Module 15: Customer Service for Beginners

Part 2: The Customer Care Process

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Train For Employment
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Importance

People like to deal with People they like…"
From this point it is very important to apply the standards in dealing with our customers in order to maintain their loyalty to our organization and thus achieve our personal and organizational goals.

Modular Objectives

Upon the completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Apply the excellent customer service equation
- Implement the process for dealing with customer challenges

The Excellent Customer Service Equation

Superior Service is the result of a combination of the following elements in the Excellent Customer Service Equation:

1. Greeting the customer.

2. Determining needs of the customer.

3. Meeting needs of the customer.

4. Making the meeting memorable.

5. Checking results.

6. Leaving the door open.

1 - Greeting the Customer

How you meet and greet your customer sets the stage for the entire interaction. The first impression is a lasting impression.

We have no option except to depend on the first impression since we have no chance for a deeper interaction with customers.

Elements of the successful greeting are connecting emotionally and the first impression.

1- Connecting Emotionally

Connect emotionally with your customer initially with a warm and sincere greeting.

*   Build rapport.

*   Avoid jargon.

*   Display confidence.

*   Show empathy.

2- First Impression

Make a good first impression by following the rule of the six S s:

1. Stand; which reflects respect and manners.
2. Smile; which encourages a smile from the customer.
3. See; absence of eye contact is an obstacle to effective communication.
4. Shake; use the proper and   professional handshake.

5. Speak; introduce your name slowly and clearly.
6. Say; repeat the customer's name back and ensure addressing the customer by
      name all the time.

Dealing with Customer Challenges

Customers present challenges to us in different ways. It is important to understand what is really going on when a customer is dissatisfied or angry. In this section we will take look at how to handle customer challenges.

Angry Customers

An angry customer is not a bad person but someone who had a bad experience.

So why do customers get angry?

- Deliverable not meeting expectations; causing complete disappointment.

- When promises are broken; one practice that kills trust and initiate anger.

- When desires are blocked; a feeling overcoming the customer that the employee is placing obstacles in the way of his goals.

- When ownership is lost; anger develops from the feeling of "where shall I go? Or who will help me solve this problem?"

- When the customer's ego is hurt; it comes fast when the employee does not use the proper way to address the customer, show interest or does not give the personal attention.

- When the employee does not try to understand a customer's perception.

Customer Perception

Different People See Different Things! The following simple exercise illustrates this point. If you looked at the following picture, some will clearly see a duck looking to the left side of the picture. Others concentrating on the picture might see a rabbit who is looking to the right side of the picture. Look at the picture below. Do you see a rabbit or a duck?

This simple exercise illustrates the concept that people see things and perceive things differently. As a customer service provider, you need to take these differences into consideration when dealing with customers.

Technique to meet an angry customer

- Stand; such a move if you are interrupted by an angry customer relieves 50% of the anger.

- Listen; an integral part of effective communication and decreasing anger.

- Show concern; this affects the customer resulting in controlling his own anger.Take notes; a sign of concern and sincere desire to solve the issue.
- Block outside interferences; if this does not happen you guarantee the worst fit of anger an employee can experience by a customer.
- Refer to your boss if the problem is beyond you; your boss with wisdom created by the years of experience can monitor a situation that went out of control.

Dissatisfied Customers

Ways to Discover Hidden Dissatisfied customers:
Repeated customer requests; this should indicate that his needs are not fulfilled and dissatisfaction is developing.
Repeated observations of what customers need; observing the same need several times is a sign of hidden dissatisfaction.

Determining Customer Needs

Following greeting your customer and establishing rapport, you need to find out the needs of your customer by effective use of questions.

Close ended Questions

Closed-ended are usually answered by Yes or No. Use closed-ended questions when you want to accomplish the following results:

- Test your understanding to the customer's problems, needs and enquiries.

- Clarify given information by the customer.

- Control the flow of information to avoid irrelevant details that will delay your action.

Open ended Questions

Open-ended questions are used to gather more information than a simple Yes or No answer. Use open-ended questions when you want to accomplish the following results:

- Get the customer talk if he is the type who does not organize his details or give them at all.

- Gather the information needed for ownership.

- Expand on given information to ensure right and on time delivery.

Meeting Customer Needs

When a customer approaches you with a service problem, your goal is to resolve the problem and maintain customer loyalty. The following problem solving process is a helpful tool for clarifying a customer problem and finding solutions.

- **Define the Problem**

  The first step is to define the problem so you can understand how to approach the solution:

- Separate the problem from its emotional content.

- State the problem as clearly as possible.

- If there is more than one issue, define each issue separately.

- Use positive language and informative explanations.

  - **Describe what you can do and your limitations**

    You may not be able to meet every customer demand. However if you are clear about how you can help the customer, you will maintain customer loyalty:

    - What will you do?

    - When and how will you do it?

    - Why will you do it?

    - Who will be involved?

    - Where it needs to be done?

    - What are your limitations?

  - **Agree on a solution**

    Once you have determined to how you can help the customer, make sure they understand the solution:

    - Provide alternatives, if appropriate.

    - Verify the solution; say why you chose it.

    - Ask if the solution is acceptable and summarize agreements.

  - **Follow Up**

    Once you agree with the customer on a solution, follow-up immediately by following through on your commitments:

    - Do what you say you will do!

    - Follow-up to make sure the problem has been solved.

    - Must call back the customer, to make sure they know the problem is solved and create rapport.

    - Provide the customer with your contact information.

    - Invite the customer to call you back if they have any concerns or questions or any further help.

Making the Meeting Memorable

Your goal as a customer service representative is to create a memorable experience for your customer. You want the customer to leave feeling good about the overall interaction with you as a representative of your bank. You want the customer to come back and you want them to refer their friends and colleagues to you for more business. This all depends on how they feel about their customer experience.

Communicating Effectively

A memorable customer experience is established with effective communication. This includes not only what you say but how you say it. Non-verbal communication is very powerful. Effective communication depends more on non-verbal communication cues (body language), part of which is the eye contact, voice tone and inflection to establish rapport.

Effective communication covers the verbal, vocal and visual communication.

Verbal communication:

What you say and how you say it.

1- What Gets in the Way?

As a customer service representative, it is important to understand the impact of an emotionally charged language. What do you want to say when someone tells you, "NO, I CAN'T"? Probably the tone of this statement plus the finality of the answer NO, provokes an emotional response. In response, you want to say:

- "YES, YOU CAN!"

- "Let me talk to your supervisor!"

- "I'll show you!"

- "You've got some nerve!"

- "If you cared at all, you'd find a way!"

You drive the customer to an irreversible edge.

2- Negative and Positive Language

Negative phrasing and words often have the following characteristics:

- Tells the customer what cannot be done.

- Has a subtle tone of blame.

- Includes words like can't, won't, unable to, that tell the customer what the representative cannot do.

- Does not stress positive actions that would be appropriate, or positive consequences.

Examples of negative phrases that is likely to provoke an emotional response:

- I don't know

- I don't care either

- That's not my job

- Those are the rules. I don't make them

- Well, it wasn't ME

- Because I said so

- Read the sign

- I already told you that

- Get a move on

Positive phrasing and words have the following qualities:

- Tells the customer what can be done.

- Suggests alternatives and choices available to the customer.

- Sounds helpful and encouraging rather than bureaucratic.

- Stresses positive actions and positive consequences that can be anticipated.

Examples of positive phrases:

- If you can send us [whatever], we can complete the process for you.

- The information we have suggests that you have a different viewpoint on this issue. Let me explain our perspective.

- Might we suggest that you [suggestion].

- One option open to you is [option].

- We can help you to [whatever] if you can send us [whatever].

3- How to Say No When You Must?

- Listen, even though you know you may not be able to say yes or you know the issue beforehand.

- Cushion your reply: "I wish we could get that done for you."

- Say what you can do not what you can't: "We can call the department that handles that."

Leave the Door Open

Finally, before the customer leaves, you want to be sure that both you and the customer have a way to stay in contact and that he will not hesitate to recommend your bank for another customer.

- Give your name or card to customers in case they need to contact you again.

- Follow up by calling the customer to see if a problem or issue was resolved.

- Invite customers to come back if you think they might be interested in something you can offer.

- Appreciate customers for coming in and using your services.

Checking Results

- Once you have completed the process of identifying the customer's problem and found a solution, you want to ask the customer if they are satisfied with the service.

- Ask customers what they think about our service.

- Ask if there is anything else we can do, even if the transaction is finished.

- Ask if the customer needs any other assistance.

- Thank the customer for dealing with the Bank.

- Make the proper company closing statement;

- "Thank you for choosing our bank"or "It was a pleasure serving you".

Summary

In this part, you learned how to:
- Apply the excellent customer service equation
- Implement the process for dealing with customer challenges