



Never Say No

There are times when we are not able to solve a customer need exactly as they wish, however those who are excellent customer service ambassadors have a toolkit of phrases they can use instead of the word “no”. No is a trigger word and can evoke negative customer emotions. It can leave a customer feeling like there are no options.

- I completely understand the situation and all the detail, however...
- At this moment in time there are limited options, but...
- There's nothing that we can do to overcome this now, however, let's investigate other possibilities for you given the current situation.
- I am fully aware that this is a difficult situation to be in, so...
- Let's investigate alternative options for you now that I have all the detail. We will do everything we can to alleviate this situation.
- I completely empathise with your situation and fully understand your needs. Unfortunately...
- Display sympathetic body language through your eye contact, body movements but don't mirror the customer behaviour especially if they are aggressive or passive, stay assertive throughout the situation and think of proactive alternatives for them.

There are naturally going to be situations, both with your internal and external customers that the answer is NO, but there are ways to say it.

If you have to say NO!

Be honest, calm, understanding and polite. Ensure that you have listened to and understood their needs. It will help you to keep control, and avoid escalating the situation or alienating the other person. People are happier to accept an honest NO, than be faced with indecision and delayed refusal. However, consider the tone that you use in this situation. Do whatever you can, when the only answer is essentially NO e.g. when a passenger has missed their flight or the gate has closed, that you then state the reasons why and investigate alternatives. There's always something that can be done for customers. The customer may feel really dejected, annoyed (often with themselves) and give you a personal attack. If you do have to say no – say it only once and then investigate alternative options.

For more information and development in this area, have a look at the [Going The Extra Mile Workshop](#) in the Customer Services & Sales section of the website and brochure.