



CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING CURRICULUM

BACKGROUND

Customer Service is driven by the leaders of the organization.

The leadership has the power to make or break any customer service initiatives. Exceptional customer service involves exceeding customer expectations, where the standards and level of service received exceed what the customer could reasonably define as normal or expected. It is very hard to measure, as the standards rise with each initiative or innovation designed and implemented by your competitors.

What might have been acceptable three years ago might not be acceptable today. Exceptional customer service prompts customers to share their experiences with others. The general consensus is a bad experience is more likely to be shared. You have to have performed very well to have a customer talk enthusiastically about a positive experience. If you receive a written thank you, you have done very well, particularly if not prompted in any way, such as by a customer survey card.

DIFFERENT STANDARDS

Superior customer service is slightly different. This involves consistently meeting the high standards set. Guests have certain expectations when they check into a five star hotel. They have different expectations when they check into a three star hotel. In both cases, they expect a certain standard of service delivered with 100% consistency. Exceptional customer service will occur if the guests feel they are receiving five star services in a three star establishment.

EXCEPTIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Most good organizations 'get it right' most of the time. Exceptional organizations 'get it right' 100% of the time. This takes constant attention and vigilance and takes consistent attention to detail.

Quality objectives for continuous improvement and performance in a world of competition for resources, changing priorities, and instability of work structures require leaders and managers to practice skills which:

- Provide a clear vision to their subordinates, peers, and customers.
- Facilitate, clarify, and confirm activity modes to reach the vision.
- Stimulate technical and teamwork performance excellence.
- Provide performance feedback to assure continuous improvement.

This program has been developed to cause and encourage participants to assess their leadership and management assets, develop an awareness and appreciation of their strengths, explore values and practices of effective leaders, and envision the future potential of their organizations and the “world” in which they function. The assumptions underlying the design of these programs are:

- Leadership and management skills are specific and able to be learned.
- Both leaders and managers benefit from effective knowledge of varied issues, disciplines, and problem-solving approaches.
- Leaders and managers for the future must engage in life-long learning.

PROGRAM TOPICS

The inventory of practical and intensive customer service programs is offered to provide participants the skills and abilities to expand their knowledge base within their organization. These programs and topics can be contracted individually, on an as needed basis, combined to form a weeklong program, or coordinated as a program series.

1. Improving Customer Service Through Building Trust

Middle managers/foremen/leads and in-house stewards role is to model essential practices that are exemplary for the front line staff. Trust may mean different things to different people; most definitions include the notion that trust is the reliance upon the behavior of a person in order to achieve a desired but uncertain objective in a risky situation. The purpose of this session will be to (1) identify the characteristics and behaviors we associate with people we trust (and with people whom we distrust) and (2) develop skills in trustworthy behaviors (e.g., behavioral consistency, behavioral integrity, communication skills, delegating control, and demonstrating concern).

Managers will master the following essential practices:

- Generating a spirit of service
- Leading by example
- Developing employees
- Building trust
- Focus the organization on customer needs

2. How Transformational Leadership Drives Superior Customer Services

Consultative leadership builds on the concepts of delegation and employee empowerment in mapping out a dynamic relationship of shared purpose and mutual accountability between leader and follower. This program will focus on jurisdiction issues, the skills a leader needs to operate in the transformational mode: goal-setting, jurisdictional understanding, active listening, values clarification, joint problem-solving, and accountability management.

3. Achieving Superior Customer Service Through Communication

What is effective communication? What methods in both verbal and non verbal communications are most effective in achieving results in forums such as progress sessions, evaluation interviews, descriptive briefings, formal and informal conferences, and written correspondence? This program will look at a variety of means to achieve focus and the desired results through communications. Participants are encouraged to bring in and discuss positive and negative communication experiences and observations.

4. Building Relationships with Team Members and Customers

Still at the core of all successful organizations, customer service is learned best through practical and experiential programs. This course provides opportunities for participants to undertake team projects, role-plays, and exercises all aimed at developing and operationalizing excellent customer service for both internal and external customers.

5. Working in Teams: Unleashing Creativity, Solving Problems, and Meeting Customer Service Challenges

This course focuses on some practical ways to realize the potential of teamwork within the context of today's changing organizational cultures. Exercises will be conducted that are designed to improve communication and networking skills, increase collaboration, and unleash creative potentials. There will also be time for consultation concerning specific cases.

6. Human Resources Management (performance management, rewards systems, documentation skills)

In today's customer-centered, team-oriented organization, human resource management has become the shared responsibility of all organizational members. In this workshop, we will examine how human resource activities can be designed to increase the effectiveness of the organization through improved communication and performance management. Participants will also enhance their skills in key HR activities such as providing performance feedback, and tying rewards to performance.

7. Human Side of Change Management - How to Obtain Commitment

There are many organizational models for change being used today that focus on technology. What is often missing is how to deal with the human side of change. How do we engage the people who ultimately will enable the change to occur? This workshop offers proven approaches for managing the human side of change. Topics include change management, communications, and dealing with resistance.

8. Dealing with Difficult People

Usually, individuals do not make a conscious effort to be difficult. The difficult person is often unaware of their behavior and how it affects others. They also don't realize how harmful their actions are to their own career success. In the business world, we are constantly faced with trying to work with others who may challenge our ability to get things done. There is great value to be gained when we take the time to try to understand another's viewpoint. By changing our attitude toward them and changing our viewpoint about what makes them "wrong" we can find a wealth of knowledge to improve our own ability to work with people.

PROGRAM DESIGN OPTION

There are several different program designs. Listed below is a recommended program design, however, actual dates are subject to change if needed:

- Two-to-three-day program held once every three to four months.
- Train-the-trainer program (for selected members) held once every three to four months.

PROGRAM FORMAT

2-3 day program held every three months

PROGRAM EVALUATION

To ascertain the effectiveness of the program as well as to determine how future programs can best be organized; each one will be evaluated through the use of a written participant evaluation form along with informal participation discussion and feedback at the conclusion of each course. Tabulated results from this evaluation will be supplied to your organization. In addition to the participant evaluation and as part of quality control and continuous improvement program, the program director and a representative from your organization will jointly complete a program review document following each course. Comments and action steps will be forwarded to you. This program provides certification of completion to ALL participants who successful meet the criteria stated.

SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT

At the core of the EACA training philosophy is a systemic improvement management approach that insures the successful execution of all its training efforts. This systems perspective encourages us to look beyond individual mistakes and events, into the underlying structures, which create conditions of success. To understand the most challenging leadership issues requires seeing the whole system that generates the issues. Interaction with others is important to see the problems clearly. Therefore, beyond our own organization, it will be essential to maintain an open relationship with representatives from your organization to successfully implement these systemic improvement practices through the feedback mechanisms we have designed and tested in our past experiences.