

YOU'RE HIRED!
DISCUSSION GUIDE AND STUDENT HANDOUTS

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Produced by
TRIUNE PRODUCTIONS INC.
in association with D.M.C.I.

With the participation of the
Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund
and the
Ontario Film Development Corporation Non-Theatrical Fund

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Introduction

Through entertaining and informative dramatic scenarios, set in a variety of service sectors, such as retail, telephone sales, general sales, and government services, this series shows young people the practical skills they'll need to know once they're hired. The series is divided into seven modules: Customer Service for Youth, Customer Expectations, Handling Problems, Communicating by Phone, Internal Customers, Special Customers and Customer Service Summary.

Educational Objectives

Having learned basic service skills from the videos and participating in the training sessions, students should be able to;

- Describe the many types of services that customer service employees provide.
- Explain that although many companies provide the same service and sell the same products, what often distinguishes one company from another is the *quality* of service they give their customers.
- Explain that because customers have different needs, expectations and personalities, customer service employees must be flexible in order to serve customers well.
- Describe some key characteristics of successful customer service employees.
- Explain that handling customer problems and complaints is a normal part of a customer service employee's work day.
- Explain the value of cooperation with co-workers.

Using This Video Series

The series has been designed with maximum flexibility in mind. Within each video are sections separated by a brief fade to black where the tape can be paused and discussed. The series not only contains information, but also raises questions, so it is best viewed in a group setting with an informed discussion leader present. The discussion questions are suggested examples of ways to stimulate debate around the issues raised in each video.

Using The Discussion Guides and Handouts

The discussion leader is encouraged to read and adapt the guides and to photocopy the handouts before the training session begins. The top half of each guide contains sample questions for discussion or testing purposes and the lower half contains key training points for review.

1 CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR YOUTH

Customer service is everybody's business. Every individual in a company is either serving a customer or serving someone whose job it is to serve a customer. Service means not only fulfilling customer expectations, it's also turning unsatisfied customers into satisfied ones.

Discussion Questions

What is the role of the customer service employee in today's service driven economy ?

What responsibilities do customer service employees have ?

Why are they so important ?

Key Training Points

Often, how well the customer is treated is the only thing that separates one company from another. - A business spends five times as much to acquire a new customer as it does to service an existing one.

Greet the customer warmly. It's nice to smile, but not if you feel uncomfortable. Just try and be yourself. - It's also good to shake the clients hand but only if it feels comfortable or the client initiates it. - Know your client's name. Once you're on a first name basis things go a lot smoother. - Don't be distracted. The customer wants your undivided attention. - Always make sure you treat your customer's requests as though they're unique. -

Different customers have different needs, and you must be observant and flexible enough to tailor your service approach accordingly;

Help Indecisive customers make decisions. - Impatient customers should be shown extra concern- Knowledgeable customers may test you, so brush up on the products and services your company offers, as well as your companies policies and procedures. - Always keep your interaction with Flirtatious customers on a professional level. - Protect yourself from being dragged into a bad mood by Unhappy customers . - Ask Argumentative customers their opinions on a product or service and they're liable to be more cooperative. It will also help you discover what they do like. - Keep cool, and show Rude customers you are there to help. - Angry customers usually are dealing with other problems. Remain calm, and help defuse their anger.

2 CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Customer expectations are often unfulfilled by poor service.

AIRHEAD SERVICE

Airhead service is characterized by a friendly, well-meaning and energetic approach that lacks effective communication skills and product knowledge.

Discussion Questions

Is it OK to engage in a little small talk to break the ice ?

Is Dave aware that Mr. Brown has limited time to spend in the store ?

Does small talk distract Dave from his original goal to help Mr. Brown find what he needs ?

Overall did Dave think before he spoke ?

Does Dave know anything about baseball gloves ?

Key Training Points

Being nice and energetic is useless if you aren't really listening. - Product and service knowledge is essential. It's vital you have it. - If you don't have the information your customer is looking for, admit it. Then try and find it, or ask for help.

INDIFFERENT SERVICE

Customers want their shopping experience to be as hassle-free as possible. They expect to find what they want or get an answer to their question as soon as possible

Discussion Questions

Did Mr. Brown feel welcome in this store ?

Did he get prompt attention ?

Do the sales clerks in this store care about customers or do they "only work there" ?

What does this store communicate to customers ?

How long will this store be in business ?

Key Training Points

If you are busy when a customer walks up, simply look up and say, "I'll be with you in a minute". Then finish with the first customer.

BY-THE-BOOK SERVICE

Rules and regulations should never get in the way of fulfilling legitimate customer expectations.

Discussion Questions

Should customer service employees neglect rules and regulations ?

Is there some flexibility in applying rules and regulations ?

If particular rules and procedures chronically get in the way of meeting customer needs, what should you do ?

Key Training Points

Companies have to have rules and regulations for consistency's sake and sometimes you have to say "no" to a customer. Being familiar with company policy will enable you to know how far rules can be bent and what the options are. If particular rules and procedures cause chronic problems with customers, talk to your supervisor to see if changes can be made ?

3 COMMUNICATING BY PHONE

The first impression of your company is often created within the first five to ten seconds of a telephone conversation. If a customer has a bad impression you may never hear from them again.

Discussion Questions

Why is it so important to know all the features of your telephone system ?

Why should you smile before picking up the receiver ?

How many times should the phone ring before it is answered ?

What should you say when you answer the phone ?

When you take a message over the phone what should it contain ?

Key Training Points

Customers on the phone deserve the same quality service as those in a store or office. -

Make sure you understand all the features of your phone before you get a customer on the line. - Answer the phone as quickly as possible.- A caller should be treated as a welcomed guest not an annoyance.

Additional Information

As a front-line employee you represent the business to the public. If you can't satisfy a caller with information, instead of saying, " I don't know" you should say, "Let me check for you and find out"

It is common business practice not to leave a customer on hold any longer than one minute. If you're not sure you can get an answer in that amount of time, ask for a phone number and tell the caller you will call back and give them an approximate time.

In a call waiting situation, the first caller has to be treated with greater priority. The second call should be handled as quickly and efficiently as possible, for example you could say,

" I'm on the other line right now, may I call you back in ten minutes ?

What number can you be reached at ?"

4 HANDLING PROBLEMS

When a customer complains or expresses objections, accept it as their way of saying they want to be loyal customers and that they're giving you the opportunity to correct the problem. Most dissatisfied customers find somewhere else to shop rather than tell a company they're unhappy.

Discussion Questions

Did Dave (baseball scene) try hard enough to satisfy the unhappy customer ?
What techniques did the manager use in fulfilling the unhappy customer's expectations ?
Did Susan (restaurant scene) treat her customer fairly ?
Did Susan's customer have a legitimate cause for complaint ?
Is it proper to 'give in' to obnoxious customers ?
Did Justin (gov't office scene) behave professionally ?
What does professional mean ?
How did Justin avoid embarrassing his customer ?
Did Tony (hardware scene) find out the real cause of his customer's anger ?
Did Tony take his customer's behaviour personally ?
Why did Tony reward his customer's behaviour by giving him two free litres of oil?
Is it Tony's or the company's policy ?
Did Tony convert an angry customer into a satisfied one and what will this mean for the business ?

Key Training Points

Objections are a normal part of the service process. Customer service employees should identify and meet them. The first rule for dealing with a customer with a complaint is to listen. Don't interrupt, unless it is to clarify a point. In handling a complaint remember, you and your customer basically want the same thing - to find a solution. If you can't find a solution, as a last resort, bring in the manager. Acknowledge the problem, apologize for it's existence, then try to resolve it.

Argumentative customers thrive on disagreement. Don't fall into the trap and argue back. If you do allow yourself to become angry, "take five". Excuse yourself and regain your composure, or even ask another customer service employee to take over. Concentrate on points of agreement. Suggest solutions, and ask the customer's opinion.

Arrogant and rude customers need to be treated diplomatically. Resist the temptation to put them in their place. Stay calm. Be firm but helpful.

Angry customers have two messages; one is about facts, the other is about feelings. Analyze the problem. Find out what solution the customer would like. Don't make promises you can't keep, and stress only what you can do. If it's in the realm of your authority, negotiate a solution. Finally, thank them for their understanding.

5 SPECIAL CUSTOMERS

Stereotyping customers because of such things as age, gender, ethnic origin, or handicap, can seriously jeopardize your relationship with them.

Discussion Questions

Does Justin treat his clients like people or numbers ?
Why did Justin change his mind and decide to help ?
Why wasn't Justin sensitive to Mrs. Willoughby's objections ?
Why did Justin feel insulted by Mrs. Willoughby's reaction to the walk-in shower ?
Did Justin really listen to Mrs. Willoughby's explanation ?
How does Justin feel about himself when he discovers the application is for a doghouse ? Why ?
What presumptions lead Justin into such a situation ?

Key Training Points

Be patient and concentrate on the conversation - Use your ears and your mind when listening - Be cordial, warm and friendly, encouraging your customer to express themselves. - Don't patronize; remember difficulty in expressing yourself is not an indication of mental deficiency. - Reiterate what has been said. This not only ensures that you understand the issue or problem, it also helps the customer determine if they have left out any relevant facts.

Additional Information

Sometimes communicating with foreign born customers who have heavy accents or limited knowledge of the language can be difficult. Articulate carefully and speak slowly but not so slowly as to give offense. Avoid slang, jargon or jokes. Different cultures may interpret humour in different and sometimes unexpected ways.

6 INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

In many businesses, the majority of employees have little or no contact with external customers. Cooperation by the various departments in serving external customers is vital in meeting customer expectations. The inability to appreciate each other's needs in carrying out their tasks creates conflicts and can affect meeting external customer expectations.

A customer is anyone who receives the output of someone else's work.

Discussion Questions

Did Tony and John coordinate their jobs and schedules ?

Did they appreciate each others needs ?

Did their conflict enhance external customer service ?

Is their a difference between your co-workers and your boss ?

Do your relations with your boss influence your ability to fulfill customer expectations ?

Is it proper to ask for a raise ? If yes, when ?

Is it proper to threaten to leave or quit ?

Is it proper to flatter your boss ?

Is it a good idea to ask your boss for advice or support on an assignment ?

Key Training Points

Customer service is every employee's business. Every individual in your company is either serving customers or helping someone else to serve customers. Build a problem-solving approach into your work-style and it will make you better at what you do. Give credit where credit is due. Positive feedback is always appreciated.

Satisfying internal customer needs means co-operating with your co-workers and communicating with your boss. Bosses are human, with all the advantages and disadvantages of the species. Therefore treat your boss as a special internal customer, one requiring special treatment. Don't forget that service quality is measured on two dimensions; expectations of the service to be received ; and perceptions of the service actually received. Involve your boss in your work, demonstrate that their involvement will improve your performance.

7 CUSTOMER SERVICE SUMMARY

As quality becomes a password in the competitive world of business, the difference between success and failure is now measured by how the customer is treated.

Your job as a customer service employee is to determine and to fulfill customers' expectations. How can you do that? Chances are good that the things you want as a consumer are the same things your customers want. Courtesy; prompt, personal attention; reliability, competence and sincerity.

It takes a special person to work with the public. Being knowledgeable, confident, and courteous, even when everything seems to go wrong, means you're a professional.

A major part of your job involves communication. Communicating effectively means active listening; getting feedback as well as expressing yourself well.

It's not an exaggeration to say that how well you do your job significantly impacts on the job security of all employees. If your organization loses customers because of poor service then the future of the entire company is threatened.

Whether you're hired, or you're fired, ultimately depends on you meeting customer needs.

It's up to you!

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1 CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR YOUTH

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1. What are some of types of services described in the videotape?

2. Tony, Wanda and Susan are shown dreaming about the jobs for which they've just been hired. What do the dreams reflect about their thinking regarding their jobs?

3. Most companies train their new employees. What are some "tips" given to the newly-hired employees?

4. The narrator states... "Throughout your career you will encounter thousands of different customers". Listed below are types of problem customers. What advice does the narrator give about how to treat them?

A. The Indecisive Customer:

B. The Impatient Customer

C. The Knowledgeable Customer

D. The Flirtatious Customer

E. The Unhappy Customer

F. The Argumentative Customer

G. The Rude Customer

H. The Angry Customer

5. Why is it important that a customer service employee be observant and flexible?

2 CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1.

The first part of this videotape is titled "Airhead Service". What are some things Dave did wrong as he tried to help Mr. Brown?

2.

What should a salesperson do if she or he does not have the information the customer is looking for?

3.

In the segment titled "Indifferent Service", what problem did Mr. Brown have with the salespersons he asked to help him?

4.

What did Mr. Brown say as he left the store?

5.

In the segment titled "By-The-Book Service", Mr. Brown's credit cards were refused because he had reached his credit limit. How did the two credit card companies differ in their approach to help Mr. Brown solve his problem?

3 COMMUNICATING BY PHONE

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1.

What instructions did Wanda receive about how to use the phone?

2.

Why is it important to be enthusiastic and to smile before picking up the phone to communicate with a customer?

3.

What are four basic rules that should be followed when answering the phone?

4.

When a customer service employee ends a phone conversation, what is the last thing he or she should ask the customer?

4 HANDLING PROBLEMS

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1. True or False? Customer service employees must learn to handle customer objections as a normal part of the selling process.
2. What is the customer's objection about the ladder?
3. How does the customer service employee convince the customer that the ladder is all right?
4. What is the woman's objection in the restaurant?
5. How does the customer service employee handle this complaint?
6. How should customer complaints be handled?
7. True or False? Most customers will return to a business if they feel an objection or complaint has been resolved to their satisfaction.
8. What advice is given about how to deal with "difficult customers"?
9. The narrator suggests that arrogant customers be treated _____.
10. What suggestions are made about dealing with angry customers?

5 SPECIAL CUSTOMERS

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1. Why has Mrs. Willoughby come to this office?

2. How does Justin treat her?

3. What is (are) Justin's mistake(s) when serving Mrs. Willoughby?

6 INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1. Who is an internal customer?

2. John and Tony have a disagreement. What is the disagreement about?

3. Both John and Tony spent their energies defending themselves instead of finding a solution to the problem that could benefit the customer. What does the videotape show could have happened that would better meet the needs of Tony and John and would benefit the customer?

4. The boss is an internal customer, too. He or she may have to be dealt with in a special way if an employee wants the boss to help him or her meet personal needs. Why does the narrator say it would have been better if Wanda had returned later to ask for a raise?

7 CUSTOMER SERVICE SUMMARY

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below during or shortly after viewing the videotape.

1. What often determines business success or failure in the competitive world of business?

2. How should a customer be treated?

3. What are some important characteristics of a good customer service employee?