

# **INTRODUCING CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

# OBJECTIVES

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

# Who are Customers?

- Customers can be internal or external
- Customers are people who need your assistance.
- They are not an interruption to your job; they are the reason WHY you have a job.

# Communicating Effectively with Customers

- Good customer service is taking that extra step to help without being asked! It is 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

# 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

# What do Customers Want?

- To satisfy a need
- Your undivided attention
- Your respect
- To be treated as SPECIAL and UNIQUE

# 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 are busy**
- **SMILE**
- Establish eye contact
- Tell them your name

- Ask **HOW** you can help
- Give the customer your full attention
- Be polite and courteous

# Establishing Rapport

- What does good rapport feel like ?
  - Make the customer feel comfortable
  - Make the customer feel important and valued
  - Use **EMPATHY**

# Find out HOW 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?

# Communication is a 2 way Process

- Communication skills involve
  - Listening to others (Receiving)
  - Asserting

# The Communication Equation

- What you hear
    - Tone of voice
    - Vocal Clarity
    - Verbal expressiveness40% of the message
  - What you see or feel
    - Facial expression
    - Dress and grooming
    - Posture/Body Language
    - Eye contact
    - Touch
    - Gesture50% of the message
- WORDS.....  
ONLY 10% of the message

# Effective Communication Skills

- Eye contact and visible mouth
- Body language
- Silence
- Checking for understanding
- Smiling face
- Summarising what has been said
- Encouragement to continue
- Some questions

# Barriers to Effective Communication

- Language
- Distractions /Noise
- Put downs
- Lack of interest
- Disability
- Discomfort with the topic
- Distance
- Too many questions
- Other People
- Time



# 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

# Following Skills

- This opens the door to further communication
  - Invitations
  - Questions
  - Encouragement
  - Empathetic Silence

# Questioning Skills

- Open Questions
- Closed Questions
- Paraphrasing
- Check for Understanding

# Reflective Skills

- Keeps the door open for further communication
  - Paraphrasing
  - Reflecting Facts
  - Reflecting Feelings
  - Reflecting Silence
  - Summarizing
  - Choosing your words
  - Useful Phrases

# Using Your Voice

- Do you
  - Become loud when angry or upset\Speak faster when nervous
  - Speak slowly when tired or bored
  - Have a cheerful voice
  - My tone of voice is warm and understanding
  - Find it easy to talk to people you don't know

Control your tone in most situations

Sound bossy, weak or unsure

Have a clear and easy-to-hear voice

Speak in a very formal or very trendy manner?

Think about how you might modify your voice in certain situations

# Body Language for a Positive Result

- Some examples of good body language
  - Smile
  - Introduce yourself (if appropriate) or wear a name tag
  - Shake hands if appropriate
  - Lean forward
  - Be aware of cultural differences

# Telephone Skills

- Know HOW to use the phones
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Smile ( you can hear it in your voice)
- State your name and organization
- Write down the caller's name and use it



- Don't say rude things while someone is on hold
- If they are explaining something, use words to show you are 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 Communication

- 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 have answered their query or request or explained why you can't
- Be timely or apologise for any delay in replying

# Guaranteeing Return Business

- Leave a positive impression, SMILE
- Check Customers have everything they need
- If you've said you'll follow-up, do so
- Tell them something that may be useful to them later( eg new service starting soon)
- Invite them back
- Say goodbye

# A Positive Organizational Image

- First Impressions count and will affect the interaction. People make judgements in the first 30 seconds.
- GOLDEN RULE : You only have one chance to make a first impression

# A Positive First Impression

- Be confident
- Knowledge- know your organization and the services you provide
- Confidentiality
- Follow-up ( don't just say you'll do something, do it)
- Strengthen the customer's commitment to your organization

# What to Avoid

- Saying I don't know without offering an option
- Saying you don't know where a colleague is or saying they are at lunch/toilet/gone for coffee etc
- Leaving people on hold for too long
- Ignoring people if you are busy
- Treating people unequally

# Service Standards

- Be prompt and efficient
- Ensure services are delivered in accordance with legislative or statutory requirements
- Maintain accurate records
- Ensure any special needs of customers are taken into account.

# Factorss Affecting the Quality of Service

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



# Customers with Special Needs

- People for whom English is not their first language
- People with disabilities
- People from other areas who may not be familiar with the way things are done here
- People with limited mobility
- Unaccompanied children

# Planning Good Customer Service

- Observe and report customer needs
- Be proactive in improving service
- Market your organization
- Have processes and procedures for dealing with difficult situations BEFORE they happen and make sure all persons are trained

# Dealing with Difficult Behaviour

- Label the behaviour, 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 Talkative Customer

- Ask closed questions
- Limit the time available for them to interrupt(don't have long pauses)
- Provide minimal response
- Smile and be pleasant, but don't encourage them
- Wind up- thank them for coming, walk them to the door but don't be rude or dismissive

# The Angry Customer

- Listen carefully without interrupting so you can understand the problem
- Empathise 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 are scared, if you can't agree on a solution or if the customer asks to see "whoever is in charge".

# The 'know it all' Customer

- Acknowledge what they say
- Compliment them on their research
- Be generous with praise
- Don't put them in their place no matter how tempting
- Don't try to be smart- you can't win
- Ask them questions and use them to improve your knowledge

# The Indecisive Customer

- Find out WHAT they really want
- Ask them for the options
- Reflect back to them what they have said
- Assume control gently and point out the best course of action from what they have told you they need



- Be logical
- Confirm a plan of action with them
- Maybe even put it in writing

# The Suspicious Customer

- Establish your credibility
- Ensure you know your product or service
- They will try and catch you out so don't guess or tell them something you are not sure of
- Be careful what you say
- Be polite
- Don't take it personally; they don't trust anyone

# Workshop Objectives

- Our Objectives were to learn how to:
  - Communicate effectively with customers
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HOW DID WE DO? HOW DID WE DO??

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU !**