, and if you're not on the same page as your supplier, it can complicate things even more.

*Action Step:* Place orders with dependable companies you know you can trust. You want to deal with customers *and* suppliers who are more focused on service than price. Make sure the suppliers you work with share your values so you're always happy with their service and you always know what to expect.

### **Customers Who Don't Pay on Time**

An order is never sold until it's paid for, so it's essential that you deal with people who pay in a timely fashion. The main problem with not getting paid is that it affects every aspect of your business. It curtails your cash flow, and the frustration of being ignored can rub off on everything you do.

*Action Step:* Employ a strict payment policy and stick to it. If new customers refuse to give you a deposit or provide you with credit references, be prepared to walk away from the order. That's better than never getting paid.

### **Salespeople Who Leave**

Salespeople come and go. If they find success, they may leave to start their own company. While it's the nature of the business, you may become stressed knowing someone who once worked for you has become your competitor.

Never overreact when one of your salespeople moves on to start their own distributorship. It happens all the time. Just be happy for that person. Talented salespeople can't be held down, and when someone leaves, do the best you can to hold that book of business. If you can't, don't worry about the situation.

*Action Step:* Refrain from hiring salespeople too quickly in an effort to expand your business. There are many things you can do to streamline your processes and allow yourself additional selling time. Get your distributorship firing on all cylinders first, and hire cautiously if you need to.

### **When Stress Happens**

No matter what steps you take to remain stress-free, some stressful situations will take place in your selling life at some point. Employ these steps to turn bad situations into opportunities to learn and grow your business:

#### **1. Find out what they want to do.**

Ask the client what resolution would be best from his or her point of view. This defuses the situation and reveals a possible solution. Quick action always makes for better outcomes in the long run.

#### **2. Don't be defensive.**

Refrain from lashing out in a hostile manner, because the only thing that does is make you feel worse about the situation. Always take your customer's side, even if you know they were at fault. Say you understand how he or she feels, and provide assurance that you're working toward a resolution that is suitable for both parties. When you empathize with customers, they're more likely to see your point of view.

I tell my clients that no matter whose fault it was, I'm going to fix it. The fact that I employ this policy always builds goodwill and makes me stand out in the eyes of my customers.

**3. Control the situation.**

Losing control of any situation can cause stress. Stay in control by learning all the pertinent facts of the situation, and you'll be better able to solve problems and keep stress in check.

To operate your business effectively and to make sure that you're able to enjoy your profession, make every effort to keep stressful occurrences from happening in the first place. When unavoidable problems come up, take the necessary steps to solve problems quickly. By doing so, your career in sales will not only be more profitable, but more enjoyable, too.



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- \* Offer good on an order of \$500.00 or more (product & tooling only).
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- \* Coupon must be attached to order.
- \* Offer expires 12/31/20.
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### **FREE DIE COUPON**

- \* Free Die up to \$80.00 net value.
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- \* Limit one offer per sales person, per order.
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- \* Use code: DS-2020-FD