



Above and Beyond

Customer Service Training
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*Windham*SM
PROFESSIONALS

Your Trainer



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Workshop Purpose & Objectives

Purpose

To create an environment where we provide superior client service with integrity

Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- + Recognize and treat your co-workers as internal customers
- + Understand what should always be done for your customers
(internal and external)
- + Identify your opportunities for listening in order to better service your customers
- + Recognize the impact of your communication
- + Understand how to cope with difficult people
- + Understand what it takes to go *above and beyond* for your customers each and every time

Opening Exercise

Instructions

1. Write down an instance when you received exceptional customer service:

2. As a group, discuss the differences and similarities in your customer service experiences. Are there examples of occasions when one of you felt the service was great and another felt it was okay?

3. Designate one person in your group to share an example of exceptional service and why you felt it was great.

Examples of exceptional customer service:

Understanding Our Principles

To create exceptional customer service there are certain things we need to consistently do for our customers to go *above and beyond*. If we deviate from these things our customers may choose to go somewhere else.

Begin with the Basics

- + Start by providing common courtesies to everyone
- + Take the initiative to address customers
- + Make good first impressions as they are lasting ones for our customers
- + Identify customers who have never used our service and determine what they need

Provide the Extras

- + Show appreciation. It is a compliment to us when our customers decide to use our services again
- + Let our customers know we are happy they have chosen us again

Go Above and Beyond

- + Anticipate the customer's needs
- + Provide extra services
- + Exceed the customer's expectations

How to Do It Differently

Dealing with customers differently is essential to our ability to provide superior client service.

Instructions

1. In groups, discuss and flipchart three areas of client service. List the things you should always do in the below situations.
2. Be prepared to share your group's ideas.

Basic Courtesies	What are some standard courtesies that should be provided with each and every encounter?
Internal Customer	What do you need to do for someone who is an internal customer?
External Customer	What does an external customer who chooses to use our service need?

Principles of Basic Courtesies

Principles	Description
Name	Address the customer by name and give them your name.
Smile	Smile in your voice while on the telephone with the customer.
<i>Go Above and Beyond</i>	Offer to take care of the details. Suggest other services.
Listen for Confusion	Listen for uncertainty and be ready to clarify.
Answer Their Questions	Be available to answer questions. Be responsive.
“Please” and “Thank you”	Always use your manners.
Be Flexible	Make yourself available to internal and external customers.
Use Standard English/Spanish	Speak clearly and in the language most commonly used by the person you are speaking with.
Speak in a Normal Voice	Tone of voice conveys confidence and ability to handle any crisis.
Eye Contact	Make eye contact.
Follow-up	Follow-up is critical to fulfilling the customer's expectations. Be timely.
Be Honest	Always be honest with yourself and others.
Be Clear Regarding Expectations and Results	Repeat instructions and verify the information with the client.
Listen	Listen with the intent to understand.
Be Accessible	Always be available when the customer is in need.

Principles for Internal Customers

Principles	Description
Acknowledge Good Work	Provide positive feedback and compliment when appropriate.
Help Others	Be a team player and assist others.
Address Past Success	Address a recent success if appropriate.
Consider Other Points of View	Gather information and consider that there can be more than one right answer.
Encourage Teamwork and Collaboration	Offer support and encouragement to work as a team for a common goal.
Give and Receive Constructive Feedback	Be open to providing and receiving constructive feedback.
Voice Mail	Respond and follow-up.
Ask For Clarification	Repeat instructions to be sure you understand.
Gather Your Facts	Make sure the information you have is accurate.
Learn “Full Cycle” of The Business	Understand all facets of the business and where to go to get information.
Be a Team Member	Teamwork gets results.

Principles for External Customers

Principles	Description
Introduce Yourself	Make customers feel welcome by giving your name.
“How May I Help You?”	Serve them.
Tell Them What You <i>Can Do</i>	Offer solutions and explain what you can do for them.
Ask Permission	Ask to put them on hold, to check on something.
Invite Them Back	Ask them to call again when they need our services.
Encourage Questions	Let new customers know you want to be of assistance.
Respond Promptly to Inquiries	Provide information to customer timely or call and let them know it is taking longer than anticipated.
Thank Them	Appreciate the fact they chose us again and thank them.
Display Empathy	Empathize, apologize and reassure.
Take Ownership	Own the customer experience. Take responsibility for every contact.

Listening to Our Customers

Another important element to providing exceptional service and going *above and beyond* is listening to our customers. When many of us listen, we are typically thinking about what we want to say in response to the speaker. We listen with the intent to reply. This, however, can be very dangerous to our ability to truly understand what they are saying.

Distractions are also a challenge when listening to others. If we are not focused on the speaker, we may allow outside sources to divert our attention away from the conversation.

It is our responsibility to hear our customers in order to provide what they need and more.

How Well Do You Listen?

When Listening, I Do the Following:	Almost Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Almost Never
1. I pay attention, even though the subject may bore me.				
2. I refrain from finishing the other person's sentences.				
3. I wait for the speaker to finish before evaluating the message.				
4. I maintain eye contact.				
5. I listen for feelings as well as subject matter.				
6. I show nonverbal responses to demonstrate I'm listening: nodding, smiling, and leaning forward.				
7. I give brief verbal responses: "Uh-hum, M-m-m, Oh."				
8. I stop myself from interrupting the person speaking to me.				
9. I seek to reduce or eliminate distractions.				
10. I ask questions only to clarify something said.				
11. I demonstrate I have an open mind and do not respond negatively to another person's ideas or feelings.				
12. I often paraphrase what I hear to make sure I have heard it correctly.				
13. I work to make myself really want to listen.				
14. I listen carefully to understand the main message.				
15. I maintain emotional control, no matter what is said.				

To improve your listening, focus on the areas where you checked "Some of the Time" and "Almost Never." These are opportunities for improvement.

Take a Guess

Consider your communication with others. Do they think you are going *above and beyond*? Think about the messages you are sending. How are they being interpreted? What is the other person considering when you are communicating? Are they only listening to the words you are saying or are they focusing on the way you are crossing your arms? Are they watching your eye communication or are they concentrating on the instructions you are providing?

Take a moment and fill in the percentages you believe represent the total impact of communicating a message. The totals should equal 100%.

_____ %	The way you look (visual)
_____ %	The tone of your voice (vocal)
_____ %	The words you say (verbal)
=100%	

Understand Your Impact

Three factors are critical to consider when you are interacting and communicating with others – Visual, Vocal, and Verbal. Studies have shown the results below.



Most people, unintentionally, undermine their communication with nonverbal cues. Often times we are not aware of the critical factors that send messages to others.

How You Look (Visual)

How you look sends a message to your customers. This includes your clothes, facial expressions, your hands, your stance, your eye communication, your gestures, etc.

How You Sound (Vocal)

If you speak in a low volume, you most likely sound monotone. Low, monotone voice equals loss of interest. The voice needs to express passion and excitement in order to express your desire to service your customers.

What You Say (Verbal)

Certainly, what you say is important to delivering your message; however, if the other person is distracted by your looks or bored by your voice it does not matter what you have to say. They won't hear it.

What Message Are You Sending?

Body Language

- + Own your space
- + Stand straight and confident
- + Avoid crossing your arms
- + Nod your head
- + SMILE

Appearance

- + Dress for success
- + Always err on the side of being professional
- + Be neat and tidy

Voice

- + Project without shouting
- + Vary pitch and volume for effect
- + Have a SMILE in your voice
- + Match your customer's tone

Eye Communication

- + Engage your customers with your eyes
- + Focus on individuals for 3-4 seconds
- + Don't look away
- + Don't look down when speaking

A Letter to Every Employee...

Dear Employee:

For now, I have chosen to be YOUR customer. And no matter what your position is, no matter what your daily tasks involve, you are part of my customer connection. YOU determine whether or not I'LL BE BACK.

When I call your office, I expect to be treated well by the people who provide the service I am requesting. However, I judge your business by so much more than just how I'm dealt with by the "Cashier."

I look at everything. I look at the way the service I request is delivered. Will anyone answer my call or will I have to leave a message? Will someone return my phone call timely? Can the person I speak with assure me the information I am requesting will be covered by the person I speak with? Will the information be accurate? Will I receive the necessary information and/or paperwork on or before the date requested? Will the person I speak with be available and knowledgeable about how to take my payment, answer questions about the student loan I am requesting, the balance I owe for tuition or be able to counsel me regarding the University requirements to be able to drop a class and not be charged for attending?

My list of questions goes on and on and eventually touches the area that YOU are personally responsible for. You see, you are in the customer service business. Directly or indirectly, you do touch me.

Some of you may never know me personally or perhaps never see me. But you still need to appreciate me because I am the reason your University is in business. I am the reason you have a job!

Therefore, if you do your part to provide the level of service I require or astonish me by going *ABOVE AND BEYOND*, I'll be back to give you my business again and again. Let your part of the bargain slip because you think customer service is someone else's responsibility, and I (and my \$\$) will go somewhere else. The choice is YOURS...and MINE.

Sincerely,
Your Customer

What Are We Saying?

We all have to be aware of what we say and how we sound to our customers. They are not interested in hearing any excuses as to why they cannot get what they desire.

Instructions

1. Review the list below of common phrases guaranteed to send our customers away frustrated.
2. Check off any of the phrases you have heard or said yourself.
3. Share your responses with your group.

- + It is not my job
- + I have no idea
- + I am sorry, but I am new
- + Someone else will have to assist you
- + No
- + We can't do that
- + I am only a _____, I don't know
- + You will have to...
- + I'll try to...
- + We don't have anymore
- + I don't think I am allowed to do that
- + Let me check with my supervisor
- + It's company policy
- + No problem

Owning the Customer Experience

Owning the customer experience is all of our responsibility. No matter where they are or what they need, we all must be accountable to service them. This may require changes in how we speak to our customers and how we deal with requests.

Instructions

In groups, rewrite these statements in a way that indicates you OWN the client experience.

Not Owning the Customer's Experience	Owning the Customer's Experience
It is not my job.	
I have no idea.	
I am sorry, but I am new.	
Someone else will have to assist you.	
No.	
We can't do that.	
I am only a _____, I don't know.	
You will have to...	
I'll try to...	
The transcript isn't here yet.	
I don't think I am allowed to do that.	
Let me check with my supervisor.	
It's company policy.	
No problem.	
We had it right. The reporter went to the wrong place.	
We do not have an office in that location.	

How Do We Know?

Our customers do not always tell us if they are unhappy. In fact, only 4% of customers who are dissatisfied will complain. The remaining 96% will stay dissatisfied and will tell 10 to 12 other people that they are dissatisfied. Therefore, it is our responsibility to recognize when they are unhappy with our service.

You need to pay attention when a customer is displeased. They may not verbalize it, but there are many other ways they may share with us that we have not met their expectations.

Instructions

1. In groups, discuss and flipchart ways you can identify when a client (*internal or external*) is unhappy.
2. Be prepared to share your group's ideas with the group.

Common Reasons for Concerns

It is also important to understand why our customers are disappointed. What are some common concerns you have experienced with both our internal and external customers? Understanding the reasons our customers are unhappy and may choose not to return will assist us in recognizing the signs and determining effective ways to improve the situation.

Instructions:

In groups, discuss and list below the common reasons our customers become unhappy with our service.

Be prepared to share your group’s ideas with the group.

(Common Internal) Customer Concerns	(Common External) Customer Concerns

Do Not Do It!

- + Be too busy
- + Say, "No"
- + Not acknowledge their presence
- + Raise your voice
- + Say, "It is not my job"
- + Refuse to help
- + Ask, if you do not care about the answer
- + Blame others
- + Say, "I am new"
- + Be disrespectful
- + Move slowly
- + Put client on hold without asking permission
- + Frown
- + Use slang
- + Interrupt
- + Say, "It's our policy"
- + Fail to follow-up
- + Be disorganized
- + Fail to resolve a problem
- + Criticize
- + Close mind to new ideas
- + Chew gum
- + Be dishonest
- + Project superiority
- + Complain to a client
- + Be impatient
- + Disturb co-workers by speaking loudly
- + Tell inappropriate jokes
- + Have a personal conversation while talking with customers

Dealing with Difficult People?

Instructions

Can you recall the last time you had to deal with a negative or difficult person? Or the last time someone said something with the intention of hurting you?

In groups, flip chart ways you have done the following:

How did you handle it?

What was the result?

What can you do in the future to get through these situations with peace and grace?

Avoid Becoming Defensive

When customers are disappointed they may express it in a fashion that can be frustrating to others. At times, this can become a challenge for us and our natural defenses may take over.

When someone is complaining, it is common for the person receiving that complaint to defend himself or herself. Whether it is a direct attack or referencing something or someone else, it is natural to want to defend the action we took. However, if not careful, this can escalate an already difficult situation.

We should not allow the way someone else acts to impact how we react. Listed below are some examples of unproductive responses that will only escalate a situation, not improve it.

Unproductive Responses:

“I’m sick of dealing with you.”

“I can’t do that.”

“It is not my fault.”

“There is nothing I can do.”

“I have never heard that before.”

“That is the way we always do it.”

“That has never happened before.”

What are some other unproductive responses that you have heard?

What Happens When We Do Not Control Our Responses

There are many reasons why we should control our responses. The following are some of the more important reasons.

- + Hurting ourselves
- + It is not about you. It is about them
- + Battle of the egos
- + Anger feeds anger
- + Negativity feeds negativity
- + Waste of energy
- + Negativity spreads
- + Freedom of speech

Tips for Dealing with Difficult People

Here are some tips for dealing with difficult people or negative messages.

- + Forgive
- + Wait it out
- + “Does it really matter if I am right?”
- + Do not respond
- + Stop talking about it
- + Be in their shoes
- + Look for lessons
- + Choose to eliminate negative people in your life
- + Become an observer
- + Go for a run
- + Worst-case scenario
- + Avoid heated discussions
- + Most important
- + Pour honey
- + Express it

How Do We Rate?

In order to build customer loyalty (internal and external) and learn to deal with difficult situations and people, we need to have a thorough understanding of how we are doing and where we need to improve.

Instructions:

1. Read the questions below and answer based on how you feel our customers would respond (consider both internal and external).
2. In groups, share your responses and discuss why you came up with these answers.
3. Identify areas where your answers differ and discuss why.
4. Highlight the opportunities for improvement and be prepared to share them with the group.

1. How well do we deliver what we promise?

2. How often do we do things right the *first time*?

3. How often do we do things right *on time*?

4. How quickly do we respond to requests for service?

5. How accessible are we when customers need to contact us?

How Do We Rate?

6. How helpful and polite are we?

7. How hard do you think we work at keeping our customers satisfied?

8. How much confidence do our customers have in our products or services?

9. How well do we understand and try to meet special needs and requests?

10. Overall, how would our customers rate the appearance of our facilities, products and people?

11. Overall, how would customers rate the quality of our service?

12. Overall, how would our customers rate the quality of our service compared to our competitors?

13. Would customers be willing to recommend us?

14. Will our customers be willing to buy from us again?

Make a Commitment

How will you make a difference? What can *you* do each and every day to improve the experience of our customers and/or your ability to deal with difficult people of situations?

Instructions:

1. Review the information covered.
2. Identify two areas *you* personally need to focus on for improvement in customer service and dealing with difficult people.
3. Determine how you personally will change your behavior to improve these areas.

Customer Service Commitment 1

Action for Improvement

Behavior Change

Customer Service Commitment 2

Action for Improvement

Behavior Change

Dealing with Difficult People Commitment 1

Action for Improvement

Behavior Change

Dealing with Difficult People Commitment 2

Action for Improvement

Behavior Change

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