

Customer Service

Chapter 29

Unit 7

Performance Objectives:

You will write personal experiences with poor customer service. You will discuss and write answers to questions related to customer service. You will participate in and discuss a customer service role-play situation. You will participate in two negotiation exercises.

Evaluation Criteria:

Successful completion of this chapter requires you to:

- § Write your own personal experiences with poor customer service.
- § Discuss the importance of customer service.
- § Role-play difficult customer service situations.
- § Participate in the planning and conducting of two negotiation exercises.

Background Information:

Click on the links below and read the following articles:

1. "Customer Service Tips for the Real and Virtual Worlds," by Paula Williams
http://www.ravenwerks.com/?page_id=442
2. "How To Improve Customer Service," by Doug Howardell
<http://www.thesspa.com/sspanews/012803/article2.asp>

Task 1: Developing Customer Service Skills

In this activity, you will write your own personal experiences with poor customer service.

Customer service is a critical part of any business. No matter how good your product is, if your customer service policies are poor, you will lose customers. Think of how many times you have said (or heard someone say) “I will never go back there again!!” after a bad experience in a business.

Open Microsoft® Word and open a new document.

1. In the Microsoft® Word document, which you will call **service.doc**, write the answers to the following:
 - a. Describe, in detail, the worst service you have ever experienced at a store, restaurant, or other business.
 - b. In the situation you described above, if you were the employee, what would you have done differently?
 - c. If you were that employee’s manager, how would have handled the situation?
 - d. How can you prevent your employees from treating customers poorly?

Task 2: Discuss the Importance of Customer Service

Write the answers to the following questions.

1. Why is customer service so important to the success of a business?
2. What are some things to avoid when dealing with customers?
3. What are some things to ensure when dealing with customers?
4. What does “the customer is always right” mean to you?
5. How would you, as a business owner, ensure you have good customer service?

Task 3: Customer Service Role Play

In this activity you will work with your team to role play difficult customer service situations. You will evaluate how well your classmates handled their respective customer service issues.

Role-Play Rules:

- Each team can choose the scene they want to role play.
- Each team member should participate in some way.
- There should be two staff and two customers in each scene (this depends on group size).
- The scene should be short (five minutes or less), but long enough to give a clear picture of the problem and resolution.

1. Get into groups and choose one of the following customer service problems to role play:

- A young shoplifter (aged 10 - 13 years old).
- A lonely customer who just wants to talk and talk and not buy anything when there are lots of impatient people in line.
- An impatient customer who is in a hurry and wants to be served ahead of people already waiting.
- A customer who is not satisfied with your product or service.
- A very angry customer trying to return a defective product without a receipt.

❖ *You can use your business or just create an imaginary business for the role play.*

2. In your group, decide who will be the customers and who will be the employees.
3. Plan what each person will say and do.
4. Rehearse the role play quietly with your team.
5. Present the role play to the class.

Task 4: Learning to Negotiate

Participate in the planning and conducting of two negotiation exercises.

You have seen a number of case studies of interactions between businesses and their customers. You probably noticed that there are many “gray areas” where things “might” happen. For example, an irate customer **might** charge an employee with criminal assault; **might** sue the store; you **might** fire an employee; she **might** sue you for wrongful dismissal. With all these possibilities out there, how does any situation ever get resolved? The answer to that is **negotiation**.

The irate customer may **negotiate** with you and perhaps drop all the charges in return for a \$500 shopping spree, your employee may **negotiate** with you to keep her job, and so on.

Many complex social interactions in our society are resolved through the use of negotiation. You may have negotiated with your employees for time they want off, your suppliers for a lower price or longer terms to pay, etc. It helps to possess good negotiating skills. You can practice your negotiating skills in the following exercise.

Playing the Negotiation Games

In the first exercise, called **Used Computers Cheap**, you will act either as The Buyer, The Seller, The Technician, or The Accountant in a fictional student-run corporation called Used Computers Cheap. You will be negotiating a business agreement with your three business partners. You will address the following issues:

- What will become of the business?
- How will the business' outstanding bills and assets be divided?

In the second exercise, called **John Brown's Sausage**, you will act as either the representative of Buzz Off Web Designers or the representative of John Brown's Sausage Company. You will negotiate a business agreement regarding the creation of a website for John Brown. The two of you will address the following issues:

- What will be the price for setting up the website and web store?
- What will be the hourly rate for making modifications?
- What will be the premium for finishing the job ahead of schedule?
- What will be the penalty for finishing the job late?



In both the games, the winner will be the student who accumulates the most points. See your "Secrets" sheets for an explanation of the points. Remember, points aren't given just for money collected. **You will also score points for coming up with creative solutions!**

Used Computers Cheap

By

Burdick and Burnstein, Copyright 2001

THE CHALLENGE: “Used Computers Cheap” is a for-profit corporation four of you started as sophomores upgrading and reselling used computers to the local community. You each put in \$1,000, which you had to borrow as start-up capital for the company. One of you, The Buyer, purchases used computers to be upgraded. One of you, The Technician, upgrades the computers for resale. One of you, The Seller, finds buyers for your upgraded computers. One of you, The Accountant, handles the books, the taxes, and the bills. When you started, you hoped to earn a modest part-time income, but your business turned out to be much more profitable than any of you predicted. Last year, your company grossed revenues of \$30,000. After paying all your expenses, you each earned and spent \$6,000 for the year.

THE ISSUES: It is now May 1. You are all seniors preparing to graduate in a few weeks and go your separate ways. You are about to meet to decide what to do with the business. You have to decide at least two issues:

- What will become of the business?
- How will the business’ outstanding bills and assets be divided?

THE PLAYERS: The players for this game are The Buyer, The Seller, The Technician, and The Accountant.

THE ALTERNATIVE: If you can’t reach a unanimous agreement, it is not clear what will happen to your business.

Directions:

1. Read the **Used Computers Cheap** section above.
2. Read the Secrets sheet, as given to you by your teacher. Your teammates should not see your secrets sheet. You will be negotiating with them, so be careful what you divulge.
3. Answer the questions on the **Players Plan** worksheet, to prepare for the negotiation exercise.
4. After all planning is completed, get into a group of four and begin the negotiation. There are no right or wrong ways to conduct this exercise. You just have to keep your secrets and goals in mind and try to get what you want.
5. Answer the questions that follow in the **Written Self-Critique**.

The Players Plan

1. Introductions:

- How do you want to introduce your role to the other players?

- What do you want to say about yourself that helps you strategically obtain your goals?

- Do you want to be friendly, angry, accommodating, demanding, or what?

2. Clue Sharing:

- What information do you want to find out from the other negotiators?

- What information do you want them to know about you?

3. Matching Up:

- What interests, standards of fairness, and assumptions do you think the parties have in common that they could use to help them reach an agreement?

4. Brainstorming:

- What creative options can you think of that might improve the value of the solution you come up with to solve this problem?

5. **Bargaining:**

- Once the parties start to bargain and exchange proposals for how to settle this challenge, what might you want to include in a package deal that meets your character's needs as well as the other party's needs?

6. **Finalizing:**

- What do you want to make sure you don't forget before time runs out and everyone feels the pressure of the deadline?

7. **Scoring:**

- If you reached an agreement, how much was it worth to your character, according to your "Secrets?"

- Make sure to count any creative idea points included in the final agreement that your "Secrets" worksheet says you value.



Notes:

Assessment

Written Self-Critique

Please write your answers to the following questions:

1. What was your goal going into this negotiation?
2. Were you satisfied that you accomplished your goal when this was over, but before you learned what you could have gotten out of this negotiation? Why were you or why weren't you satisfied?
3. Were you still satisfied after you learned of the results of the negotiation? Why?
4. Did you leave value on the table that you might have been able to get if you had conducted this negotiation differently? What?
5. Did anything surprise or bother you about this negotiation? What?
6. If you were going to do a negotiation like this one again, what would you do differently?

John Brown's Sausage
By
Burdick and Burnstein, Copyright 2001

THE CHALLENGE: Buzz Off Web Site Designers, Inc. and John Brown's Maple Flavored Sausage Company are preparing to discuss the possibility of working together to create a website and a web store for John Brown to sell gifts and its many food products over the Internet.

THE ISSUES: The issues which you need to address in this negotiation include:

1. What will be the price for setting up the website and web store?
2. What will be the hourly rate for making modifications?
3. What will be the premium for finishing the job ahead of schedule?
4. What will be the penalty for finishing the job late?

THE ALTERNATIVE: If you cannot reach an agreement on these four issues, you will each take your business elsewhere.

Directions:

1. Read the **John Brown's Sausage** section above.
2. Read the Secrets sheet, as given to you by your teacher. Your negotiating partner should not see your secrets sheet. You will be negotiating with him or her, so be careful what you divulge.
3. Answer the questions on the **Players Plan** worksheet, to prepare for the negotiation exercise.
4. After all planning is completed, get into a group of four and begin the negotiation. There is no right or wrong way to conduct this exercise. You just have to keep your secrets and goals in mind and try to get what you want.
5. Answer the questions that follow in **Written Self-Critique**.

The Players Plan

1. Introductions:

- How do you want to introduce your role to the other players?

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- Do you want to be friendly, angry, accommodating, demanding, or what?

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- What interests, standards of fairness, and assumptions do you think the parties have in common that they could use to help them reach an agreement?

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- What creative options can you think of that might improve the value of the solution you come up with to solve this problem?

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- Once the parties start to bargain and exchange proposals for how to settle this Challenge, what might you want to include in a package deal that meets your character's needs as well as the other party's needs?

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- What do you want to make sure you don't forget before time runs out and everyone feels the pressure of the deadline?

7. **Scoring:**

- If you reached an agreement, how much was it worth to your character, according to your "Secrets?"

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