# Session One: Course Overview

Course Overview

While many companies promise to deliver an incredible customer experience, some are better at delivering than others. This course is designed around six critical elements of customer service[[1]](#endnote-1) that, when the company lives them, bring customers back to experience service that outdoes the competition.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

* Demonstrate a customer service approach
* Understand how your own behavior affects the behavior of others
* Demonstrate confidence and skill as a problem solver
* Apply techniques to deal with difficult customers
* Make a choice to provide customer service

Personal Objectives

# Session Two: What is Customer Service?

## Definitions

What is Customer Service?

Customer service is the way you treat the people who support your company.[[2]](#endnote-2) The customer’s perception of that service is what brings them back to you for repeated service. Great service is what they cite when they send referrals to you.

People who provide good customer service (regardless of the nature of their business) earn psychological benefits in addition to any rewards offered by their company. If you are unhappy in your job, take an objective look at the kind of service you are giving. In almost every case, your job satisfaction mirrors the satisfaction people feel when doing business with you. Giving poor service is a way of beating up on yourself.

The Critical Elements of Customer Service

We’re going to cover a lot of material in this course, but it is really focused on six critical elements of customer service.

Figure 1: The Six Critical Elements of Customer Service

## The First Critical Element – A Customer Service Focus

The first critical element of customer service is a customer service focus. There are some important concepts that we need to understand about customer service before we can do a really good job of providing it.

Service is a philosophy — not a department, a program or a policy.

Service means meeting, not necessarily exceeding, customer expectations.

Service is not always natural, automatic, or coincidental.

# Session Three: Who Are Your Customers?

Who are our customers? For many of us, customers are easy to identify. They buy something from us, or we serve them in some way. People will sometimes say, “I don’t work directly with customers.” Before you accept this idea, try taking a closer look at who our customers are.

In most organizations and agencies, customers take two forms: internal and external.

Internal customers are the people, departments, or agencies served by what we do. The only person who might have no internal customers is the individual who works completely alone. For the rest of us, internal customers are a fact of life. Do you meet with external customers, or somehow meet the needs of internal customers, like your co-workers?

As individuals, we all have at least one internal customer: our boss. We may also have internal customers in the form of people we supervise. They rely on us to meet their needs and they form opinions about how well we meet those needs.

External customers are the people, departments, or tenants who are the end users of our organization’s products or services. This is a much more traditional use of the term “customer.”

Do you have VIP (very important person) customers, people who rate extra special service? You may think that certain customers who spend a lot of money at your business are VIPs.

In reality, all the people we work with are our customers and deserve VIP treatment. When we treat all of our customers like VIPs, we start to become known as an organization that offers exceptional service to everyone.

What do people want? At the simplest level, our customers have some basic needs.

* They want to be understood.
* They want to feel welcome.
* They want to feel important.
* They want to feel comfortable.

# Session Four: Meeting Expectations

Every individual’s needs are important. Each customer wants to be treated like they are your only customer. They know that isn’t true, just as well as you do, but they still want that kind of attention. A service oriented philosophy says that you are there for your customer.

How do you feel about knowing that customers today are much more demanding than they were 50 years ago? The customer’s expectations are higher than ever, they know more about you and your products, and they also know about your competition.

Here are six ways to meet your customer’s expectations.

* If the phone is ringing, make sure someone answers it. If no one is available, then a voice prompt will suffice (provided that it is working properly). People appreciate talking to people when they call to get service.
* When a customer enters your premises, greet them as though you are happy to see them. Don’t leave someone standing awkwardly.
* Be present for your customer. Your body language and tone of voice, whether you are on the phone or in person, need to let your customer know that you want to be there and you are pleased to serve them.
* Be polite. There is no excuse for bad manners. Your customer will not forget rudeness, even when they are being difficult.
* Pay attention to the details. If you promise something, make sure you deliver. Wow them by being on time and remembering all of the required pieces.
* Always thank your guest. There is a lot of competition out there, so your goal is to retain your customer, not send them on. Even if you are providing a service they cannot get somewhere else (like a government department issuing a driver’s license), be thankful for their attention and business.

# 

# Session Five: Setting Goals

## Creating a Personal Vision Statement

If you want to feel like you’re getting more out of life, then we recommend that you set a personal vision statement.[[3]](#endnote-3) Think of it like a pyramid:

Figure 2: The Vision Pyramid

There are three important steps to creating your personal vision:

* Step One: Identify Your Values
* Step Two: Define Your Values
* Step Three: Put it all Together

### Step One: Identify Your Values

From the list of values shown on the next page (both work and personal), select the ten that are most important to you as guides for how to behave, or as components of a valued way of life. Feel free to add any values of your own to this list.

Now that you have identified ten, imagine you are only permitted to have five values. Which five would you give up? Cross them off.

Now imagine that you are only permitted three. Which two would you give up? Cross them off.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Achievement |  | Excellence |  | Leadership |  | Reputation |
|  | Advancement & Promotion |  | Excitement |  | Location |  | Responsibility & Accountability |
|  | Adventure |  | Expertise |  | Loyalty |  | Security |
|  | Affection |  | Fame |  | Market Position |  | Self-Respect |
|  | Arts |  | Fast living |  | Meaningful Work |  | Serenity |
|  | Challenging Problems |  | Fast-Paced Work |  | Merit |  | Sophistication |
|  | Change & Variety |  | Financial Gain |  | Money |  | Stability |
|  | Close Relationships |  | Freedom |  | Nature |  | Status |
|  | Community |  | Friendships |  | Order |  | Supervising Others |
|  | Competence |  | Growth |  | Personal Development |  | Time Freedom |
|  | Competition |  | Having a Family |  | Physical Challenge |  | Tranquility |
|  | Cooperation |  | Helping Other people |  | Pleasure |  | Truth |
|  | Country |  | Helping Society |  | Power & Authority |  | Wealth |
|  | Creativity |  | Honesty |  | Privacy |  | Wisdom |
|  | Decisiveness |  | Independence |  | Productivity |  | Work Under Pressure |
|  | Democracy |  | Influencing Others |  | Public Service |  | Work with others |
|  | Ecological Awareness |  | Inner Harmony |  | Purity |  | Working Alone |
|  | Economic Security |  | Integrity |  | Quality of Results |  |  |
|  | Effectiveness |  | Intellectual Status |  | Quality Relationships |  |  |
|  | Efficiency |  | Involvement |  | Recognition |  |  |
|  | Ethical Behavior |  | Knowledge |  | Religion/Spirituality |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Step Two: Define Your Values

Now, outline what success for each of those values would look like.

Value One

Value Two

Value Three

### Step Three: Put it all Together

Finally, bring the three statements together into one paragraph. You may feel that you need to go back and re-evaluate your values, or you may want to re-work some sentences. That’s okay! Above all, this should be a reflection of your innermost thoughts and a roadmap for how you would like to conduct your life.

Example

In my life, I would like get the most out of each day by being as productive as possible. For me, being productive means feeling good about what I have accomplished at the end of the day and knowing that I have helped as many people as possible. It is important to me to do this in a way that allows me to feel good about my choices and to know that I have maintained my integrity while giving my best in work and life. As well, I need to feel challenged in my life. I like overcoming new problems and meeting new people while having new experiences.

1. The six critical elements are a customer service focus, defined within your organization, given life by the members of the organization, being a problem solver, measuring it, and reinforcing it. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. These can be paying customers (external customers) or staff members (internal customers). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. This will then help you set short- and long-term goals, which should influence your daily plan. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)