

# WHAT IF NONE OF THIS WORKS?

By Lee Lowery

**In many cases, the client may be upset about something you have no control over. At times like these, it's important to remember a few rules of verbal engagement.**

- Take a deep breath and stay clam.
- Try and remove the upset client from the area or remove the target person.
- Allow the client plenty of space.
- Allow the client to be angry.
- Be careful to avoid clever word plays and one-upmanship.
- Don't hesitate to be animated in your response (While still remaining calm inside).
- Never embarrass the client.
- Work for win-win situations.
- Constantly scan your environment.
- Know who is behind you.
- Don't let other clients get involved in the conflict.
- Be sure you have alerted others if the situation appears out of control.

## **If you have to say anything...say it right!**

- Use the upset client's name, but use it sparingly.
- Keep verbal interactions short and to the point.
- Avoid introducing too many issues.
- Give the client the words to use, don't evaluate the behavior at this point.
- Never threaten or issue unenforceable ultimatums.
- Avoid sarcasm and oblique humor.
- Stay focused on the issue at hand. Avoid bringing up old issues.

## **Proper use of verbal directives**

- Tell them what to do rather than ask if they want to do something.
- Give one directive at a time.
- The directive should intend to move the client toward the positive and not from the negative.
- Save the word please for high likelihood compliance. Otherwise use please sparingly in confrontational situations.
- If the client doesn't comply, make a second request and increase the strength of the directive.
- Look for opportunities to acknowledge cooperative behavior.
- If the client still refuses to cooperate, avoid issuing threats. Remind him/her of the consequences of his behavior.
- If the client begins to escalate in behavior set limits and be ready to enforce them.