



TRANSFORMING CONFLICT INTO OPPORTUNITY.

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In our daily lives, there are many occasions when disagreements arise, and in this presentation we will address how to transform a conflict into an opportunity for improvement, using tools such as empathy, active listening, learning to listen without judging, trying to understand what the other person wants to convey to us without preparing a response, making good use of open/closed questions, knowing when it is appropriate to use one or the other, using paraphrasing and rephrasing to ensure that our message is getting across as we want it to and that we are actively participating in the exchange of ideas, and finally, a very important tool that we often overlook: silence.

We can define conflict as the process that begins when one party perceives that the other party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect their interests.

Looking at the definition, there is one term that takes on special importance, and that is "perception", which is therefore something subjective, involving feelings and emotions once again. Let us bear this in mind when addressing a conflict, trying to "understand" what the other party has perceived, to understand their reasons and their point of view. With this exercise, we will achieve two objectives at the same time: on the one hand, we will be ensuring that we understand what, in the eyes of our interlocutor, has caused the conflict (later we will see how to address it, but now is the time to listen and understand); and on the other hand, we will be showing them that we are interested in understanding their situation and finding a way to resolve it, thereby reducing the level of tension in the conversation. Simply listening with the intention of understanding, without replying, and accompanying this with appropriate body language will already help us greatly to lower the level of 'aggressiveness' and steer the conversation towards a place where we can understand each other.

If we change our perception of the complaint and instead of seeing it as a problem, we see it as an opportunity to interact with the customer with the aim of achieving something positive, we will achieve a process of constant improvement in the performance of our work and in many cases, the relationship will be strengthened compared to how it was before this conflict.

We should always be grateful for complaints, because they are a very important tool for improvement and loyalty, and they prevent the silent defector, who is the really dangerous one (the one who is directly unhappy with our work and decides not to return without complaining, and thus without giving us the opportunity to be aware of the conflict or to try to solve it, but who will probably complain in areas where we cannot explain our point of view, such as their social networks and their circle of friends).

In short, we must face them with a positive mindset, through active listening, empathising with the customer, trying to understand "their reality", letting them speak, showing that we are interested and want to provide a solution. To ease the initial tension and reach a truly productive stage in the conversation, we can use techniques such as pacing, but what we must avoid is systematically putting ourselves on the defensive or confronting the customer without listening to them or trying to understand them.

As we may often not have all the information we need to address the conflict, it is very useful to separate it into two stages:

- In the first phase, we gather information and, if we think the customer is right, we have made a mistake and the solution is easy, we propose the solution and close the complaint, to analyse internally afterwards what happened.
- If this is not the case, it is best to collect all the information on a form, assuring the customer that the person responsible will contact them once it has been analysed. This reassures the customer and gives us time to analyse internally what happened and prepare the arguments we need before having the final conversation with the customer.



Simply showing the customer that we are willing to address their complaints and doing so through an established protocol, applying the two-step rule, will yield very good results, both in terms of the number of complaints resolved satisfactorily and the number of loyal customers.

We must be aware that most of the complaints we receive are not related to clinical actions, but rather to communication conflicts. By working on this aspect of our profession with our entire team and establishing protocols for how to do so, we will minimise errors and reduce the costs associated with every complaint, which can be divided into three categories: direct costs, such as product returns or refunds and compensation; legal costs, if any; and the worst, which are those derived from the possible loss of the customer, loss of customers informed of mistakes made with other customers, and the costs of attracting new customers to replace the previous ones in order to maintain the number of active files necessary for the centre's profitability.

With good management, 95% of customers who complain will be more loyal to the centre than before, because they will know that their opinions are taken into account and are important, and that when something does not satisfy them, they have the option of saying so and we will do our part to solve it. Let us therefore place emphasis on collecting and resolving complaints, seeking options that strengthen the relationship, because if we manage to establish win-win relationships, we will be able to retain that customer over time.

Finally, as the best way to enjoy good health is through proper prevention, we will analyse the most frequent mistakes we make on a daily basis, studying solutions to avoid them in the future, and being aware that, depending on each case, we will encounter different realities to which we will have to apply different solutions.