



Customer Experience Management

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Customer Experience Management

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Second Edition | ISBN: 978-1-941676-07-3

Published by Hight Performance Group, Inc.

Austin, Texas

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Printed in the United States of America by Hight Performance Group, Inc.

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CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT:

Going Beyond Customer Service

In today's market, basic customer service is not enough. The new experience economy demands exemplary service and experiences that are memorable. Managing experiences with customers—both internal and external ones—require new skills and understanding. How well these experiences are managed dictate which organizations will have the competitive advantage in the market and how they differentiate from other competitors.

Learn how to deliver great experiences, ensure that every 'moment of truth' is consistent no matter who provides the service, and ensure your organization's brand is positive. Develop a Service Standard Scorecard that you will be proud to have customers use to rate their service experiences and explore how to conquer service barriers that make it difficult to meet identified service standards consistently.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize why creating extraordinary customer experiences is essential
- Realize when 'moments of truth' prove how well we manage our customers' experiences
- Explore the 10 Commandments of Customer Service that must be delivered consistently
- Define 'standards of excellence' for creating positive service experiences in your department
- Create a Customer Experience Scorecard to measure your outcomes

Module 1: The Role of Leaders in Delivering Exceptional Service

Employees See Value Through Your Eyes

Module 1 Objectives

- Explore the role of leaders in modeling values and performance
- Recognize the competition for top talent in today's workforce
- Discover three strategies to employ a Ready to Serve Culture

The Role of Leaders in Developing Culture

According to Wikipedia, culture is defined as, “. . . the behavior of humans within an organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviors. Culture includes the organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits. It is also the pattern of such collective behaviors and assumptions that are taught to new organizational members as a way of perceiving, and even thinking and feeling. Organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders.”



Although many organizations attempt to develop a consistent universal culture, like Disney, culture is really developed at departmental or team levels. If the organization wants every employee to deliver exceptional customer service, then its leaders must embrace those values and cultivate that within the departments and then reinforce those values within each team. The truth is leaders drive and influence the organizational culture. So, developing positive customer experiences starts and ends with leaders.

The Competition for Top Talent

Talk to any leaders and they will tell you how hard it is to find quality talent—employees that possess the current education and skill sets needed to perform specific functions, have the “soft skills” needed to have a good relationship with team members and relate to customers effectively, and who can drive desired results toward goals and initiatives. With the ongoing retirement of Baby Boomer employees and the increasingly dominance of Millennials and Gen Z in the workplace, organizational leaders are challenged with maintaining a culture of shared values and meeting the expectations of various stakeholders.

Several studies conducted on the changing demographics of work indicate that there is a global talent shortage and that organizations will find it more challenging to attract and retain the best available talent. Leaders of organizations have a key role to develop not only a culture that delivers positive customer experiences, but to develop a culture where the best talent wants to be.

Two Strategies to Develop a Ready to Serve Culture

Developing a culture that embraces the value of delivering exceptional service requires that organizational leaders employ these three important strategies.

Strategy #1 Develop Customer-Centric Staff

Leaders can develop a customer-centric culture by:

- Hiring customer-centric people—although you can provide professional development opportunities to staff, it pays forward when you hire people who seem naturally friendly, polite, and who have a servant leadership attitude.
- Setting expectations around customer-centric behaviors—determine the common behaviors that are associated with creating positive customer experiences (e.g., greeting, timeliness, resourcefulness, follow through) and ensure that team or department procedures are in place so there is known way for doing things.
- Recognizing the impact of positive internal customer service—delivering exceptional customer experiences is not reserved just for external customers; team members should practice positive behaviors with one another.
- Communicating those expectations consistently—do not take for granted that team members read memos or procedures or know what your expectations are for handling specific situations. Continue having dialog around the expectations in staff meetings or interactions.
- Managing expectations—when you observe that customer service expectations are not met, take timely and appropriate action to discuss your observations with staff members.
- Rewarding and reinforcing positive behaviors—performance feedback should be provided throughout the year and when you make a point of recognizing positive behaviors, they are more apt to be repeated.
- Celebrating when expectations are met—take time during the month to recognize accomplishments, share stories with positive outcomes, and to let team members know that you appreciate them.
- “Walking the talk” about being customer-centric—remember that your staff observes what you do and not just what you say. By modeling the behaviors you want to see in your staff, you are reinforcing these behaviors and the values of the culture.

Module 2: We are in the Experience Economy Now

Extraordinary Experiences are Priceless

Module 2 Objectives

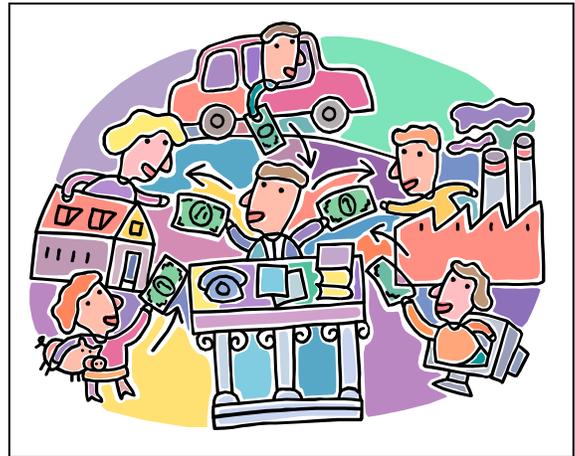
- What is the experience economy?
- Recognize the impact of customer experiences
- Acknowledge that “Moments of Truth” influence perceptions
- Explore the Customer Experience Service Chain and the impact of the “weakest link”

What is the Experience Economy?

Joseph Pine and James Gilmore started a new era of customer service when they authored the book, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*.

Since the early 1900's, our economy has been based on and evolved around:

- An agriculture-based economy
- A mass manufactured goods-based economy
- A service-based economy (for last 30 years)



In their book, Pine and Gilmore stated that the service economy has been superseded by the *experience economy*. Because of technology and the ability to do more with less, customers expect to have a rich, compelling experience everywhere they go and 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And with the demands of working harder and longer hours, customers often do not have the patience to wait for service or to have things resolved.

Experience is More than a Service

Experiences are distinctly different from services. Experiences provide a **memorable** feeling that remains with customers for a long time. Customers feel a pleasant **sensation**, and an emotional connection with an organization. This requires highly skilled staff who can dynamically **personalize** each transaction according to customers' expectations.

Employees that offer memorable customers experiences rather than services, see themselves as **stagers** of events. And like any theatrical event, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to deliver memorable experiences on a consistent basis. The stage provides the look and feel of the organization's brand; employees are committed and well-trained to deliver exceptional experiences. Employees respond to customers as unique individuals with unique needs and then meet them.

SHARING OUR BEST AND WORST EXPERIENCES

Activity: What Do You Remember Most as a Customer?

Describe one of the best customer experiences you have had as a customer in the last few years, and one of the worst customer experiences you have encountered. Capture your experiences in the spaces provided below.

1. One of your best customer experiences:

2. One of your worst customer experiences.

We Are All Customers

You know what it feels like to have great experiences and poor experiences as a customer, both as an internal and external customer. So, does not it just make sense for you and other staff members to create the best experiences for all your customers? Don't you wish every organization you do business with felt that way?

The “Dream Vacation—A Case Study

You and your spouse put away money each paycheck for over a year to go on vacation to Hawaii. Neither of you have ever been there. It has been a dream of yours ever since you were married to finally experience what you had only seen in pictures and movies.

You see an advertisement for a Hawaiian vacation package that includes round trip airfare for two, 6 nights' lodging in Waikiki, and a rental car for 7 days for \$1,999. The deal sounded too good to pass up, so you buy the package. You decide to go in January to get away from the wintry weather on the “mainland.” Friends agree to take care of your two dogs while you and your spouse are away. Everything planned is working great so far and the two of you cannot wait to get away!

It snows the night before the trip and since your flight is at 7 am, you and your spouse book a 4 am shuttle to get to the airport and ensure you are there two hours before the flight. The ride goes smoothly enough, and you are at the airport by 5 am. When you check in for the flight, the gate agent states that checked luggage is not included in the package so there is an additional \$50 for the two suitcases. You gladly pay it since you are on your way to “paradise!”

It has been a long time since you and your spouse have been on a long flight, so the 9-hour non-stop seems like an awfully long time. Meals are no longer included on most flights, so you purchase lunches for two for \$25. You are relieved that the movies-in-flight are free!

After landing in Honolulu, you head straight to the baggage claim and ground transportation area. Your spouse goes to the car rental counter, and you wait for the luggage, which does not arrive and is now expected on the next flight which lands in five hours. So, you drive to the hotel in Waikiki and stop at a store to buy attire that is more suitable for tropical weather. The luggage finally arrives at the hotel at midnight.

The first three days of the vacation are great and both you and your spouse enjoyed spending time at the beautiful beaches. On the third day, you decide to drive to the north side of the island to see the big waves. While walking along the beach, the car keys have fallen out of your pocket. You call the car rental company and must wait three hours before a taxi delivers a new set of keys. Because you are on the other side of the island and the taxi driver had to pick up the keys from the car rental office, deliver the keys to you and then drive back to Honolulu, you must pay \$150.

It rains “cats and dogs” the last three days of your vacation, and you spend much of the time inside the hotel. The amenities are great, but you and your spouse are disappointed that you cannot go hiking, snorkeling, or see some of the other sites you planned because of the non-stop downpour. When you ask the hotel concierge if the rain was unusual, he replies, “Not really. That is Winter in Hawaii. You get snow and we get rain. That is why it is so green and lush here!”

So much for the “dream vacation” and now it is time to head back home. You and your spouse are wondering if it really was worth the money spent, and the stories you plan to share with family and friends are as memorable as planned.

Small Group Exercise: Your Reaction as a Customer

Consider and respond to the following questions:

1. What would your initial expectations be when you booked this vacation?
2. As a customer, how would you describe your Hawaiian experience?
3. Since there was no guarantee that you would be absolutely satisfied with the vacation, do you have a right to be disappointed? If so, why?
4. Who is to blame for this poor customer experience?

MOMENTS OF TRUTH



Jan Carlzon, the former president of Scandinavian Airlines, authored a book in 1986 entitled, *Moments of Truth*. In this book, Carlzon defines a 'moment of truth' in business as:

"Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business, however remote, is an opportunity to form an impression."

When customers' perceptions of what they receive are the same or higher than their expectations, then the moment of truth is positive. When their perceptions are less than their expectations, a negative moment of truth is created.

As a result of his beliefs, Jan Carlzon took a failing airline and transformed it to be one of the most respected in the industry. Some of the moments of truth Carlzon identified in the airline business include:

- When you call to make a reservation to take a flight,
- When you arrive at the airport and check your bags curbside,
- When you go inside and pick up your ticket at the ticket counter,
- When you are greeted at the gate,
- When you are taken care of by the flight attendants onboard the aircraft, and
- When you are greeted at your destination.

Activity: Where do your customers encounter Moments of Truth with you and your organization?

Who is Your Customer?

A customer is . . . whoever gets your work next . . . anyone who uses the products or services of your job . . . internal or external.

Customers keep us in business and employed. We remain relevant to customers and competitive in the market when we provide exceptional service and meet our customers' expectations. It is important to recognize that our customers can be external and internal to the organization. Based on the definition above, anyone whom you provide information, support, resources, or services is your customer—regardless of whether they are external or internal to the organization.

Why is it important for us to acknowledge people we work with every day as our customers?

Studies have found that the quality of service is linked to how well internal customers serve one another. So, customer service starts with inside an organization.

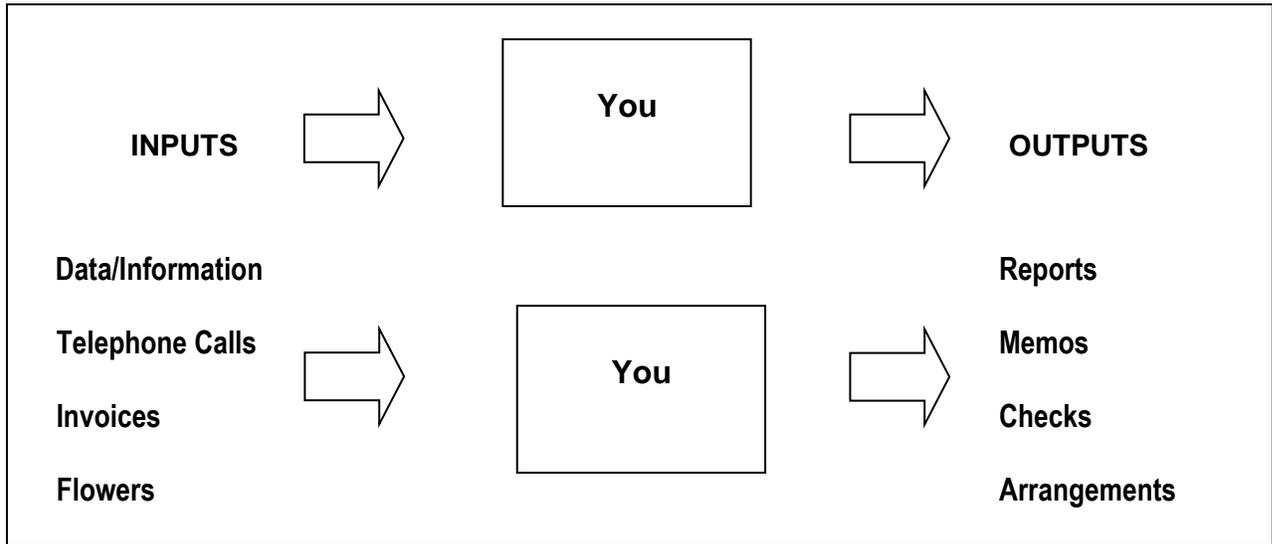
Activity: Who Are My Customers?

Brainstorm all the different people, roles, teams, departments and/or organizations that could be considered your customer. You may choose to construct a mind map to illustrate all the different customer groups represented.

In this activity, you may have determined a few people you did not consider as customers before. It is important to be aware of your customers and recognize how you meet their needs. In addition, YOU may be in the position of being the customer when you need information, resources, or services from someone to perform your job or meet your needs.

Service Inputs vs. Service Outputs

Outputs are products or services provided for customers, internal or external. Inputs are products or services that are supplied to an individual or organization. Everyone in an organization has both inputs and outputs in his/her role. (See the sample inputs and outputs reflected in the chart below.)



Activity: Who Am I Customer of and Who is My Next Customer?

Using the chart below, indicate who you receive inputs from and what they provide, and because of what you do with the inputs, who is the recipient or customer of what you do and what does he/she receive from you?

WHO GIVES INPUTS TO ME

WHAT DO I RECEIVE?

WHO:

WHAT:



WHO RECEIVES MY OUTPUTS?

WHAT DO THEY RECEIVE?

WHO:

WHAT:

WHO:

WHAT:



WHO:

WHAT:

WHO:

WHAT:

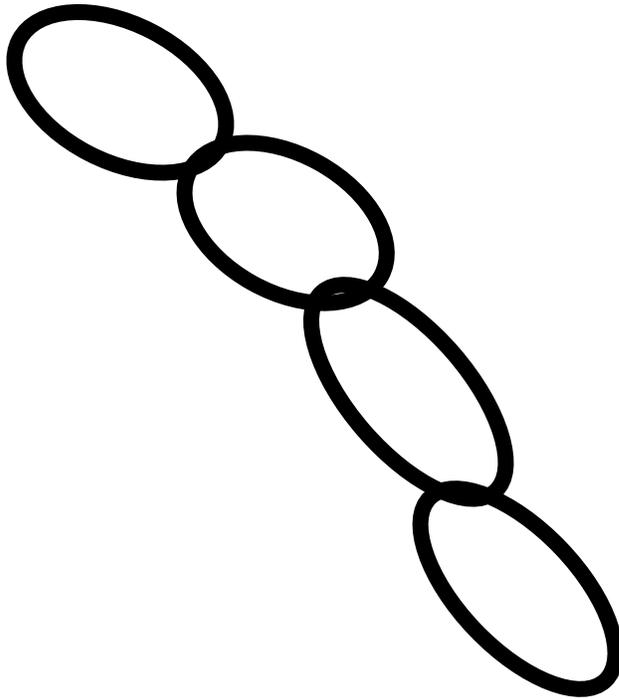


WHO:

WHAT:

The Service Chain

Each role in an organization is a link in the total 'service chain' for the organization's customers. Every link is dependent on one another and impacts the total image of the organization and the overall experiences of its customers. Consider all the links that add up to your organization's brand and consider the following questions.



- How would you describe the individual links in the service chain?
- How does each link impact the others?
- Which links are your strongest?
- Where are the weak links that impact your team, department/ organization's brand?

Activity: Customer Experience Action Plan

2. How could you ensure that each Moment of Truth is a positive experience for all customers?

2. Why is it important for us to recognize our individual role in the Service Chain?

Module 3—The 10 Customer Experience Commandments: *Are You Ready to Serve?*

Module 3 Objectives

- Discover the 10 Customer Service Commandments based on common expectations and pet peeves of customers
- Identify the barriers to delivering exceptional experiences on a consistent basis

The 10 Customer Service Commandments

You can create more positive customer experiences by employing these commandments on a consistent base—which means doing them every day!

#1 See it through the Customer’s Eyes

We all want to provide service and provide positive experiences using the skills, knowledge, and information available. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Put yourself in the customer’s “shoes”
 - This might be a “first time” experience
 - Their prior experiences may not be positive
 - Feelings of fear and frustration can cause emotional outbursts
 - How would you feel if this happened to you or a family member?
- Treat others as you want to be treated
 - Do not pass on your “bad” customer service experiences
 - If you were this person, what do you want to experience, see, or hear?



#2 Attitude is a Choice. Choose Positive

We all have things that happen to us or are going on in our lives that can make our time feel challenging. Although your customers (internal and external) present their attitudes to you, you always have a choice and are responsible for your own attitude. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Choose to serve others
 - Recognize that you are in a service role
 - Act as though you enjoy what you do
 - Always serve as an ambassador for your organization
- Treat others as you want to be treated
 - Leave your personal issues at home
 - Do not complain about the organization or your co-workers
- You attitude is contagious
 - Good behavior starts with yours
 - Remember, you are always responsible for how you feel and how you react to others
 - Keep a mirror near you and look before you act—if you are not smiling, others will feel it, even though they cannot see your face



#3 Good Manners Are Timeless

You may not always be able to meet customers' expectations and there is never an excuse for displaying poor manners. Hopefully, your parents or mentors instilled common everyday behaviors that they expected you to display with others, regardless of how you felt about them.

In an era of customer service decline, we need to get back to the basics. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

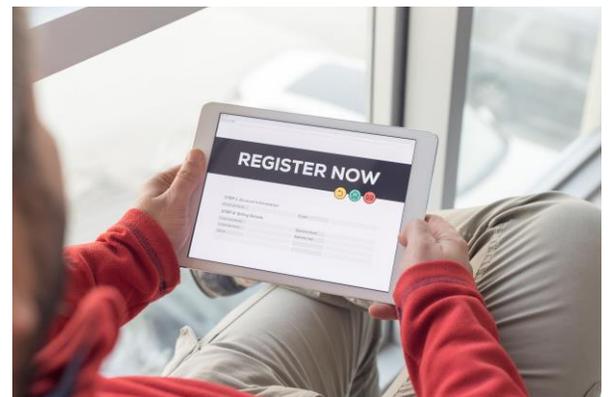
- Acknowledge others
 - Make appropriate eye contact
 - Greet them warmly
 - Make them feel welcome
- Mind your body language
 - Show that you are listening with eye contact, affirming actions (nodding), and with the front of your body facing them (if possible)
 - Align your words with your body signals
- Thank customers
 - Act sincerely when you do
 - Do not overuse clichés such as “Have a nice day!”
 - Invite them back again or say, “See you tomorrow!”
 - Make them feel appreciated for being there or for their decisions to be a part of your organization



#4 Make it Easy to Buy or Choose You

We have rules, policies, and procedures. Customers do not really care about how we are governed unless it benefits them. When we make matters complex or have them “jump through hoops” to get things done, it creates a negative experience and “moments of truth” that we cannot take back. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Let other customers promote you
 - Collect written or video testimonials from your customers
 - Share highlights from the year so people can “relive” the good experiences again
- Provide information that is timely and readily available
 - Offer answers to Frequently Asked Questions
 - Consider providing information in more than one language or having a resource for those who need assistance
 - Create self-serve opportunities so customers can access information, purchase things, or register online when it is more convenient for them
- Audit your own systems
 - Be a customer and call and experience the auto-attendant
 - Go to the web site, click on links, or attempt to buy something or register. How is the user-experience when you are on the other side?
 - Conduct “Mystery Customer” audits and get feedback from real customers.



#5 Add Value to Every Transaction

Each of us feels that we do our jobs to the best of our abilities. But face it, a lot of times, we do “just enough:” we perform our job duties as stated. Customers are often satisfied with what we do, yet we may not be creating experiences that separate us from other competing organizations. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Provide the highest quality possible
 - Take pride in what you do
 - Strive to be #1 in your field or role
- Find ways to save customers time and money
 - Recognize that everyone suffers from time poverty
 - Show customers how they can save time or money
 - Share other resources that may be of value to them



#6 Find Ways to Say “Yes”

We know that customers are not always right, and it is easier to state a policy when we are confronted with a request that we do not usually perform or are too busy to do. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

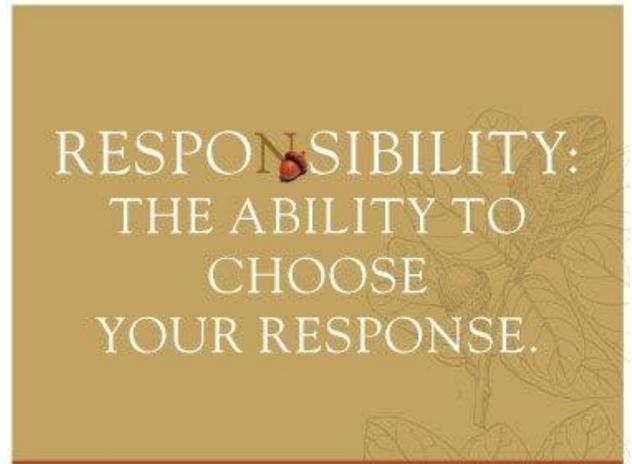
- Make exceptions, when possible
 - Customers respond to principles, not policies or rules
 - Ask a higher authority for a decision
- Say what you can do, not what you cannot
 - Rather than say, “No our policy is . . .” consider saying “Here is what I can do . . .”
- Give customers options
 - Consider alternatives to addressing the problem or to accomplish the result
 - Give customers choices and let them decide on the one to act on



#7 Take Responsibility

When customers have been wronged or are having a poor experience, they want the organization's representative to step up and be proactive. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

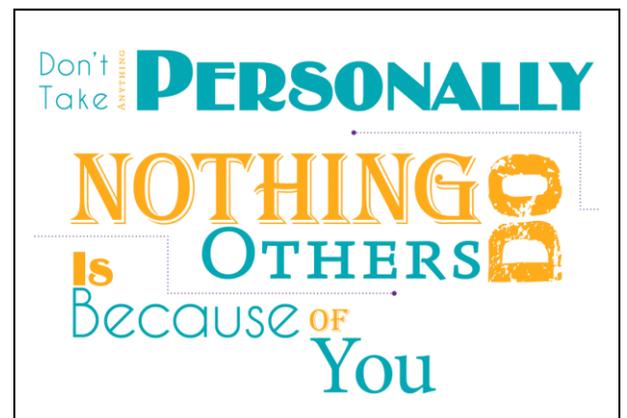
- Be accountable for the situation
 - Apologize, even if it is not your fault
 - Acknowledge the situation
 - "It's taking longer than we planned."
 - "I'm sorry for the inconvenience."
- Explain what happened without blame
 - Discuss facts, not people
 - Realize that you are the representative
- Take timely action
 - Respond as soon as possible
 - State the next steps to take
 - Follow up and ensure the situation has been resolved



#8 Make I Personal; Do not Take it Personally

Every customer wants you to see him or her as a unique individual and not "one of many." Sometimes, customers' words or actions feel like personal attacks. Do not let someone else's words or actions get to you. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

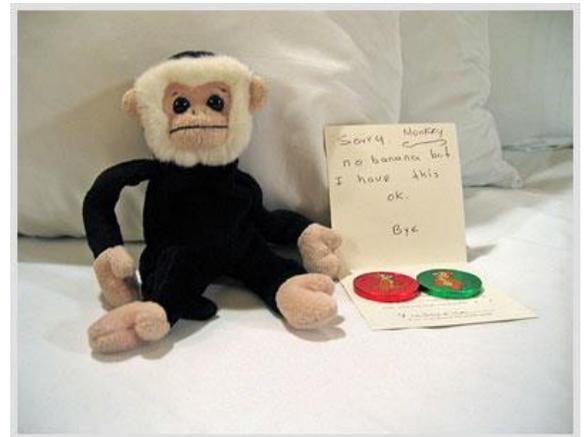
- Treat customers as unique people
 - Use their name (ask if you do not know)
 - Recognize them if they are "regulars"
- Realize that it is not about you after all
 - Their complaint or behavior is about the situation or their feelings and concerns
 - Separate your role from who you are as a person



#9 Create Magic Moments

Not every interaction needs to resemble the Disney experience. However, when you can really make a difference, then do so to create positive experiences and a strong brand for the organization. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Anticipate customer needs
 - Serve before being requested
 - Ask, “What would I need or want?”
- Create memories
 - Deliver “once in a lifetime” experiences
 - Do something special for someone the customer cares about
- Do something unexpected
 - “There’s no competition on the ‘extra mile.’”
 - Turn ordinary into extraordinary



#10 Find a Better Way of Doing Everything

No matter how good we are at doing what we do every day, there is always a better way. Do not get stuck in routines or your comfort zone. Look for opportunities to continuously improve how things are done. Here is how you can practice this commandment:

- Practice Kaizen
 - Make it better for customers
 - Reduce expenses for the organization
 - Be a life-long learner
- Let stakeholders have a say
 - Ask customers how to improve experiences
 - Solicit feedback from employees

改 = KAI = CHANGE

善 = ZEN = GOOD
(FOR THE BETTER)

改善 = KAIZEN
= CONTINUAL
IMPROVEMENT

1. What are three things you enjoyed most about your visit?										
a. _____	b. _____	c. _____								
2. What are the three things you enjoyed least about your visit?										
a. _____	b. _____	c. _____								
3. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit:										
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion						
4. The probability that I will visit again next year/two years/three years/is:”										
0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

Module 4—Dealing with Angry and Upset Customers:

Strategies to Deal with the Unexpected

Module 4 Objectives

- Discover the 10 five approaches to listening and when to use each
- Explore tips for professional phone skills, face-to-face interactions, and email messages
- Practice negotiating win-win for situations

How Well Do You Listen?

Being a “good listener” requires you to practice a variety of listening behaviors. Read each behavior below and rate how consistently you use them. 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = all the time.

- _____ I listen to the speaker’s tone and watch body language in addition to the words spoken.
- _____ I listen regardless of the person’s manner of speaking and choice of words used.
- _____ I listen to the person’s tone of voice to identify the emotions beyond the words spoken.
- _____ I ignore or eliminate distractions so I can concentrate on who is talking.
- _____ I smile, nod my head, and encourage the other person to talk? (in face-to-face interactions).
- _____ I stay focused on the conversation rather than think about what I will say next.
- _____ I jot down notes while the speaker is talking so I do not miss what was said.
- _____ I make connections with different points raised to look for relationships.
- _____ I ask questions to get the speaker to explain the idea or problem more fully.
- _____ I restate or paraphrase what the person says to ensure that I understood the message.
- _____ I try to determine whether the person wants to just “vent” or wants a solution.
- _____ I withhold judgment about the idea or problem until the person is finished talking.
- _____ I ask what the other person expects before giving advice or solving the problem.
- _____ I let the other person finish what he or she is trying to say and do not interrupt.
- _____ I make eye contact with others when they are talking to me (in face-to-face interactions).

How Well Did You Score?

- 60-55 Excellent! You do an excellent job of listening!
- 54-40 You practice good listening behaviors and just need to do them consistently.
- 39-28 You may allow distractions or what you want to say get in the way of really listening to others. Choose a few behaviors you want to improve upon.
- 57 or less Listening is a skill that can be learned. Practice to improve and it will make a difference in your communication with others.

What's Your Preferred Listening Approach?

There are five listening approaches that should be used to become an effective listener. Each of us has a preferred approach that we tend to use the most. Learning to use all five approaches to better communicate with clients and co-workers will result in strengthening your management skills.

- **Appreciative Listening:** Appreciative listeners enjoy the listening experience. They like to be entertained and are more likely to pay attention to someone if they enjoy the presentation or the impression of the speaker. They care more about their own feelings and the overall impression of the speaker than about the details of what is being presented. If they are distracted by someone's tone of voice, facial expression, appearance, etc. they will "tune out" and not listen to the message being communicated. *Appreciative Listening is a common approach for a concert, a pleasant conversation, or everyday informal interactions. Use analogies, pictures and stories and vary your speaking pace to keep them engaged in the conversation. Act like you enjoy the interaction and see the humor in things.*
- **Empathic Listening:** Empathic listeners want to provide the speaker with a sounding board while offering the speaker support and reflecting on his or her comments. They are often patient and tend to listen to the feelings and emotions described. Empathic listeners confirm what they heard from the speaker. They let the speaker know they care about what he or she is saying. As a result, they are often approached by people who want to 'let off steam,' and, if asked for advice, they will encourage others to make their own decisions. *Empathic listening is an appropriate listening approach clients are frustrated or unhappy with a project, provides an opportunity for someone to 'let off steam,' or to listen to frustrations without offering advice. Demonstrate sensitivity, maintain eye contact, and do not interrupt.*
- **Comprehensive Listening:** Comprehensive listeners relate what they hear to what they already know, organizing details in their own way and summarizing what they hear. They are good at recognizing key points and the links between one message and another. They pay attention to how the speaker develops his or her argument to understand the rationale of the argument. The comprehensive listener can figure out what people intend to say, even if the speaker is not explicit. Once something has been explained, they can explain it to someone else easily. *Comprehensive listening is an appropriate Listening Approach when taking directions from someone, understanding what is important to others, or determining how to communicate outcomes. With comprehensive listeners, get to the point with complete details, be methodical and organized, and ask if you are meeting their needs or if they need more information.*
- **Discerning Listening:** Discerning Listeners want to make sure they get all the information, and they frequently write down what people say to remember it. It is important to them that they know the main message and they tend to focus closely on what a person is saying. They usually remember the speaker's appearance, behavior, and tone of voice. They find distractions annoying and tune out if there are too many. *Discerning Listening is an appropriate Listening Approach when gathering information, checking for accuracy, and understanding what needs to be done. Be logical, be succinct, connect ideas or key points, summarize what has been said, and ask questions.*
- **Evaluative Listening:** Evaluative Listeners tend to look for the facts that support what a speaker is saying but does not accept something as true just because the person says so. They listen for how the speaker develops an argument to critique it. They try to figure out the speaker's intentions before responding to the message and may "argue" with the speaker in their mind. If the Evaluative Listener does not like what someone is saying, they will tune out. *Evaluative Listening is an appropriate Listening Approach when preparing to decide, vote, or*

draw a conclusion. Establish credibility, be concise and logical, provide an agenda, weigh the pros and cons, include information that is valuable, and ask what they think.

Activity: Using Listening Approaches to Serve Customer More Effectively?

Work in a small group and discuss:

1. What is the listening approach that you use the most often and what are the pros and cons for using it in your role?
2. What other listening approach should you use to become a better listener?
3. What tips would you suggest using when dealing with customers over the phone?

Keeping a Positive Attitude in Difficult Situations

Most of us find it more difficult to maintain a positive attitude when we are dealing with upset, difficult or irate customers. It can be easy to blame a difficult customer for changing your positive attitude to a negative one. But remember...attitude is a choice that only YOU can make. Do not let others make it for you. Keep the following tips in mind to maintain a positive attitude in the most difficult of situations.

Start a DIALOGUE with the Customer

Begin a conversation that opens dialog and begins the problem-solving process.

- Listen for words, emotions, and body language signals (if in person)
- Show empathy and interest in the situation
- Let your customer vent their frustrations without taking it personally
- Ask open-ended questions to better understand what the customer means or wants
- Use a variety of listening approaches that are appropriate in the discussion
- Respond to the customer's concerns by focusing on what you **can** do, not what you cannot do
- Be ready to apologize even if it is not your fault
- Take responsibility, help, information, and resources

Remember to TAKE A DEEP BREATH!

When a customer is determined to make you the problem, choose to be centered by:

- ◆ Breathing deeply from your abdomen
- ◆ Standing with your weight centered on both feet
- ◆ Speaking in a calm, relaxed tone
- ◆ Relaxing your facial muscles and shoulders

Activity: Practice Listening Approaches

Work with two other participants for the role-play exercise. One person will play the role of the Service Provider, one will be the Customer and one participant will function as the Observer to provide feedback.

Module 5—Develop Customer Experience Standards:

What is Excellent Service and How Do I Provide It?

Module 5 Objectives

- Define our Standards of Excellence for your team
- Create a Customer Experience Scorecard that employs the standards
- Consider action items to implement the Scorecard

Defining Standards of Excellence—What ‘Just Has to be There’?

Standards of Excellence are what you agree to deliver to customers on a consistent basis. Consider what ‘just has to be there’ day-after-day-after-day, for you and your team to offer the best experiences to all your customers. When you deliver on your standards of excellence, you are providing the best experiences for customers.

Activity: What Are Our Standards of Excellence?

Discuss and brainstorm standards of excellence with other team members. In the chart below, list standards that describe what customers can expect from you and how you and other staff members deliver great service and experiences to all customers. Once you have listed your service standards, prioritize them in order of importance. *(See the examples of standards of excellence in the chart below.)*

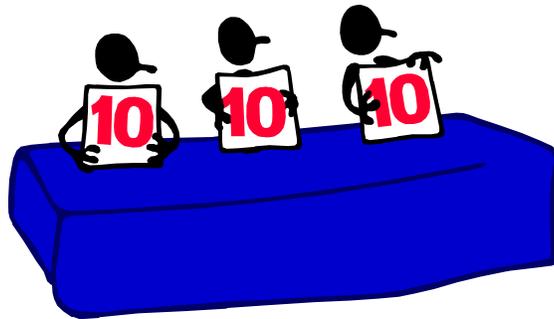
Priority	Our Standards of Excellence
	<p><i>Example: We acknowledge and respond to inquiries or problems within one business day.</i></p> <p><i>Example: Our staff members are polite, courteous, and professional always.</i></p>

Activity: Develop Our Customer Experience Scorecard

Start by reviewing the agreed upon Standards of Excellence on the page before. Work with other staff members to choose or create 10-12 standards that will serve as the basis of your Service Excellence Scorecard. Think of the Scorecard like a Report Card—whereby customers (internal or external) could grade you on how well you live up to these standards by giving you a numeric score for each standard.

Upon completion of designing your Service Excellence Scorecard, consider how you could use this Scorecard to collect feedback from some customers on a regular basis. Customers could rate their experiences with you, your team or department on a monthly or quarterly basis.

TIP: Use questions or statements that represent each of your Standards of Excellence. (See the sample Scorecard and use the blank Scorecard template provided for this exercise.)



Sample Customer Service Scorecard

Thank you for agreeing to evaluate your experience with Quality Company. We hope your feedback will help us enhance the overall service for all customers. This scorecard will measure our level of service in specific areas—it shows us where we are meeting your expectations and where we should focus our improvement efforts. Using the scorecard below, please rate your experience with us for each performance area. And all feedback you provide will be anonymous.

Our Standards of Excellence	Performance Score			
	On a scale of 1 – 4, with 1 the lowest and 4 the highest, rate your experience in each area.			
	1 Are you kidding?	2 Sometimes we do, sometimes we don't	3 Yes, for the most part	4 All the time!
Our staff acknowledged and greeted you in a friendly manner on the phone or in person.				
Our staff responded within 24 hours or one business day to your inquiry or request.				
Our staff was professional (e.g., courteous, polite, respectful, appropriate appearance)				
Our staff communicated positively (e.g., listened, responded, asked questions, followed through with appropriate actions.)				
Our staff was knowledgeable about our procedures and their responsibilities.				
Our staff worked together to meet your needs.				
Our staff solved your problem or resolved the issue timely.				
Our staff fostered a team-oriented approach and behaved as 'one Quality Company' environment.				
Our restrooms, hallways, offices, classrooms and windows are clean.				
Our grounds are presentable (e.g., snow removed, grass mowed, trash cans emptied, beautiful plant beds, cigarette butts picked up)				
Our staff provided exceptional service and a positive Experience for you as our customer.				
Please write in your responses to the two questions below:				
What is one thing we could have done differently to make your service experience better?				
Have any of our employees provided exceptional service for you lately? If so, please state their name and how they provided exceptional service to you.				
Please provide any additional feedback to expand on any rating you provided. Feel free to use the back side of this Scorecard.				

