High Quality Customer Service for One-Stop Career Center Clients in Stressful Circumstances

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Customer Service

- What is a customer?
- What does customer service mean?
- What are some examples of bad customer service that you’ve experienced?
- What are some examples of good customer service that you’ve experienced?
What is a customer?

- the recipient of a service
- any individual needing the services of another individual in a person-to-person transaction
- an individual who uses the goods or services of another individual
- the recipient or beneficiary of a given output or product
- a person who receives a product, service or information, but is not part of the organization supplying it
- any individual with expectations regarding the attributes of goods or services received

Source:
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&q=define%3ACustomer+
Which of the definitions of “customer” fits the people you work with?

What aspects of the definitions are especially relevant to your work?
What is customer service?

- activities and programs provided to make the relationship a satisfying one for the customer
- the degree of assistance and courtesy granted those who patronize the organization
- the provision of goods and services in a way that exceeds the customer's expectations
- taking active steps (as opposed to always reacting) to improve a product or service delivery
- supporting activities at the customer/provider interface adding value to a product

Source:
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define: Customer+service
Which of the definitions of “customer service” fits the work you do here at the One-Stop Center?

What aspects of customer service are important in your work?
Examples of bad customer service

- The clerk was talking on the phone while ringing up your order.
- You were standing at a counter waiting for help while the employees ignored you.
- You asked a clerk for a help and you got an eye roll and big sigh in response to your question.
- Even though you had an appointment and arrived on time, you waited for more than an hour with no explanation or apology.
- You were led to believe that you would be receiving something but discovered that it wasn’t available after all.
Examples of good customer service

- A sales representative at the cable company really listened to your problem and tried to help.

- The store clerk told you about a coupon in the newspaper that helped you save 30 percent off your purchase.

- While at a restaurant the manager approached your table and asked if everything was okay.

- A pharmacist in a large drug store took the time to explain the side effects of a medication to you on a busy day.

- The person who helped you guided you toward a better product that was more in line with what you really wanted.
Principles for delivering good customer service

*Appear friendly:* Even if you are having a bad day, don’t let it affect how you talk to customers.

*Go the extra mile:* If you are working with a customer and have run into a dead end, help the customer move beyond it. Without your help, he or she may be lost.

*Pay attention to the customer:* Make sure to give customers your full attention when helping them.

*Make eye contact:* Never talk to someone while looking through papers or over their shoulder at someone else without saying “Please excuse me” first.

*Recognize waiting customers:* Be sure to tell those waiting in a long line that you will be right with them and apologize for the hold-up.

*Tell them what you can and can’t do:* Customers sometimes believe that you have all the answers and all the power. Let them know what you can and can’t do to help. Their expectations and requests will become more realistic.
What Types of Stressed Customer Behavior Do You See Every Day?

What Are Some Techniques that You Use to Manage Stressed Customers?
### What’s Happening in Your Customers’ Lives?

They are experiencing…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Stressors:</th>
<th>What else?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exhaustion, hunger, physical illness, cold/heat</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Stressors:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>loss of control, sense of helplessness, loss of hope, mental distress</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Stressors:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>decreased income, decreased quality of life, lack of money, family-related stressors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customers’ Tornado of Emotion

Frustration
Fear
Worry
Anger
Stress

Staff Get Caught in the Downpour
Lose/Lose Model

In the lose/lose model the customer doesn’t get what he wants & you feel you failed somehow.

Win/Win Model

In the win/win model the customer gets what she wants & you get a sense of satisfaction from how you handled things.
Lose/Lose Model vs. Win/Win Model

What happens when you use the Lose/Lose Model with Customers?

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What happens when you use the Win/Win Model with Customers?

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Weathering the Storm

Win/Win Model
Tools and Techniques

- Teflon vs. Mirror
- Acting vs. Reacting
- The Four Stages of Crisis Development
- Creating Calm through Communication
**Teflon vs. Mirror**

**Being Teflon**
- Non-stick
- Non-absorbent

**Being a Mirror**
- Captures image
- Bounces image back

When staff use the “Teflon” method they allow the negative words or behaviors of a customer to “slide right off.” Despite having to deal with customers’ unpleasant behavior, staff who use this method remain polite and professional.

When staff use the “Mirror” method they “reflect” back a customers’ unpleasant behavior by matching it. When using this method the unpleasant behaviors of staff and customers feed off of each other causing a bad situation to get worse.
Customer reaction to mirror

- Their agitated mood is maintained
- Their agitated mood may increase
- They’re unable to listen and follow directions
- They may start to see you as the enemy
- Their agitation may negatively affect other customers and staff
- Their agitation may lead to disruptive behavior

RESULT: solving the customer’s problem may take longer or never happen

Customer reaction to teflon

- Unreflected mood makes it difficult to maintain agitation
- Unreflected mood means they don’t see you as the enemy
- Their agitated mood decreases and eventually calms

RESULT: solving the customer’s problem is quicker and easier for all involved.
## Acting vs. Reacting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does it mean to Act?</th>
<th>What does it mean to React?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You set the tone</td>
<td>Others set your tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You take control</td>
<td>Others take your control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You set the example of good behavior</td>
<td>Others set the example of good or bad behavior for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You decide how to behave or respond</td>
<td>Others determine how you respond or behave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You decide not to let others control your emotions or behavior</td>
<td>Others prevent you from controlling your own emotions or behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four Levels of Crisis Development

- Anxiety Level
- Defensive Level
- Acting Out Level
- Tension Reduction Level

The National Crisis Prevention Institute (1987b)
The Anxiety Level

What the customer is doing
- Pacing
- Restlessness
- Increased voice tone
- Psychomotor agitation
- Nervousness
- Hypervigilence

What you should be doing
- Active listening
- Making supportive statements
- Indicating understanding non-verbally (e.g. nodding)
- Being non-confrontational
- Making non-judgmental statements
1. Door Openers
   “Can I help you?”

2. Acknowledgment Responses
   Eye Contact “Mmmmm…”
   Nodding “I see…”
   “I hear you.” “I’m sorry that happened.”

3. Active Listening
   “So what you’re saying is (repeat what you heard)…”
   “I want to make sure that I understand. Do you mean?…” (repeat what you think was meant)
### The Defensive Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the customer is doing</th>
<th>What you should be doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal belligerence</td>
<td>Project a calm demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projecting hostility</td>
<td>Don’t argue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging authority</td>
<td>Don’t get drawn into a battle of wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing limits</td>
<td>Remind customer of rules for appropriate behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making accusations</td>
<td>Remind customer that you are there to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking louder</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Acting Out Level

What the customer is doing

- Total loss of control
- Physical aggression towards you or their environment (windows, chairs, etc.)

What you should be doing

- Non-violent crisis intervention
- Don’t engage customer or try to physically subdue
- Emphasis should be on “safety” and “escape”
- Leave at the earliest opportunity and call for help
Tension Reduction Level

What the customer is experiencing

- Muscle relaxation (physical)
- Remorsefulness
- Embarrassment
- Physical exhaustion

What you should be doing

Initiate discussion with other staff to determine:

- Triggers leading to disruptive incident
- Things that could have been done differently
- How to avoid a similar situation in the future
**During an Escalation: Create Calm through Communication**

1. Appear centered and relaxed. Breathe! Control your own emotional response. Be calm, but attentive.

2. Allow time. Listen and acknowledge the anger. Let the person know you see that something is wrong. Don’t judge or belittle.

3. Lower your voice, tone, pitch, and tempo.

4. Ask the person to sit down.

5. Allow extra physical space. Do not crowd the person or touch the person.

6. Allow full expression of needs and grievances. Verbal venting can release energy and promote calming.

7. Do not be defensive. Don’t argue with the person. Don’t take sides or agree/disagree with distortions.

8. Do not talk over the customer when he or she is yelling. Wait until a breath is taken and speak during the quiet seconds.

9. Clear up misunderstandings and respond to valid complaints.

10. Respond selectively; only answer informational questions, not abusive ones. Ignore challenging questions.

11. Don’t offer solutions. Point out choices. Don’t attempt to bargain.

12. Build a momentum of agreement. What can be genuinely agreed upon? For example, “You’re right, it sounds like a mistake was made.”

13. Know when to stop trying. Exit the meeting, if possible, and call back-up or security, if necessary.

Techniques for Resolving Workplace Conflict

Initiate and Listen
- If you are aware that something is wrong, be the first to bring it up.
- Set the tone for the discussion by your calm attitude and willingness to discuss and resolve the situation.
- Initiate discussion at a place and time that is safe and good for all.
- Listen, Listen, Listen, and listen some more.
- Find out what is really being said -- listen behind the words.
- You don’t have to agree with everything that is said, but hear it out.
- Clarify what you are hearing – restate what you hear, ask questions.
- Respect differences in communication styles and cultural differences in approaching conflict.

Don’t be a Trigger
- Avoid using language that triggers – reframe to neutral language.
- Use “I” rather than “You.”
- Don’t over react – your attitude and actions will increase or decrease the conflict.
- Don’t get sucked into side issues – ignore challenges. Focus on the issues.
- Be careful of your non-verbal communication. What is your body saying?
- Respect the person’s need for personal space and dignity.
- Avoid standing or sitting directly in front of another. Instead place yourself a bit off to the side.

Set Respectful Limits
- Be clear about limits and consequences.
- Don’t threaten. State facts, don’t make the person feel threatened.
- If the discussion gets out of control, take a break, make an exit, and/or get help.
- Never use violence or physical means to set a limit.
- Resume when things have cooled off.

Find Win-Win Solutions
- Generate solutions that meet the needs of each person.
- Know that the real needs might not be what is initially stated.
- Make sure everyone walks away with something.
- Use a fair process for deciding – even when you need to exert authority.
- Check in later – is the solution working, did the process of resolving the situation work?

Thanks for joining us today!