

Exceptional Customer Service

Local Program Meeting
New Bern, NC
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What We Hope to Learn Today

- Today we will learn how to:
 - Communicate effectively with customers
 - Create a positive impression
 - Develop and maintain good quality service standards
 - Plan good customer service

Who Are Customers?

- Definition of a customer (External / Internal):
 - Customers are people who need your assistance.
 - They are not an interruption to your job, they are the reason you have a job..

Communicating Effectively with Customers

- What describes GOOD service and BAD service?
 - Good customer service is taking that extra step to help without being asked! It's all about attitude and skills.

Attitude Checklist

- What attitudes assist in providing good service?
 - Enjoy helping people
 - Handle people well
 - Care for your customers
 - Give fair and equal treatment to all
 - Be understanding of people with special needs (language barrier)

Skills for Customer Service

- Know about your organization
- Learn the technical parts of the job
- Communicate well
- Be consistent
- Be organized
- Know your place in the team and be a team player

Greeting Customers

- The purpose is to create and maintain a welcoming environment - how can we achieve this?
 - Be attentive, acknowledge a person as soon as they appear, even if you're busy
 - SMILE!
 - Establish eye contact
 - Tell them your name
 - Ask how you can help
 - Give the customer your full attention
 - Be polite and courteous..... (Be Nice!)

Find Out if You Can Help

- How can you find out what people want?
- If you can't help, what should you do?
- Offer alternatives if possible
- If they have to wait, how would you handle it?

How to Listen to Customers

- Active listening = Attending skills (being ready)
 - Attend to immediate needs (if you need to finish something before giving your full attention)
 - Being available
 - Eye contact
 - Attentive posture
 - Concentration

Using Your Voice

- Do you:
 - Become loud when angry or upset
 - Speak faster when nervous
 - Speak slowly when tired or bored
 - Control your tone in most situations
 - Sound bossy, weak or unsure
 - Have a clear and easy-to-hear voice
 - Speak in a very formal manner?

Think about how you might modify your voice in certain situations...

Dealing with Difficult Behavior

- Label the behavior, not the customer
- Listen
- Don't get defensive
- Don't take it personally
- Find out what the customer wants
- Discuss alternatives
- Take responsibility for what you CAN do
- Agree on action

The Angry Customer

- Listen carefully without interrupting so you understand the problem
- Empathize in a broad way
- Stay calm and remain polite
- Don't escalate the problem
- Don't take it personally, be defensive or blame others
- Propose an action plan and follow it
- Seek support if you can't agree on a solution or if the customer asks to see "whoever's in charge"

Phone Skills

- Know how to use the phones
- Speak clearly and slowly
- State your name and organization
- Write down the caller's name and use it
- Don't say rude things while someone's on hold
- If they're explaining something use words to show you're listening (umm, yes ...)
- Have pad and pencil ready to take notes or messages (check spelling and message content)
- Don't eat or drink while on the phone

Written Skills

- Write clearly and concisely
- Refer to their letter, date and query
- Be friendly without being too informal (*Dear Aunt* writing style)
- Check your spelling and grammar
- Make sure you've answered their query or request or explained why you can't
- Be timely or apologize for any delay in replying

A Positive First Impression

- First impressions count and will affect the interaction. People make judgments in the first 30 seconds.
- Be confident
- Knowledge - know your organization and the services you provide
- Confidentiality
- Follow up (don't just say you'll do something, do it)

Remember - You only have one chance to make a first impression!

Develop and Maintain Quality of Service

- Reliability
- Confidence
- Responsiveness
- Efficiency
- Consistency
- Organization
- Acceptance of and adherence to policies and procedures

Planning Good Customer Service

- Recording procedures (when are your busy times)
- Observe and report customer needs
- Be proactive in improving service
- Have processes and procedures for dealing with difficult situations BEFORE they happen and make sure staff are trained.

Questions?

