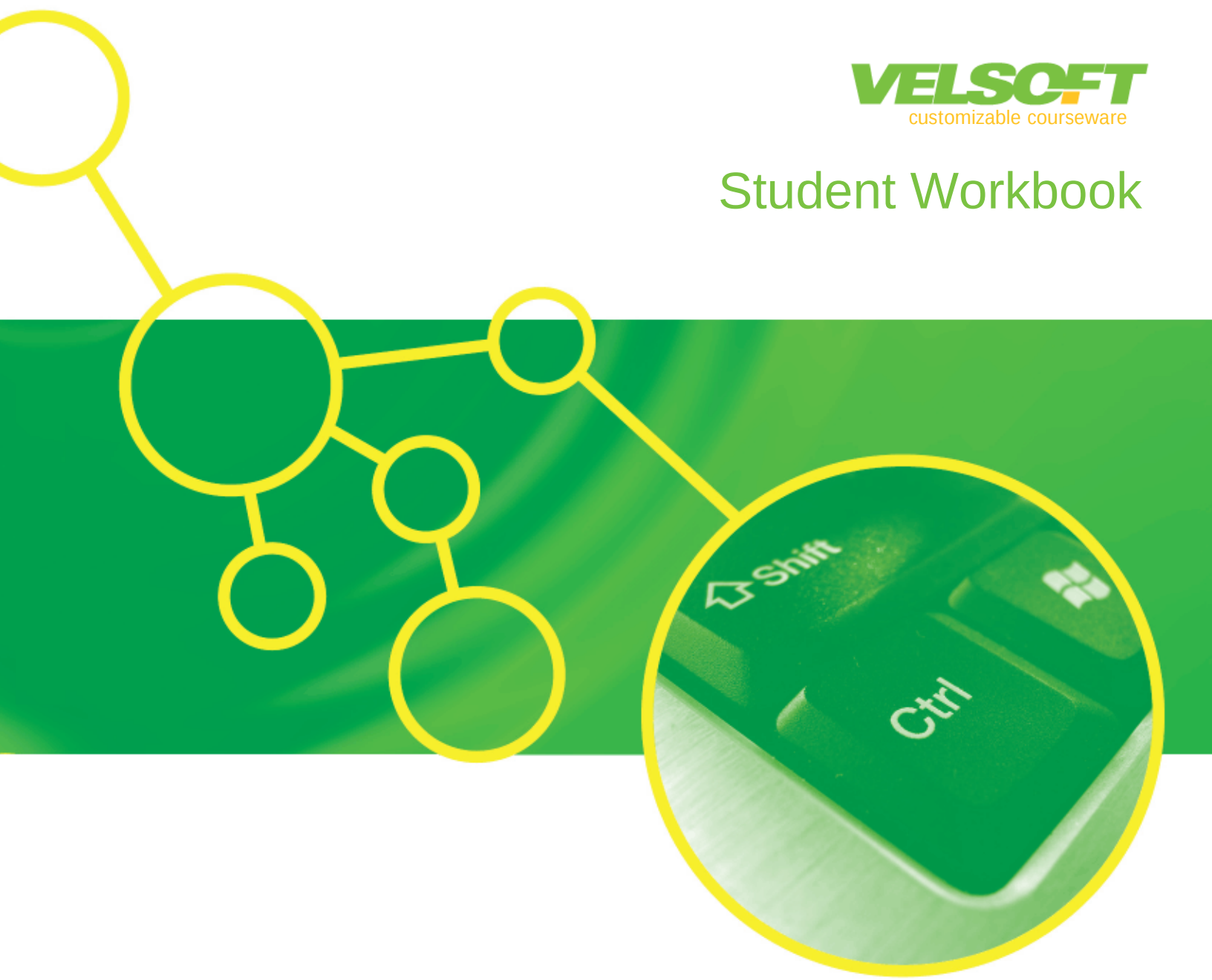


Student Workbook



Customer Service Training

Critical Elements of Customer Service

print-on-demand courseware

Customer Service Training
Critical Elements of Customer Service
Student Workbook

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Session One: Course Overview

Learning Objectives

- Recognize that service delivery is an individual response value.
- Understand how your own behavior impacts the behavior of others.
- Develop more confidence and skill as a problem-solver.
- Communicate more assertively and effectively.
- Learn some ways to make customer service a team approach.

Personal Objectives

Session Two: What is Customer Service?

Definitions

What is customer service?

Why is it important?

What's in it for me?

Some results of stress on employees and the organization include:

People who provide good customer service (regardless of the nature of their business) earn psychological benefits in addition to any rewards offered by their company.

If you are unhappy in your job, take an objective look at the kind of service you are giving. In almost every case, your job satisfaction mirrors the satisfaction people feel when doing business with you. Giving poor service is a way of beating up on yourself.

Small Group Exercise

There are some important concepts that we need to understand about customer service before we can do a really good job of providing it. What do the beliefs listed below mean to you?

Service is a philosophy—not a department, a program or a policy.

Service means exceeding customer expectations.

Service is not natural, automatic, or coincidental.

Session Three: Who Are Your Customers?

Who are our customers? For many of us, customers are easy to identify. They buy something from us, or we serve them in some way. But some people will say, “I don’t work directly with customers.” Before you accept this idea, I suggest taking a closer look at who our customers are.

In most organizations and agencies, customers take two forms: internal and external.

Internal customers are those people, departments, or agencies served by what we do. The only person who might have no internal customers is the individual who works completely alone. For the rest of us, internal customers are a fact of life. A word processing clerk or copy centre worker within an organization serves other workers’ needs for documents.

As individuals, we all have at least one internal customer: our boss. We may also have internal customers in the form of people we supervise. They rely on us to meet their needs.

External customers are those people or departments, or tenants who are the end users of our organization’s products or services. This is, of course, the traditional use of the term customer.

What do people want? Well, at the simplest level, our customers have some basic needs.

- They want to be understood.
- They want to feel welcome.
- They want to feel important.
- They want to feel comfortable.

Session Four: Meeting Expectations

Every individual's needs are important. Each customer wants to be treated like he/she is your only customer. They know that isn't true, just as well as you do, but they still want that kind of attention. The only way for you to be successful is to help other people get what they want

In the larger sense, customers expect us to meet expectations in four critical areas.

Timeliness

Quality

Consistency

First Impressions

Session Five: Presenting Yourself Properly

Check yes or no for each question.

		YES	NO
1)	Do people usually buy from someone they dislike?		
2)	Do you understand the power of a smile?		
3)	Do you show sincere interest in your customer and engage in preliminary small talk?		
4)	Do you grant people time alone before asking for the order?		
5)	Are you aware that a negative first impression may turn a prospect off of your product?		
6)	Do you open with a sincere compliment?		
7)	Do you promptly offer a prospect refreshments and a comfortable seating arrangement?		
8)	Do you pay attention to your attire and personal grooming?		
9)	Do you welcome buyers with a firm handshake?		
10)	Are you congenial no matter what the outcome?		

Session Six: Setting Goals and Targets

SMART Goals

Read any self-improvement book and you will learn that hard work, focused goals and persistence are important (very important!) in getting to where you want to go in life. Some smart person has come up with an acronym to help us remember these characteristics. Goals should be SMART!

S = SPECIFIC

When we make our goals too general we aren't able to visualize them, and if we can't see them, we have a hard time devoting our efforts toward reaching them. We are more apt to do a good job of redecorating the bathroom if we have a picture in our mind of how it will look when it's done.

M = MEASURABLE

If we can't measure a goal, we have no idea how close we are getting to reaching it, and that can be de-motivating. For example, let's say you have decided you will save some money from every pay check in order to take a vacation this summer. But if you don't set a specific amount each pay, and you don't have an amount you want to reach, you are less apt to put the money away.

A = ATTAINABLE

We sometimes think that we should set high targets or goals for ourselves, in order to grow and stretch. Well, we do want to grow and stretch, but if we set goals that aren't doable, we soon get discouraged and we stop trying. The really high achievers in the world know this. They set goals that they know they can reach, and when they get there, they set another goal they know they can reach. They climb the mountain one foot at a time.

R = RELEVANT

Goals have to make sense, and have some importance, or they will soon be discarded. Set goals that make sense to you.

T=TIMED

Put a deadline on your goals. Deadlines are great for getting things done.

And **put** these goals or standards **in writing**, so everyone will remember them all the time.

Workshop Goals

[illegible]

Session Seven: Standards

What are Standards?

Standards, or expectations, or targets, are good, because they give us something to strive for, they tell us what we have to do to have our supervisors/managers say our work is satisfactory.

However, we should make certain that our standards are meeting or exceeding the expectations of our customers. And the only way to do this is to ask our customers, on an ongoing basis, if they are satisfied with the service.

The Four Components

Telephone[illegible]

Appearance of facilities

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal black lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appearance of self

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Face to face contact

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Session Eight: Communication

What is communication?

Here are you, the audience, and here am I, the speaker. What are the kinds of barriers that can come between us?

Here are two tips for removing those barriers.

- Empathy: First thing you have to do is take off your own shoes.
- Rephrasing/reframing: Gives you a chance to think of your response.

Remember the saying: “God gave us two ears and one mouth so we could listen twice as much as we talk.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt used to say that people never really listened to what he said; they only kept quiet out of courtesy. Every once in a while he would test his theory and say something like, “So good to see you. I murdered my grandmother this morning.” But he got caught out on one occasion when a woman nodded gravely before replying, “Mr. President, I’m sure she had it coming to her.”

The problem is that listening and hearing are not the same thing. Most of us were fortunate to be born with hearing, but listening is a skill that must be learned, and practiced and perfected, before it can be used successfully. Here are some tips:

- We should listen for names.
- Listen with interest.

- Try to get rid of your assumptions.
- Listen for what isn't said.

Remember that when other people are listening to us, they have the same difficulties we do. Always be clear to the WIIFM (what's in it for me).

Active Listening

Active listening has three stages:

- Non-verbal communication
- Cues
- Paraphrasing, clarifying, summarizing

Here are some tips:

- As people talk to you, mentally say to yourself: "Which means that..."
- Be clear in your own mind what you hope to achieve.
- Take the lead in conversations wherever possible. This gives you the psychological advantage, and you are in the stronger position to direct the conversation along lines that are favorable to you.
- Check your understanding with your six helpers: why, what, where, when, who, how?
- Talk less than you listen.
- Try silence.

Remember that when we are delivering any message, only 7% of that message is our words. The rest is our tone of voice and our non-verbal body language.

(Source: Active Listening by Carl R. Rogers and Richard E. Farson)

Session Nine: Telephone Techniques

One of the biggest misconceptions on the phone is that people can't see your expressions. However, this is not always the case. Our voice and tone can convey exactly what our face is expressing.

The most important thing to remember about telephone communication is your tone. The reason is that tone accounts for 87% of how the receiver interprets your message. Your words account for only 12% of the response, and body language counts for only 1%.

The Initial Greeting

Identify the organization, the department, and yourself. Be careful about verbal shorthand or internal jargon. Don't make the caller say, "Is this Velsoft?" or "To whom am I speaking?" By the tone of a few words, you can convey a friendly welcome, which will imply your willingness to be helpful. As well, you should always personalize service.

What are the situations you should keep in mind when you answer your phones?

- The person they want isn't there.
- You have to transfer a call.
- You have to put a caller on hold, give progress reports, and return to the line.
- You have to take a message.

Transferring Telephone Calls

An impression of poor service and lack of interest often results when calls are transferred improperly within an organization.

A call should only be transferred when the person transferring it cannot help the caller and is reasonably sure the person to whom the call is transferred will be able to help the caller.

The reason for the transfer should be explained, along with the name of the person to whom the caller will be transferred. This prepares the caller for what is about to happen, and doesn't look like you are giving him/her the run-around.

Here's an example: "Mark Jenson in Fire Prevention handles that. I'll transfer you to him, Mrs. Smith."

Then the person transferring the call should announce the call to the person receiving it. This will prepare him and eliminates the need for the caller to repeat information.

Putting Callers on Hold

If you are handling a call and you must put the caller on hold, ask their permission and explain why you are putting them on hold. You should also give them your best estimate of how long they will be on hold.

If you think the waiting time might be more than 3 minutes, give the caller the option of holding or having you call back. Waiting time always seems longer than it actually is.

Progress Reports

A progress report means informing the waiting person what progress is being made on the call. Here's an example: "Mr. Johnson, I'm still checking the code for that. Do you mind waiting a little longer or should I call you back?"

Proper Return to the Line

Attract the person's attention by calling them by name or using a suitable introductory expression, so you won't have to repeat any of the information. Thank them for waiting.

Taking a Message

Taking a message for your supervisor or another employee should be relatively simple. However, a great deal of business is lost each year by incomplete or forgotten messages. A courteous person returns telephone calls. Accurate messages reduce errors and eliminate unnecessary calls.

Taking Messages Accurately and Completely

- Keep a pad handy.
- Write while you are on the line. Take notes as you handle the call, not after you hang up the receiver.
- Request, don't demand information. Say, "If I may have your name, please..." rather than, "What is your name and number?"
- Verify spelling.
- Get the first name too.
- Spell out phonetically if the name is difficult.
- Give feedback for verification. (For example, "So that's spelled J-a-y-s-o-n?")

What to Record

- To whom: The name of the person called.
- From whom: The name of the call and his business connection.
- Where: The caller's telephone number and extension number.
- What: The message itself.

- Why: Action requested and the action promised.
- By whom: Name of the person who recorded the message.
- When: Date and hour of the call.

Other Tips

To assure the accuracy and completeness of a message, you might consider the following suggestions:

- Listen attentively to the message.
- Check to be sure all telephone numbers are correct and use feedback for verification.
- Verify the spelling of difficult names, using phonetic helpers – people are sensitive.
- After the telephone call has been completed, make additional notes from memory.
- Attach to the message any papers, reports, lists of information that would be helpful to the called party.

When asking to take a message, if the caller says, “No, I’ll call back,” courteously ask one more time. For example you could say, “If I could just tell him who called, I’m sure he will be interested. Of course, you can call back if that would be more convenient.”

Personalizing Service

All customers are important. Together, they represent the sum total of our reason for being. However, each individual customer craves to have his uniqueness recognized and acknowledged in the process of being served. We can appreciate each customer’s importance by getting and using their name.

A Quick Formula to Practice

- Prepare to hear the name.
- Write it down immediately.
- If you miss it, ask the person to repeat it.
- Repeat the name immediately in your next comment to the person.
- Use the name occasionally in the conversation. It’s an attention getter at the beginning of the sentence.
- Ask, “Let me be sure I’ve spelled your name right. Is that J-a-y-s-o-n?”
- Thank the person and use the name again as you are parting.

Addressing a Person

Should you call a person Mr., Ms., or Mrs., or use their first name? It really depends on the company and whether you have spoken to this person before. Usually, it’s best to err on the side of caution and use “Mr.” or “Ms.” until the customer says otherwise.

Your Telephone Voice

- Speak at the right volume, not too loudly or too softly.
- Use a pleasant, friendly tone. Speak clearly, pronounce your words carefully.
- If you have an accent that customers or clients might have trouble understanding, spell things out or use more simple language to make sure they have it right.
- Remember not to talk too quickly.
- Last but not least, smile! Customers can hear a smile through the phone.

Your Listening Ear

Never interrupt. Wait to be sure your caller is finished before you start to talk. However, don't hesitate to ask your customer to repeat anything you don't understand. You, in turn, should repeat important information you are given such as numbers, spelling of words, important names, cities, and streets. Listen for the caller's mood to try to determine not only what they are saying, but how they feel about it. Remember the importance of asking questions and probing until you are sure you understand the problem or have as much information as possible.

Your Format for Closing

If necessary, summarize the main ideas of your call by confirming details discussed or follow-up actions promised. Rather than just saying, "Goodbye," try to close with a friendly, courteous greeting such as:

- "Is there anything else I can do for you?"
- "It was nice talking to you."
- "Thank you for calling."
- "Thanks for your help."

Dos and Don'ts

Do say...	Don't say...
He's not in his office at the moment.	He hasn't come in yet.
She's away from her desk at the moment.	She's on her coffee break.
He's out of the office until tomorrow.	He left early today.
She's not in the office today.	She's sick today.
He's out of the office for the next two weeks.	He's on vacation for the next two weeks.

Phrases to Avoid Using

- "I believe he went to the men's room."
- "He's taking a nap right now." (This actually happened. The man had had a heart attack and his physician ordered him to rest 45 minutes after lunch each day, but this information would not be known to the caller.)
- "She has a doctor's appointment this afternoon."
- "He's at the barbershop."

Sentences That Damage Your Image or Lose Goodwill

- "I can't put your call through unless I can say whose calling."
- "I don't have anything to do with your problem."
- "He's busy, would you call him back?"
- "I'm working with someone right now, could you call back?"
- "There's nothing I can do about it – that's our policy."
- "We might have it but I don't know for sure."
- "We're getting ready to go home – would you call back in the morning?"
- "I just came in – could you call back in about 15-20 minutes?"

Remembering and using these telephone techniques will enable you to give the same exceptional service on the telephone as you would give your customers and clients in person.

Session Ten: Managing the Talkative Caller

How can you manage a conversation with a talkative customer?

[illegible]

Session Eleven: Dealing With Difficult Callers

Description	What They Do	What We Do
Abrupt		
Abusive		
Angry		

Arrogant		
Bully/bossy		
Closed-minded		

Session Twelve: Dealing With Challenges

What if...

You don't know the answer to the customer's question.

You have to say no to the customer's request.

Your computer is moving slowly and the customer is getting impatient.

The customer has unreasonable expectations.

The customer is skeptical about what you're telling him.

The customer is angry for no apparent reason.

The customer refuses to give you all the information you need.

Session Thirteen: Increasing Your Assertiveness

One difficulty we may face is our need to act assertively. Speaking assertively doesn't mean getting aggressive, angry, or disrespectful. Assertive behavior is just standing up for personal rights and acting in ways that express thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways that don't violate others' rights.

There is an assertiveness formula that can help when we aren't sure how to tell others how we think or feel and how we would like them to behave. There are several variations to this formula, and the formula doesn't work in all situations, but it can be useful.

- When you (specific behavior)
- I feel (specific feelings)
- I would appreciate it if you (suggested change of behavior)

Example: "When you don't speak to me in the mornings, I feel like I have done something to make you angry. I'd like you to smile and say good morning so I know you are not angry with me."

Think of situations where you could use this formula. Practice the wording to yourself, and then try it out in a fairly non-stressful situation and see how it works. Like most things, it gets easier with practice.

You don't have to act assertively in every situation. And this formula isn't the only way to deal with difficult or stressful situations. For example, most of us hate being criticized, but rather than become defensive, or react assertively, as in, "When you...I feel...I want..."

Allow the criticism to prick your curiosity. Ask questions like, "Why do you feel that way?" or, "What exactly do you mean when you say I'm not playing fair?"

Session Fourteen: Dealing With Difficult People

The Four Fears

Causes of Difficult Behavior

According to psychologist Shirley Winslow, PhD, of the University of Alberta, we all have four fears. They are fear of failure, fear of humiliation or embarrassment, fear of losing power, and fear of rejection. These fears often cause us to act in ways that make us difficult for others to deal with.

Can you think of any other causes of difficult behavior?

What are the characteristics of others that make them difficult for us to deal with?

What are the weapons they use against us?

What are our coping strategies?

We've already described at some length the things we will try to use as we deal with most people. However, the old 80/20 rule says that 80% of our problems will come from 20% of our employees, or of our clients. So how do we deal with them? Try this:

- S: Smile
- O: Open gestures
- F: Forward lean
- T: Touch
- E: Eye contact
- N: Nod

Group Exercise

Problem Customer	Why It Happens	What To Do About It
Stubborn		
The Quiet One		
The Heckler		

The Rambler		
Wrong Track		
Personality Problems		
The Conversationalist		

The Know-It-All		
The Whiner		

Session Fifteen: Dealing with Conflict

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” – Stephen Covey

Conflict occurs when the emphasis is on the differences between people. The more divided you seem to be, the sooner you fall. You get along better with people when the emphasis is on similarities between you. The difference between conflict with a friend and conflict with a difficult person is that with a friend, the conflict is tempered by the common ground you share. Obviously, then, reducing differences is essential to your success in dealing with people you can't stand.

Two key tools for reducing conflict are blending and redirecting.

Blending

Blending is any behavior by which you reduce the differences between you and another in order to meet them where they are and move to common ground. Blending increases your rapport with others. For example, have you ever been in conversation with someone when unexpectedly you discover you both grew up in the same place? In that moment of discovery, differences were reduced and you felt closer.

Or you go to a restaurant with a friend, looked at the menu, and asked, “What are you having?” Your question may have had little to do with menu choices and a lot to do with sending a signal of friendship.

You blend with people in many ways. You blend visibly with your facial expression, degree of animation, and body posture. You blend verbally with your voice, volume, and speed. And you blend conceptually with your words.

As natural as it is to blend with people you like or with people who share similar objectives, it is equally natural not to blend with people whom you perceived as difficult. The failure to blend has serious consequences, because without blending, the differences between you can become the basis for conflict.

Redirecting

Redirecting is any behavior by which you use that rapport to change the outcome of your interactions and reach a more satisfactory outcome. Blending always precedes redirecting, whether you are listening to understand or speaking to be understood.

Identify Positive Intent

We define positive intent as the good purpose meant to be served by a given communication or behavior. Our failure to recognize and appreciate positive intent can have lasting consequences.

A powerful key to bringing out the best in people at their worst is to give them the benefit of the doubt, and assume a positive intent behind their problem behavior. Since your difficult person may be unaware of this, ask yourself what positive purpose might be behind a person's communication or behavior and acknowledge it.

If you are not sure about that positive intent, be creative and make something up that could be true. Even if the intent you ascribe to the behavior isn't true, it will allow you to blend and develop rapport.

Identify Highly Valued Criteria

Criteria are the standards by which we measure whether ideas are good or not, the means for determining what a thing should be, the benchmark by which people gauge whether they are for or against an idea. Criteria become especially important when differing ideas or points of view are being discussed.

Money, bonding, teamwork, or increasing knowledge are some of the things that may be important to us.

Whenever a discussion starts to degenerate into conflict, try to ascertain the reasons why people are for or against something. Then look for an idea or solution to the problem that blends these criteria together. That is another way to turn conflict into cooperation.

When Discussions Degenerate Into Conflict

When your problem person is talking:

- Blend visibly and audibly
- Backtrack or echo some of their own words
- Clarify their meaning, intent and criteria
- Summarize what you've heard
- Confirm to find out if you got it right

While blending is an important skill to use when dealing with others, never blend with a hostile gesture directed at you. Don't meet aggression with aggression. If the other person raises his/her voice, or shakes his fist, the key to blending here is to underplay it assertively.

Your action plan for angry, aggressive people should include:

- Hold your ground, and use deep breathing to stay calm.
- Interrupt the attack, by repeating their name several times.
- Quickly backtrack or echo their main point to show them you have been respectfully listening
- Aim for the bottom line by taking ownership and expressing the situation from your point of view.

Some more important points to keep in mind when you are dealing with difficult people:

- No one cooperates with anyone who seems to be against them. In human relations there is no middle ground. Unconsciously people want to know, “Are you with me or against me?” That’s one of the things you have in common with your difficult people.
- Express your truth in a way that builds someone up rather than tears them down.
- Use “I” language.
- Be specific about the problem behavior.
- Show them how their behavior is self-defeating.
- Suggest new behaviors or options.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to being honest with someone is concern about hurting their feelings. But you do no one a favor by withholding information and allowing them to continue behaviors that don’t work for them either.

Session Sixteen: The Problem Solving Process

The Six Steps

There are six steps to efficiently solving problems.

Define the Problem

- Discuss symptoms (especially if problem is unknown).
- Discuss size (or seriousness) and impact (effect) of problem.
- Determine the exact wording of the problem in question form.
- Define terms in the question.

Research and Analyze the Problem

- List topics that need to be researched or discussed, including causes and past efforts to solve the problem.
- Research the problem if necessary.
- Discuss the research in an organized way.
- State the first topic to be discussed.
- Give all members a chance to cite research or opinion on the topic.
- Ask if anyone has anything further to say on the topic.
- Summarize the group's findings on the topic.
- State the next topic to be discussed and repeat the procedure until all topics have been discussed.

Establish a Checklist of Criteria

- List all possible criteria and give everyone a chance to respond.
- Discuss each criterion.
- Reduce the list to a workable length by combining criteria where possible.
- Rank remaining criteria from most to least important.

List Possible Alternatives

- Think outside the box.
- These are just possibilities, so list anything that comes to mind.

Evaluate Each Alternative

- Read through the list of alternatives, eliminating those that the group feels obviously do not meet the criteria agreed on in the third step.
- Reduce the list further by combining any similar alternatives.
- Discuss each remaining alternative's strengths and weaknesses (referring to research presented in the second step when necessary).
- Determine how well each alternative meets the criteria- number of criteria met and importance of criteria met.
- Continue reducing the list until the best alternative (or alternatives) is reached.

Select the Best Alternative(s) as Your Solution and Discuss How to Implement It / Them

- Make sure you consider all people involved.
- You may want to develop contingency plans.

There are also some simple ways of resolving a conflict.

- Competitive: I actively seek to get my own way.
- Avoidant: I seek to avoid the conflict situation.
- Accommodative: I seek to work out a mutually satisfying relationship with others.
- Collaborative: I seek to work out a mutually satisfying solution with others.
- Compromising: I seek to work out a solution in which we each give up a little to get some of what we want.

Role Play

Situation One: Happy Burgers

Jane is working at Happy Burgers alone one night. A customer comes in and orders a Super Smiley Meal. This customer then changes his mind and wants a Beamer Special. He then changes his mind again and wants a Smirky Sundae. He becomes frustrated because Jane can't get his order right.

Situation Two: Your Cash Bank

Sam walks into the bank one day to take money out of his account. The teller informs him that that account has been closed due to suspicion of criminal activity. Sam becomes very upset and demands to speak to the supervisor, who is not in.

Situation Three: Acme Widgets Inc.

On her way to work, Erin stops in at Acme Widgets to pick up her company's order. She is told that their order hasn't been received and will need to be placed again. This is the fourth time that this has happened this year and Erin is not happy.

Situation Four: Fresh Veggies

Tom is planning a big birthday dinner and goes to Fresh Veggies to get everything he needs. He's particularly excited about the fresh wangleberries that the store's flyer promised. However, when he arrives at the store, there are none to be found. A cashier tells him they are out of stock.

Situation Five: Leaky Pipes

Jacob calls in a plumber to fix his leaky bathtub. He goes downstairs to let the plumber do his work. He returns to the bathroom to find the plumber asleep in the bathtub and the work uncompleted.

Situation Six: We Fix It

Joan calls technical support one evening to fix a recurring problem with her computer. She is told that the computer is supposed to do this and there is nothing they can do. Naturally, she is not very happy about this.

Session Seventeen: Pre-Assignment Review

- 1) False. People who are successful at customer relations constantly put their customers first, and make them feel important.
- 2) False. Everybody who works for Barrett Diversified is responsible for customer service to shoppers and to internal customers. It doesn't matter whether you work in accounts payable or as a maintenance employee; you are part of the customer service team.
- 3) False. Good service employees have a surprising amount of control over their ability to do a successful job. You have control over setting high standards of performance, in choosing how you will deal with people, and in deciding how you will react to difficult situations.
- 4) True. You are not diminished in any way by apologizing for someone else's error or apologizing for the situation that caused a customer's dissatisfaction.
- 5) False. Remembering names and faces are one of the most important things you can do to make people feel important and comfortable.
- 6) True. Pleasing others is what customer service is all about.
- 7) True. If you can handle the technical side of your job efficiently, you are more apt to feel in control over difficult problems in other areas. On the other hand, if you are unsure of your skill and ability, or do not understand procedures, this lack of confidence or ability is added stress when you must deal with customers.
- 8) True. If you know how much time a task SHOULD take, you have standards to aim for, and to measure your own skill and ability by.
- 9) True. For example, if you notice that most people want to drive away with a clean vehicle after service work has been done, you will make every effort to wash vehicles after they have been repaired. If you know that people appreciate it when you identify yourself clearly each time you answer the phone lines, you aren't likely to forget and just say "Can I help you?"
- 10) True. Self-esteem is a very fragile thing. Making somebody else feel small doesn't take much, and it doesn't make us look or sound any bigger.
- 11) False. Eye contact is a very important part of good communication.
- 12) False. Feedback, given sincerely and tactfully, can help us identify expectations and show us where we are going wrong. Positive feedback can make us feel appreciated and good at our work.
- 13) True. We can sacrifice valuable time trying to get a computer to work, or we may forget to make eye contact with the customer because we are busy staring at the computer screen.
- 14) True. Generally, we get treated by others in the same way we treat them.
- 15) True. Noticing the unhappy, lost or frightened customer and helping them, or asking the angry customer how you can help them, can make them feel more loyal to the shopping centre, and while the mall is attracting and keeping customers, your job will be more secure.
- 16) False. Most people want to be served quickly and efficiently, it's true, but they also want to feel like they are recognized as special and made to feel important.

- 17) True. Even without any conscious effort, we all make our own interpretations about body language.
- 18) False. It is NEVER justifiable to be rude or impolite to a guest.
- 19) False. Going one step beyond what the customer is expecting should become something you strive for, and a natural extension of your job.
- 20) True. Only when we know what customers are unhappy about will we have an opportunity to fix things and make them satisfied.

Session Eighteen: Seven Steps to Customer Problem Solving

The Process

Let's look at the specific steps we would take to resolve a customer's problem.

- Express respect
- Listen to understand
- Uncover the expectations
- Repeat the specifics
- Look for possible solutions
- Take action and follow through
- Double check for satisfaction

Role Play

Situation One: Happy Burgers

Jane is working at Happy Burgers alone one night. A customer comes in and orders a Super Smiley Meal. This customer then changes his mind and wants a Beamer Special. He then changes his mind again and wants a Smirky Sundae. He becomes frustrated because Jane can't get his order right.

Situation Two: Your Cash Bank

Sam walks into the bank one day to take money out of his account. The teller informs him that that account has been closed due to suspicion of criminal activity. Sam becomes very upset and demands to speak to the supervisor who is not in.

Situation Three: Acme Widgets Inc.

On her way to work, Erin stops in at Acme Widgets to pick up her company's order. She is told that their order hasn't been received and will need to be placed again. This is the fourth time that this has happened this year and Erin is not happy.

Situation Four: Fresh Veggies

Tom is planning a big birthday dinner and goes to Fresh Veggies to get everything he needs. He's particularly excited about the fresh wangleberries that the store's flyer promised. However, when he arrives at the store, there are none to be found. A cashier tells him they are out of stock.

Situation Five: Leaky Pipes

Jacob calls in a plumber to fix his leaky bathtub. He goes downstairs to let the plumber do his work. He returns to the bathroom to find the plumber asleep in the bathtub and the work uncompleted.

Situation Six: We Fix It

Joan calls technical support one evening to fix a recurring problem with her computer. She is told that the computer is supposed to do this and there is nothing they can do. Naturally, she is not very happy about this.

Session Nineteen: The Recovery Process

Once a customer problem is identified, the service recovery process should begin. Not all of the six steps described below are needed for all customers. Use what you know about your products and services, and what you can discover about your customers' problems, to customize your actions to the specific situation. One size doesn't fit all.

You should always take immediate steps to solve problems. The sense of urgency you bring to the problem solving tells your customers that recovery is important to you and to your organization.

Apologize.

It doesn't matter who is at fault. Customers want someone to acknowledge that a problem occurred and show concern.

Listen and empathize.

Treat your customers in a way that shows you care about them as well as about their problem. People have feelings and emotions. They want the personal side of the transaction acknowledged.

Fix the problem quickly and fairly.

A "fair fix" is one that's delivered with a sense of professional concern. At the bottom line, customers want what they expected to receive in the first place, and the sooner the better.

Offer atonement.

It's not uncommon for dissatisfied customers to feel injured or put out by a service breakdown. Often they will look to you to provide some value-added gesture that says, in a manner appropriate to the problem, "I want to make it up to you."

Keep your promises.

Service recovery is needed because a customer believes a service promise has been broken. During the recovery process, you will often make new promises. When you do, be realistic about what you can and can't deliver.

Follow up.

You can add a pleasant extra to the recovery sequence by following up a few hours, days, or weeks later to make sure things really were resolved to your customer's satisfaction. Don't assume you've fixed the person or the problem. Check to be sure.

Session Twenty: Eliminating Customer Service Problems

Tools to Use

Wouldn't it be great if all of our customers were happy and we didn't have to deal with their issues? While there will always be areas of improvement, there are some tools we can use to address and eliminate customer service issues.

Critical Evaluation

Question big pictures and then break into smaller components. Question each using How, What, Where, When, Why, and Who in the present tense. Also ask what could be done differently to develop options. Then question the options for advantages/disadvantages using the same WWWWWH format.

Informal Surveys

Ask your customers what they want. Ask them how you are doing; this can be scored in a report card fashion to compare periods of time.

Focus Groups

These usually have 8 - 10 participants, pre-screened for subject matter experience, with structured, specific questions to ensure maximum flexibility. During it, a moderator discusses specific issues with participants. It is a very moderated and structured session; after group discussion, the moderator produces the results in report format. Don't try this if you haven't participated in one or done sufficient research into focus group structure, questioning, and analysis.

N.G.T. (Nominal Group Technique)

Similar to Focus Groups but larger. Questions are structured and everyone must respond before the facilitator moves to the next participant. Once the questions have been depleted, the facilitator and the group then prioritize the responses; the top three to five are usually set as Immediate with the rest used after that.

Fish Bone (Cause and Effect or Root Cause)

Each major bone of the fish has a heading: Equipment, Systems, Processes, People, and Environmental with the head being the symptom. This method allows participants to discuss the symptom and categorize possible reasons under the headings. Each heading is then examined to determine if it is causing the symptom until the root cause is determined.

Brainstorming

Any idea is considered, no poor or stupid ideas, no critical comments. Object is that although an individual idea may not be feasible, someone else will use this to build on, and the result will be a fantastic idea.

Benchmarking

See how others do what you do/use if applicable. You can ask and they will usually let you see how they do things – they often think you are usually not as advanced as they are if you are asking to view their systems, processes, or methods.

Skill Application

Situations

Situation One: Happy Burgers

Jane is working at Happy Burgers alone one night. A customer comes in and orders a Super Smiley Meal. This customer then changes his mind and wants a Beamer Special. He then changes his mind again and wants a Smirky Sundae. He becomes frustrated because Jane can't get his order right.

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Joan calls technical support one evening to fix a recurring problem with her computer. She is told that the computer is supposed to do this and there is nothing they can do. Naturally, she is not very happy about this.

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

Session Twenty-One: Service PRIDE is a Team Effort

Events tend to repeat themselves. The tide of opportunity comes to us all. And when we are prepared for opportunity, our chance is sure to come. Success doesn't depend upon being in the right place at the right time—it depends upon being ready.

There are several things that the company as a team can do to improve customer service.

- **Pinpoint** problem through histograms, surveys, observation, etc.
- **Record** those problems. If they don't get written down they get forgotten about.
- **Inform** those in authority and document your reports or memos for further follow-up.
- **Develop** strategies to take care of these complaints/problems.
- **Evaluate** the implementation of these strategies. If they didn't work, try again.

Session Twenty-Two: Doing Your Part

Although customer service is a team effort, you must recognize that you are part of that team and that you have as much of a role in that team as anyone else.

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

Relationships are the key to a functional, positive team. There are several parts to developing and maintaining relationships with your team members.

Clear Expectations

Every partner in a relationship has certain expectations of other partners. Most expectations remain unspoken until they have been violated. One way to develop and maintain effective relationships is to make your expectations of one another clear.

Recognizing the Reciprocal Quality of Relationships

We can use the reciprocal nature of our relationship with others to establish interpersonal cooperation and trust. Remember two clichés: “It’s a two-way street,” and, “You only get back what you give.”

Understanding Different Communication Styles

We can communicate more successfully with others, and establish more meaningful relationships if we not only understand others' styles but can attune our styles to theirs.

Phrases for the World of Work

Ten Most Helpful Phrases

- 1) I care.
- 2) I'd like to understand. Help me to understand.
- 3) How are things with you?
- 4) Let's define the problem.
- 5) This is what I heard you say.
- 6) Let me put this another way.
- 7) How can I help you? Can I do anything to help?
- 8) What would you do?
- 9) Thank you.
- 10) (Silence, with concern.)

Ten Least Helpful Phrases

- 1) You shouldn't feel that way.
- 2) Why did you do/say that?
- 3) That's not important.
- 4) I know exactly how you feel.
- 5) I know what you are going to say.

- 6) How come you're not as good as...?
- 7) Do you want to know what I think? Here's what you should do.
- 8) I told you so.
- 9) Any phrase that contains the words always, never, all the time, everyone or permanently.
- 10) Silence without concern...indifference.

Recognizing the Power of Your Behavior

The secret to success is not very hard to figure out. The better you are at connecting with other people, the better the quality of your life. Is there a natural talent for getting along with people or is it something we can learn?

Connecting with other people brings infinite rewards. Connecting is what our ancestors were doing thousands of years ago when they gathered around the fire to eat woolly mammoth steaks.

Likeability Works

Likable people give loud and clear signals of their willingness to be social. What are they?

No matter what you do or where you live, the quality of your attitude determines the quality of your relationships—not to mention just about everything else in your life. The good news is that attitudes are yours to select. And if you are free to choose any one you please, why not choose a Really Useful Attitude.

In face to face situations, your attitude precedes you. It is the central force in your life—it controls the quality and appearance of everything you do.

How to Feel Powerful in Your Position

What comes out of our mouths can strengthen our relationships with our customers or weaken our place in their heart. Along with our knowledge, skills and abilities, and a willingness to provide excellent customer service, the words we use with our customers are so powerful that they can build or destroy relationships.

Power Talk examples:

- “That may be so, but...” can be changed to “That may be so, and...”
- Instead of “I disagree,” how about, “I understand. Let’s consider another viewpoint.”
- Change, “I think I got that,” to, “Let’s verify that.”
- Change, “I’m so sorry, I’m afraid I’ve forgotten your name.” to, “Hello I’m.....”

Whether at work or in your personal life, people who make things happen learn how to phrase their words so they are encouraging and decisive. We can project positive expectations, both in ourselves and in others, by remembering some basics of good communication.

Project Positive Expectations

If you're going to say...	Try instead...
I'll have to	I'll be glad to
I'll try	I will
I'd hate to	I want to
I can't	I haven't yet, and I can
If you can	When will you
This is a terrible problem	This is a challenging opportunity
I'm never any good at ...	I'm improving at....
I'll spend time/money	I'll invest time and money
That's impossible	That can be done

Give Credit Where It's Due

I really just got lucky	I planned well and worked hard
I've never done this before	This is an opportunity to learn
I'm getting too old	I feel good. I have lots of experience.
He/she did a good job	You did a good job (Tell them)

Rebound from Failure

I failed	I learned
I can see negative consequences	I can see positive consequences
I'm a loser	I'm a winner

Accept Responsibility

They make me so mad	I feel mad when
I don't have enough time	I can manage my time
It's the other guy's fault	It's my responsibility
Someone else will do it	I will take care of it myself
I can't change things	I choose to make the best of what is

Session Twenty-Three: Dealing with Stress

Stress is a bummer. We all have too much of it. Here are some quick, easy ways you can de-stress in any place, at any time.

Belly Breathing

Loosen your clothes, close your eyes, mentally relax your body, and taken ten or more deep breaths. Each time you exhale, count silently: “one,” after the first breath, “two,” after the second breath, etc., up to at least ten. If you lose count, or find yourself working on thoughts as they pass through your mind, start your count over again. When you are finished, you should feel more calm and relaxed. (Your blood pressure will go down temporarily too.) If you’re in a meeting, on the phone, or dealing with a customer, count in your head.

Visualize

Use positive imagery to boost your confidence and enhance your visible performance. Couple this with positive language for even better results. Negative words and images become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Music

Music has the power to soothe, or to give us energy. It actually has healing power. Find a type of music that relaxes you, and play it when you need to calm down. When you feel tired and listless, play some rousing music (rather than using caffeine) to give you a pick-up.

Acupressure and Massage

Holding a fingertip to the point of most pain or tension, and pressing very hard into the offending muscle for up to a minute can avert a headache or relieve tension. Have a friend or spouse learn how to do massage therapy and/or acupressure on tense muscles, since daily treatment is better than once or twice a month.

Laughter

Laughter is the best medicine of all. A good belly laugh can lower blood pressure, slow your adrenaline, and reverse the stomach acid that comes with negative responses. Be on the look-out for jokes and cartoons you can share with family and friends. For a smaller dose, find a cartoon or picture that always makes you smile and post it near your desk. (Just make sure it’s appropriate for all audiences!)

A Personal Action Plan

I know where I'm starting from. I know I am already good at these things, and I can do them more often:

I can learn this, I am learning this, and I am doing what I can at this stage as well. I have already learned:

I will start with small steps, especially in areas that are difficult for me. My short –term goals for improvement are:

I promise to congratulate and reward myself every time I do something, no matter how small, to maintain and improve my skills. My rewards will be:

I'm setting myself up for success by choosing long-range goals to work for gradually. My long-term goals for success are as follows:

Recommended Reading List

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