



# **Module 11 : The Do's and Don'ts and What to Do When Things Don't Go to Plan**

- How to correctly deal with complaints
- How to approach every problem with the appropriate context
- What you should do if you haven't taken many bookings in a while
- How to deal with last minute damage to equipment

**By the end of this module, you will know:**

- How to correctly deal with complaints
- How to approach every problem with the appropriate context
- What to do if you run out of money and have to start again
- What you should do if you haven't taken many bookings in a while
- How to deal with last minute damage to equipment

## **11.1: Introduction**



**How you should and shouldn't react to an unexpected problem or situation which you are forced to face when running your balloon modelling business will depend largely on what that problem is.**

No matter how meticulously you plan your business and how carefully you manage your finances, bookings and marketing, there will always be unexpected problems which crop up from time to time. The problems are difficult, if not impossible, to predict and often come at the worst time possible. But there is no need to panic when these situations do arise. Every business in the world experiences a setback at some point or another, but the ones which survive these setbacks are those which are the most resilient.

You will need to be prepared to look at the whole overall picture, not just at the small detail which seems to be the problem. With small businesses, everything is interconnected. A problem in the finances of the business could be down to a problem with marketing, or with the way in which you are taking payment for your bookings. Whatever the problem appears to be, you should make sure that you look at it with the appropriate context. It might not be as serious as you thought it was and it might have a much simpler solution than you first imagined.

## **11.2: Dealing with complaints**



**One of the simplest ways in which something might not go to plan when you are running your balloon modelling business is if one of your clients makes a complaint about you or your company.**

You can be extremely good at your job but still receive complaints from clients for a number of different reasons. A complaint against you or your company doesn't always need to be a bad thing; instead, you could look at it as an opportunity for improvement. Remember that the customer is always right, so when you receive a complaint, you should never go on the defensive.

Complaints are one of the ways in which you will receive feedback about your company and your performances. This will be specific and detailed feedback which will allow you to make changes about the way you operate your business. If you can resolve the problem that the customer has found with your work, then you will also be able to resolve it for future customers before it happens

to them. If you made a mistake and the customer is pointing this out to you then you can learn from this and never make the same mistake again.

You shouldn't try to defend yourself against a complaint if you know that you were in the wrong, even if in a very small way. Instead, you should accept full responsibility straight away and try to make it up to the client. If you can resolve the complaint by doing something differently then you should do, if not, you can try to knock money off their bill or promise them a discount for them or a friend on the next booking.

Whatever you do, you should never leave a complaint unresolved. Your customers are one of your most important marketing tools. If you do a good job, they will tell some of their friends and family about you and you will probably receive additional bookings. If you do something wrong in their eyes and do nothing to resolve the problem, they will tell all of their friends and family so that none of them are ever likely to book you.

## 11.3: Dealing with a lack of bookings



**If you haven't taken any bookings for the past week or so, and you've got very little lined up in the future, don't panic.**

A lack of bookings doesn't necessarily mean that no one wants to hire you, but there could be several reasons why nobody is getting in touch to make a booking. Before you panic and decide that you want to throw in the towel with the whole business, think logically about what the problem might be.

Double check that your contact details are correct on all of the advertising and promotional materials which you have been using to market your business. If all of these are correct, think about the last time that you actually went out and put adverts in the paper or stuck up flyers on local noticeboards. If you've had a run of bookings in the last few weeks and haven't managed to get out there to continue to market your company then this might be catching up with you. Spend the free time that you have now that you don't have many bookings to go on a marketing offensive. Update your website and your social media accounts and get your name out there again.

If that doesn't work, you might want to look at your prices. Check what other people in a similar line of work to you are charging per hour. It might be that they are pricing themselves more cheaply than you and they are therefore stealing all of your business. Offer a discount through social media channels or temporarily reduce your prices until business picks up again.

Whatever you do, don't waste the time that you have off. You can use it to rehearse new models, add new skills to your act, brush up on some models that you haven't made for a while or design some new promotional materials to hand out locally. The time you have been given off should be seen as

an opportunity to improve your business, not as a sign of failure.

## 11.4: Lack of cash



**If small businesses fail, they fail because they run out of money.**

The reasons why they run out of money are different for every individual business, but the result is the same. If you find that you run out of cash to keep your business going, but you manage to find an investor or secure a loan to keep you afloat, don't make the mistake of just hoping that things will change without doing anything about it.

Take a long look at your finances, and draught in some expert help if you need to. Try and identify ways in which you could save money by looking at unnecessary costs or places where you could purchase stock for less money. Look at whether you might need to increase your prices slightly to cover increased costs, or whether you need to increase your marketing budget to drum up more business. Things won't change unless you make them change, so make sure that you take active control of your finances to get your business running smoothly once more.

## 11.5: Broken equipment



**Seeing as the equipment necessary to become a balloon modeller is not expensive, you should really operate with a backup of most of the essentials.**

You should travel with more balloons than you need and with a spare balloon pump so that if one breaks, whatever the time of day, you will be able to carry on with the show. If something breaks but you don't have a spare and you don't have time to go and buy a new piece of equipment, you will have to quickly assess the consequences of this breakage on your performance.

You should do everything in your power to avoid a last minute cancellation, so always try to

improvise. If you know someone who has a similar piece of equipment then you should try and get in touch with them to see if you can borrow theirs on a temporary basis. If not, contact your next client as soon as you can to explain the situation.

Always offer an alternative, saying that you can postpone the show to another time, offer a different performance to the one that you had agreed (which does not require the broken piece of equipment) and try to arrange a discount for them so that they are not still paying for a show they didn't book.

Remain calm and think on your feet to try and come to the best solution possible for everyone involved.

Now that you have come to the end of this final chapter on the theory of balloon modeling, you should recognise what it takes for a business to be resilient, and exactly how you should react in different difficult situations. Hopefully you will now feel confident about dealing with the unexpected in your balloon modelling business and about managing situations which you had not previously planned for.

### **Lessons Learned**

The businesses that survive are the ones that keep calm in the face of adversity, and show resilience to difficult situations. If you receive a complaint, don't become defensive, but accept your responsibility for the issue and see it as an opportunity to improve your service. If your diary is lacking bookings, recognise the interconnection of factors in a business and try and find the root of the lack of work, be it marketing, pricing, or something else, and use the time constructively. Should your business begin to fail, and you receive a second chance, carefully review your business plan to highlight which areas need work, and address them logically and proactively.

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