

- Use a bridging technique to get back on track

Action tips for efficient use of the phone

- **When making outgoing calls ask, "is this a convenient time to talk?"**
 - Be honest and tell them if you don't have the information needed
- **Take messages cheerfully & accurately**
 - Get the full name and correct spelling
 - "Is there any information you would like to leave that may be helpful to Ms. Jones when she calls you back?"
 - Note the time and date the message was taken and add your initials in case there are any questions
- **Make your greeting message efficient**
 - Keep your greeting message current and not too long or too clever
 - When you as a caller leave a message on another person's machine, do include:
 - Your name (spelled if necessary)
 - Time and day of your call
 - A brief explanation of why you are calling
 - Your phone number
 - When you can be reached
- **Don't let the telephone interrupt an important live conversation**
 - Excuse yourself if needed
- **Use the hold button & call transfer correctly**
 - Be careful not to be too abrupt
 - Ask customers if it'll be okay if you put them on hold for (a specific amount of time)
 - Be open if you don't know any details when receiving a transferred call
- **Learn to use your phone's features**
 - Customer dissatisfaction with a firm's phone call-handling stems from two general classes:
 - i. Inability of employees to use the features of telephone and voice mail systems
 - ii. Shortcomings in treating customers with the highest degree of courtesy
- **Plan your outgoing calls for efficiency**
 - Jot down notes that include:
 - The purpose of your call
 - A list of information you need to get or give
 - Be aware of probable lunch hours and long-distance time differences
 - Be specific about when you plan to call a person back

Call centres: centralized phone handling

- Call centre is a facility where customer service representatives handle high-volume phone traffic, whether inbound or outbound, using sophisticated telephone & computer technology

Call centres typically:

- Serve external customers by answering questions, taking orders, responding to billing concerns or pitching products & service through telemarketing
- Provide the primary pre-sale contact points with the customer
- The primary post-sale customer care channel

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Week 6: Customer Service

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Recognize & Deal with Customer Turnoffs

Recognize pet peeves about customer service

- Pet peeves means something that a particular person finds especially annoying
 - Negative experiences - turnoff, stick in our mind & are quickly remembered
- Extensive research would predict that some of these turnoffs may be on your list:
 - Being ignored or receiving rude or indifferent service
 - Having to wait long
 - Repair work that did not fix the problem
 - Products with defective parts or parts missing
 - Advertised sale items that are not in stock
 - Merchandise prices not marked, forcing a price check at the cashier
 - Phone calls put on hold or forcing you to select from a long menu of choices
 - Dirty facilities (especially restaurants or rest rooms)
 - Bad acoustics, noisy environment
 - Employees lacking product knowledge (and who may try to bluff the customer)
 - High-pressure sales tactics
 - Employees talking down to you or using confusing jargon
 - Inflexibility when you make a request

Getting to know your customer

- It is best of an organization to Get to KNOW their customers. The easiest way to understand a customer is to recognize a customer's satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction
- At the end of the day, what do your customer like or dislike?
- Several methods that may be used to pinpoint customer satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction
 - Customer Surveys
 - Customer Feedback Questionnaires
 - Customer Focus Groups
 - Customer Interviews
 - Customer Advisory groups

Categorizing Customer Turnoffs

- **Value Turnoffs**
 - A fundamental turnoff for customers is the feeling that they receive poor value from a product or service
 - Value is a function of a product's quality relative to its price
 - Value propositions - what the company intends to exchange with its customers. Any strategies can work fine but the perception of value (product quality relative to price) may be different in eyes of customers
 - Where do values decisions originate from?
 - Value decisions usually come from management or the head of an organization
 - In a medical or dental facility value decisions may be regulated by a medical or dental board
 - The head of an organization will determine the value proposition
 - Examples:
 - Poor guarantee or failure to back up products
 - Quality not as good as expected
 - Price too high for value received
 - Overly complicated or difficult-to-use products
- **System Turnoffs**
 - System turnoffs have to do with any process, procedure or policy associated with getting goods & services to customers
 - System will also include such non techy things as :
 - Company location, layout, parking facilities, phone accessibility
 - Employee training & staffing
 - Record-keeping or order-writing systems for handling customer transactions
 - Policies regarding guarantees & product returns
 - Delivery or pick-up services
 - Merchandise displays
 - Customer follow-up procedures
 - Billing & Accounting processes
 - Where do system decisions originate from?
 - The responsibilities for minimizing system turnoffs lies with manager and owners
 - System changes often require spending organizational resources which are usually authorized by managers or the head of an organization
 - A company's decision to add personnel, provide additional training, change locations or implement new delivery methods, will require management approval
 - This does not mean that non-management employees should not be involved in suggesting system changes
 - Customers may also indirectly be involved in system change through customer feedback questions, survey, etc. about company systems
 - Examples:
 - Slow service or help not available
 - Business place dirty, messy or cluttered
 - Low selection or poor availability of product
 - Inconvenient location, layout, parking or access
- **People Turnoffs**

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- Don't take it personally
- If you have tried your best to satisfy the customer, then you have done all that you can do
- Don't rehash the experience with your coworkers or in your own mind. If it is over it is over. Revising the situation will not change it.

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Week 11: Customer Service

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Living Life and Leading Others

Articulate a vision

- Vision, in the context of business, consists of the strategy and goals you create to lead your business into the future. If you cannot articulate your vision to others, they will struggle to see how their contribution will achieve a common goal
- Step 1: Developing a customer-driven strategy is to articulate a theme. This theme should be succinct, clear and descriptive of the organization's uniqueness
- To articulate a theme:
 - The organization's theme should describe its uniqueness - its unique service proposition
 - Managers, first & foremost, must set - and sell others on - the vision for great customer service

Plan a strategy for customer loyalty

- Planning a strategy is a key leadership function that requires thinking through many questions
- Most managers would have to admit to some failures to 'walk the talk' of good service-producing leadership

Organizing processes, people & resources to achieve the vision

- The manager must do the following:
 - Assign specific responsibilities to employees
 - Give employees the supporting authority to fulfil their responsibilities
 - Work to reduce potential problems caused by systems

Lead & motivate employees

- Leading - the management functions of motivating, commanding & coordination
- To lead, managers do the following:
 - Shows the direction employees must go
 - Generates the energy (motivation) that stimulates subordinates to action
 - Provides the needed resources

Acknowledge that customer service work can be stressful

- Emotional labour - labour that involves managing emotions so that they are consistent with occupational display rules, regardless of whether they are discrepant with internal feelings
- Caused by:
 - Working conditions that may lead to stress
 - Nonstop action
 - Management style
 - Interpersonal relationships
 - Unclear work roles
 - Career concerns
 - Poor work environment

Create and sustain an effective organizational culture

- A company's culture is shaped by its shared sense of vision, values, heroes, rites & rituals
- Organizational culture is clear & unambiguous, it serves as unspoken guidelines for employee behaviour
- An organization's culture can have a dramatic impact on employee behaviour & managers do much to shape the culture

Continuously harvest A-plus ideas

- Managers can harvest A-plus ideas using brainstorming and the nominal group process
- Use brainstorming when you need creative ideas
- Use nominal group process to sort & prioritize ideas

Influencing others to change

- Distinguish between behaviours & outcomes or attitudes
- Apply the influencer model:
 - Personal motivation
 - Personal ability
 - Social motivation & ability
 - Structural motivation & ability

Control the process

- Controlling - comparing actual results to expected or planned-for results so as to identify any deviation from the plan
- Help employees set contributing goals

Empower employees

- Empowerment - employees are given the authority & latitude to take initiative on behalf of customers
- Empowerment gives employees the authority to work on behalf of the customer

Tie the reward system to appropriate actions

- Employees should be rewarded for the right things. Beware of unintended consequences of reward systems

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