

Customer Service Means . . .



In a Nutshell

Participants work in groups to piece together several definitions of service (provided on pre-cut pages). The objective is to help participants understand the meaning of serving customers. This game is particularly useful for new employees or as a lead-in to developing a definition of customer service for your own department.

Time

10–15 minutes.

What You'll Need

One copy of the service definition sheet on page 6 and one envelope for each three participants.

What to Do

Divide participants into groups of three or four. Give each group an envelope containing the contents of the hand-out. Write, "Customer service means . . ." on a blank flip-chart or white board.

Explain that in the envelope are phrases that, when assembled, provide seven definitions of service. Their job is to work together as a team to assemble the phrases in a

way that completes the sentence, "Customer service means . . ." Each phrase must be a complete, logical sentence. They must use all the pieces and each piece can be used only once.

Mix non-native English speakers with native English speakers to avoid syntax errors. If the groups are slow to get started, advise them to start each phrase with a verb such as "finding."

After five minutes, have each team read its definitions out loud.

Answers

Customer service means:

- Doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.
- Going beyond what's expected.
- Adding value and integrity to every interaction.
- Being at your best with every customer.
- Discovering new ways to delight those you serve.
- Surprising yourself with how much you can do.
- Taking care of the customer like you would take care of your grandmother.

Discussion Questions

Q: Are all these definitions true?

A: *Be prepared for class answers to differ.*

Q: Which definition do you like best?

A: *Field answers.*

Q: Why isn't there one common definition?

A: *Because customer service means different things to different people. Notice, though, that all these definitions talk about putting energy and enthusiasm into your interactions with customers.*

If You Have More Time

Ask participants for their definitions of customer service. List words and phrases on a flip-chart. Develop into a definition of customer service for your department.

I Feel for You

In a Nutshell

In this game, participants work in pairs to rewrite dry, rote statements to show more empathy for customers. This game is useful for new hires or as a refresher for seasoned service employees.



Time

15–20 minutes.

What You'll Need

An overhead transparency or flip-chart of the information on page 95. One copy of pages 96 and 97 cut so that you have seven slips of paper, each with one scenario. Put these in a “hat” (a small basket or bowl will do).

What to Do

Read out the following scenario and ask participants which response sounds better and why.

A customer calls and says, “My home was damaged in the earthquake and I need to know what the insurance will cover.” Which of the following two responses do you think the customer would prefer to hear?

1. If you give me your policy number, I'll check your coverage.

2. I'm sorry to hear you were affected by the earthquake. If you'll let me know your policy number, I'll check the extent of your coverage.

Ask participants what the second customer service representative did that the first one didn't. (Showed empathy for the customer's situation.) Show the overhead or flip-chart to the group, and briefly go over the definition of empathy.

Tell participants that it isn't necessary for them to express empathy in every customer service interaction, but when a customer is in a difficult situation, it's essential that they show their concern. There are many ways to show empathy for customers—through actions, words, tone of voice, etc.

Divide participants into pairs. Ask each pair to come to the front of the room and draw a statement out of the hat. One partner should read the customer's statement and the other should read the customer service representative's response. Each of the other pairs has to quickly come up with a rewrite of the customer service representative's response to show more empathy for the customer. Have each pair share their response with the group, and then ask the next pair to come draw from the hat. Answers will vary, but you should make sure each rewritten response conveys empathy for the customer.

Tip! If competitions work well with your group, you can offer a small prize to the pair who comes up with the best rewrite of each response.

empathy (em' pe thee) n. identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person

To show empathy for customers, you might use the following phrases:

I understand...

I'm sorry...

I can appreciate...

Empathy is also conveyed by your tone of voice and body language.