

Customer Service: A Step Above

Presented by:

**Linda Sloan
Taylor and Associates**

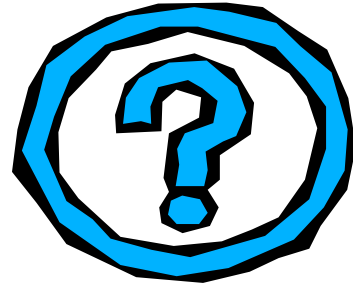
On September 4, 2008

Identifying the Customer

Who are your customers?

*I _____

*E _____



Customer service examples

1. Describe **good** customer service **you** have received.

2. Describe **bad** customer service **you** have received.

Service in the Government Sector

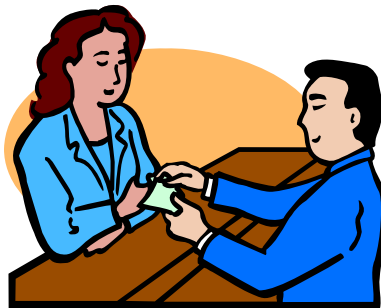
In the private sector, customers don't usually complain about poor service. They just take their business elsewhere. Most of our customers don't have other choices. In government, we don't usually think of the people we serve in the same light as merchants who are attempting to make sales and retain customers. Our transactions usually don't center on purchases, although with new fees at every turn, "free" services may become a thing of the past. But are these services really free? Tax dollars really do pay for our desks, equipment, and facilities – even our salaries. A significant portion of earning and purchases from individuals, small business, and corporations pay these taxes. If only indirectly, the public does pay for our salaries and our services. Therefore, we are all in the customer service business.

What Do Customers Want and Need?

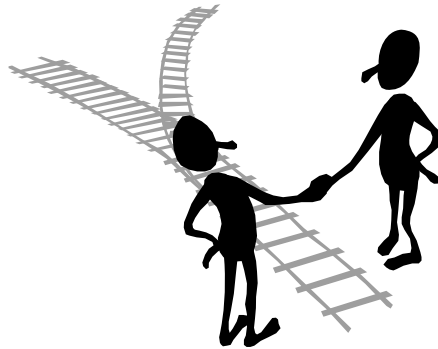
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

How Do You PERSONALIZE Service?

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓



Establishing Rapport



The first fifteen to twenty seconds set the TONE for the customer interaction.

1. Give a sincere smile.
2. Maintain eye contact.
3. Say the customer's name.
4. Act interested, but relaxed.
5. Take your cue from the customer.

How do you develop rapport?

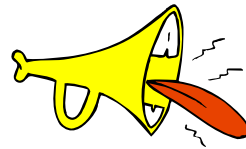


Perceptions Are REALITY

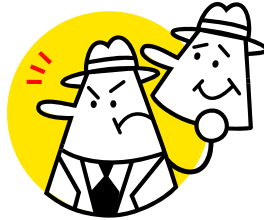
Point to remember: People don't know what we're trying to say or want to say; they don't know our best intentions. People judge on what they see and hear or what they THINK they see and hear.

The three major ways we communicate are through:

Tone of Voice



Body language



Choice of Words



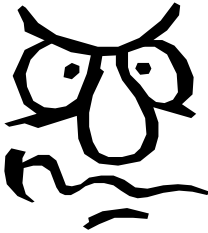
Rate the above in order of power and immediate effect.

1. _____

2. _____

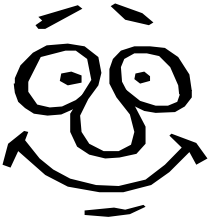
3. _____

Do's and Don'ts of Body Language



Don'ts

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____



Do's

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Tone of Voice

1. “May I help you?” (in a sincere tone)
“May I help you?” (in a “you’re bothering me” tone)
2. “I would be glad to do that.” (in a sincere tone)
“I would be glad to do that.” (in a “don’t want to” tone)
3. “Is there anything else I can do for you?” (sincere tone)
“Is there anything else I can do for you?” (sarcastic tone)
- 4.



Dead-End Phrases Response



Better

Hold on a minute.

I can't help you with that.

It's against the law.

No. There's nothing I can do about it.

Did you read the manual?

You'll have to call someone else.

I don't know.

We're really busy. I don't have time.

Choosing the Right Words

1. **Customer:** “I haven’t received my check yet.”

Employee: “Well, you filled in the wrong information.”

What is the better way to answer? _____

2. **Customer:** “Would you put this suit on hold for me?”

Employee: “Well, I guess I can hold it for a while.”

What is the better way to answer? _____

3. **Customer:** “I received an overdue notice on these library books and I have already returned them.”

Employee: “Are you sure? The computer says you didn’t.”

What is the better way to answer? _____

4. **Customer:** “Can you handle this account for me?”

Employee: “We don’t do that. You’ll have to wait for the billing person.”

What is the better way to answer? _____

5. **Customer:** “I have been waiting for an hour. When will I see the doctor?”

Employee: “I don’t know. We’re backed up.”

What is the better way to answer? _____

Asking the Right Questions

You cannot help a customer if you do not know what their needs are. So, ask! Asking the right kind of questions is very important to effective listening. There are two types of questions:

Closed questions are answered with a *yes* or *no*.

Example: _____

Open questions are those that begin with how, when, why, where and what.

Start with *open-ended* questions that give the customer a chance to talk.

Examples of *Open-Ended* Questions:

- **How may I help you?**
- **What do you need?**
- **How soon do you need this?**
- **How can we be of the greatest help to you?**

Often when customers are upset, they do not know how to really explain the problem or what they really need.

Ask specific questions so the problem can be identified and solutions can be worked on.

Questions YOU often ask:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Effective Listening



Customers want us to listen to them!

If the customer is NOT ANGRY, *active* or *reflective* listening is a way of understanding what has been said.

Examples:

“I’ll be happy to help you. You say you need for me to check your payments for the last two months?”

“Let’s see if we can get to the bottom of this. I’ll need to get some more information from you...”

If the customer is ANGRY, treating the problem as routine and doing only *active* listening will probably make him/her angrier.

First use *empathetic* listening to demonstrate you care about the problem. This will help to defuse and calm the customer; then, use *active* or *reflective* listening:

Examples:

“Mrs. Jones, I apologize for the delay. I can understand why you are upset. Which months do you want me to check?”

“Mr. Brown, I know this has been inconvenient for you.”

Other examples of empathetic listening statements:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Tips for Effective Listening

Ask questions for understanding

Repeat/check for understanding

“Do you mean. . . ?”

“If I understand you correctly, you’re saying. . .”

Repeat numbers to avoid mistakes

Clarify numbers, spelling of names, street addresses

Avoid jargon

Acronyms to avoid:

Make suggestions

Say the customer’s name,

“May I suggest. . .”

Encourage the customer to continue

Nod, take notes, lean forward

Get agreement

Is that correct?

Is this information correct?

Is there anything else I can do for you today?

Why Do Customers Get Upset?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How to Say “No” and Still Keep Customers

- Take responsibility for mistakes.
- Keep them informed.
- Be honest.
- Apologize.
- Avoid no’s; instead, be positive and focus on what you **can** do for them.
- Take steps to keep the problem from happening again.

Dealing With Angry People....and Handling Complaints

When dealing with people you are always going to have some that get angry and upset. There are some basic skills that help.



- ✓ **Keep your cool.**
- ✓ **Listen to story with understanding.**
- ✓ **Communicate the steps taken. Explain to the customer, step-by –step, what has been done and what steps still need to be taken.**
- ✓ **Pause. A moment of silence can often calm down a situation that has gotten out of control and can give you the time to consider the best way to proceed.**
- ✓ **Agree. Sometimes simply agreeing with the customer’s criticism will calm things down.**
- ✓ **Apologize. Let the customer know that you are sorry for what has occurred. This doesn’t mean you are personally at fault. You can simply by sorry for the customer’s perceived ordeal.**
- ✓ **Empathize.**
- ✓ **End the conversation. Tell the customer that you cannot continue talking. This should be used if all else fails and continuing to talk would only fuel a further escalation of the problem.**
- ✓ **Set limits. Tell the customer what is and isn’t allowed.**

Composure Strategies

We can't handle other people's anger if we can't handle our own! People don't get you angry; you get angry. You may not be able to control what people say or do, but you can handle how you respond.

What are some ways to stay professionally composed and objective when dealing with emotionally charged people and situations?

