

Save face with a customer

Sometimes customers have unreasonable demands or circumstances out of your control infuriate them. Other times, however, your actions alone cause their outrage. In that case, take accountability—and apologize. Here's how:

Act fast. If you're still speaking to the customer, move to step two. However, if you aren't, follow up quickly. You may need to investigate or talk to your boss first, but don't put it off. An angry customer can go on the attack.

Fess up. State what you did wrong. Don't blame other people, policies, technology or your bad day. Just say what happened and apologize. *Example:* "I was wrong about the discount. You should receive 45% off. I apologize for my mistake."

Some customers may continue to be rude, but most will appreciate your honesty and cut you some slack.

Detail how you've resolved the issue. For some people, it won't be enough. Do what you can to satisfy them. If their demands are beyond your authority, transfer them to your supervisor to take over.

For those people who are satisfied, genuinely thank them for their patience and understanding.

— Adapted from "[6 Excellent Apology Emails to Send to Your Customers,](#)" Julie Morse, Business 2 Community, www.business2community.com.