

Lesson Four: Building Effective Customer Service Skills in the Workplace

Effective customer service skills involve both recognizing and providing assistance when a customer is dissatisfied and going above and beyond in working with customers. Simply being polite and friendly is not enough. It's part of your job.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

North Carolina Career Development Coordinator Standards:

- Standard IV.b. Help students develop global employability skills.

North Carolina Community College System College and Career Ready Adult Basic Education Standards

- W.5Composition: The student will develop and apply the writing process to communicate in writing for a variety of purposes.
- SpeakiS.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: The student will develop and apply skills to demonstrate comprehension and collaboration of oral and aural information
- S.2 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: The student will develop and apply skills to demonstrate presentation of knowledge and ideas of oral and aural information.
- R.5 Literature and Informational Text:The student will develop and demonstrate knowledge of a range of increasingly complex literature and informational texts

Workforce Development Standards

- 20 CFR Parts 676, 677, and 678: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Programs are based on eligibility.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

At the close of the lesson, learners will be able to say... I can:

- Effectively use positive verbal and nonverbal communication with customers.
- Recognize and use exceptional customer service skills.
- Compare and contrast effective versus non-effective customer service.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- computer, projector, internet access, YouTube access

DELIVERY SUGGESTIONS

The suggested *time* for the following lesson is 40-50 minutes. Groups of 4 with screen, computer/internet capability. Maximum number of participants is 16-20.

The following lesson is appropriate for:

- ☒ high school students
- ☒ adult learners

INSTRUCTIONS

1. What are some characteristics of positive and negative customer service experiences?

Have participants read the customer service article by Sherrie Campbell. Engage participants in discussion of times they felt they had received the very best customer service from a business and times they felt they had received the very worst customer service from a business. Have participants identify staff behaviors that made them feel valued as customers. Have them identify behaviors that made them feel that they were not valued as customers. Dig deeper to ask if just politeness succeeded in making them feel valued or did other behaviors have to also take place. Record ideas on a white board or chart paper. Ask them to identify the main points highlighted in the article and discuss what those suggestions mean to them.

2. Watch you tube video: Popsicle Moments--Finding a new flavor of customer service: [**https://bit.ly/3xvrod6**](https://bit.ly/3xvrod6)

Have participants write on a chart as many of Darren Ross's strategies/ suggestions as they can identify from the video that promoted good customer service. Engage them in a conversation about how his suggestions could translate to any job/career.

3. Watch "How I stole great customer service--with pride!"
[**https://bit.ly/2VCbnVJ**](https://bit.ly/2VCbnVJ)

In small groups, using a graphic organizer (Venn Diagram) to compare and contrast recommendations of Darren Ross and Lisa Ekstrom for positive great customer service. What are strategies conducted by both that were similar; what are strategies that were different?

4. Practice with scenarios

[**https://helpcrunch.com/blog/customer-service-scenarios/**](https://helpcrunch.com/blog/customer-service-scenarios/)

Print customer service scenarios on cards: <https://helpcrunch.com/blog/customer-service-scenarios/>, follow instructions on this site for role play. Have one participant per group draw a scenario card and plan a role play to share with class. Have participants discuss best practices. Have "customers" identify how they felt in each scenario.

5. Have participants write a summary of best strategies and how those made them feel. Discuss why excellent customer service matters. What difference does it make?
6. Gauge participant understanding by returning to the **I can** statements. Read each aloud asking for a hands up if they felt the objective was met. Thank participants for their participation.
7. Direct participants to the evaluation form below for quick, formal feedback.
[**https://conta.cc/3Cx9sSO**](https://conta.cc/3Cx9sSO)

LESSON CONTRIBUTOR

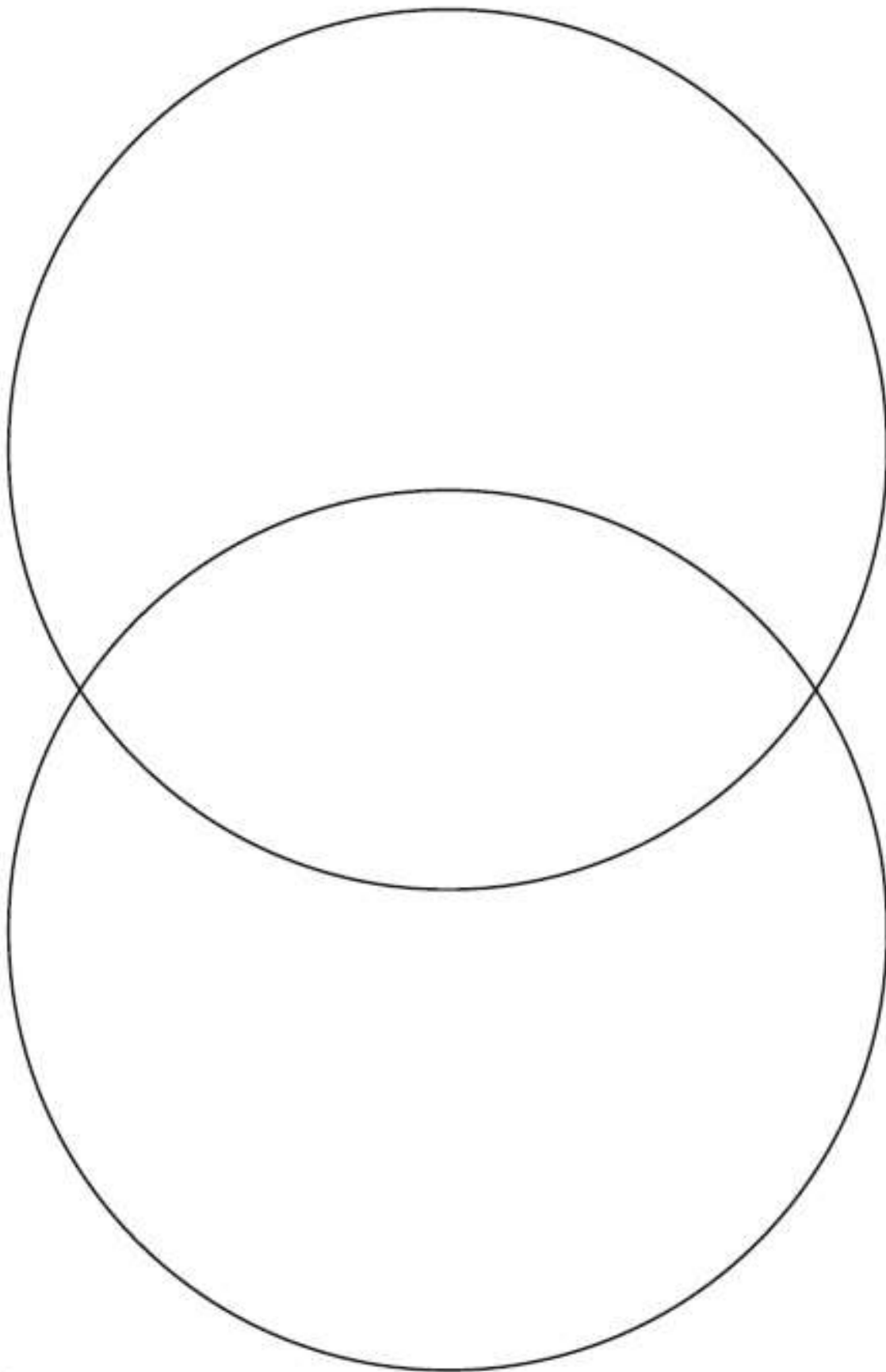
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Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____



7 Essentials of Great Customer Service

The goal of customer service is to transform an unhappy customer into a customer who feels thrilled about how well they were taken care of.

By Sherrie Campbell

Psychologist, Author, Speaker

December 14, 2017

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

There is no greater value to any corporation than their customer service.

Recently I invested in an expensive treadmill. I paid for its delivery and assembly but it hasn't work properly from day one. The contracted company who delivered my equipment did nothing more than show up, put it together and leave. I had previously purchased a spin bike from a different company, and when it was delivered their people assembled the bike and walked me through a step-by-step process on how to use the bike and access the live spin classes. Further, they left me with a business card in case I had questions or needed help. When I tried contacting the company about my treadmill, not only did I spend 30-40 min on hold, but once I got to speak to someone live, they suggested I contact another branch of their company that deals with the subscription package of workouts before they would help me. I spent another 30-40 min on hold for the subscription branch only to have them tell me to contact the original branch I had just hung up with.

To add to my frustration, their business hours are Eastern Standard Time, and I am Pacific Standard Time. My workday and their available hours made it very difficult to call and find a solution, but they did not offer any available weekend hours. This experience showed what a clear difference customer service makes for the customer. It is obvious to a customer when they are the priority and when they are not by how they are handled when things go wrong.

1. Great customer service is caring.

Great customer service comes down to caring. Not only should the corporation care about the quality of their products but should care even more-so about customer satisfaction. Companies should take the time to ensure the customer is delivered a product that works, and that the customer understands how to use and operate their product. Companies who pride themselves on great customer service take great value in creating referrals. To ensure this possibility, they make themselves available to their customers for any questions, repairs and or concerns, and if necessary offer to replace, compensate or refund what isn't working. The customer should never feel dismissed, "put out," and frustrated by long wait times on the phone, no access to help during weekend hours, or being transferred from one place to the next at each effort put toward resolving their problem.

2. Passion

Passion is the foundation of great customer service people and their organizations. Customer service is the “it” factor. It is passion which separates those individuals and organizations who excel from those who offer the customer the bare minimum to get by. When a company is passionate about what they do, they have no desire to treat customers as impersonal objects that don’t matter. When passion is present, corporations push the extra mile to ensure high-quality products and customer satisfaction. Passion in service, makes the act of serving the reward for companies who value their customers. When a corporation responds to customer complaints dismissively or totally ignores them all together, money is the only important commodity to that corporation. This is immediately clear to the customer.

3. Communication

Solid communication is crucial when it comes to customer service. Communication requires effort, flexibility and a tremendous amount of patience and self-control on the part of the customer service agent. The customer, in most cases, should be treated as correct. And, customers are wrong sometimes as well. However, to be successful with customer service, a corporation must train their employees in how to calm down and problem solve for rightfully frustrated and disgruntled customer. Because the customer is feeling duped, they will often become demanding and impatient. If a corporation is to be demonstrative about the motto they promote around valuing their customers, these trespasses with customers will be handled with openness, flexibly and geared toward a solution that benefits the customer. Dissatisfied customers are expecting solutions, which is where good communication comes in. Customers must be left feeling that whatever is being done to resolve the problem is being put into action now.

4. Willingness

The customer who is expressing a lack of satisfaction doesn’t become a more pleasant person when met with automated systems with unreasonable hold times, and one transfer after another once they have finally gotten someone live on the phone. Customers must be met with another human being who is willing and there to help. People are busy. Customers are also in careers and do not have time to waste on the phone. Human to human conversation, 24/7 technical support, on-line chats, and weekend hours are essential for great customer care. When a product is delivered, the company should set their product up to ensure it’s working before they leave and the customer has no access to getting the help they need. The types of corporations who do anything less than this clearly lack in their ethics, integrity and in taking the kind of care of their customers that the customer paid for.

Related: Mark Cuban on Why You Should Never Listen to Your Customers

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/222501>

5. Service minded

Corporations that value customer service don't just enforce procedures and shout instructions to their customers as an approach to problem solving. It is the responsibility of each corporation to develop a culture of service and to see the undeniable value of serving those who purchase their products. Customer service agents must be trained to not be antagonistic toward displeased customers, but rather, to hold the mindset to serve the customer's need in any way possible to remedy the problem. Customer service isn't a policy, it should be valued as an individual and organizational mission that proves to represent what the corporation stands for. Without impeccable service, a corporation lacks in its own quality.

6. No extra fees

Never should a corporation deliver a malfunctioning piece of equipment, especially when assembly was paid for by the customer, and turn around and charge storage, packing, or return fees to the customer who never had a working product to begin with. Running this type of operation is not only corrupt and unethical, but shameful. The customer should not be punished with extra charges for something they did not cause. Great customer service should be based on replenishing, fixing and helping, not dropping off a product and washing their hands of responsibility.

7. Repeat customers

Customer service should not be solely focused on taking care of customers. Effective customer service must also be largely geared toward a good reputation and the desire for repeat customers. For this reason, it is vital corporations focus on who their customers are, what the need-base is and how they can best serve them. In my situation, I would have thought someone who purchases an expensive piece of exercise equipment would be viewed as a motivated and hard-working person. This is not a person you want to leave unsatisfied. The goal of customer service is to transform an unhappy customer into a customer who feels thrilled about how well they were taken care of when they reached for out for assistance. When this type of trust is present, customers will not only return again to purchase more products but are more than willing to refer the corporation and their stellar customer care to everyone they know who is interested in this type of purchase.