

## Proactive Offers

Reactive behavior is the source of the majority of complaints from customers, employers and employees alike. Proactively taking care of business relationships embodies the spirit of customer service. Proactive people demonstrate an ability to systematically gather and assess information and then offer to act on it in a way that benefits their relationships. Developing this skill can help you build a reputation as a visionary, enhance your productivity and efficiency and, ultimately, increase your bottom line. Use the following conversational flow to make powerful proactive offers.

### Create Relationship & Build Trust

- Be interested.
- Use inquiry and reflection to elicit all relevant information (the current situation, people involved, outstanding commitments, organizational dynamics, etc.).

### Listen for Openings

- Ask questions and listen carefully for openings in the conversation.
- You may already know what offer you want to make but if you make an offer without first creating an opening, success will be limited.
- If there is no apparent opening, ask:
  - “What needs to happen that is not happening?”
  - “What vision or desired outcome do you have that you want help with?”
- Many times we overlook new openings because we are only thinking about what we want to offer. Unexpected openings may present themselves. Consider whether they reveal more potent offers for you to make.

### Clarify Desired Results

- Inquire into what the benefits would be if needs were met.
- Elicit specific, measurable results.

### Reveal Negative Consequences

- Identify what problems could happen if needs were *not* met.
- Get clear about what is at stake if *nothing* happens.

### Make the Offer

- Once you have inquired and feel that you are in relationship, simply offer what you have to offer. Let the offer come out of the flow of the conversation.
- If you intend to proactively build partnership and trust, ensure your offer is time-bound and specific.