

ESSENTIALS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION

Today, customers are more demanding than ever and expect professional customer service. When something goes wrong between a business and a customer, handling the situation effectively can make the difference between retaining a client and losing one. With instant communication, one unhappy customer can spread the word very quickly. Here's the *good* news: you and your people can systematically master and implement best practices for delighting customers, dramatically reducing service failures, and helping you respond quickly and effectively to those that still occur.

TOPICS COVERED:

- Providing Quality Service
- Communication Essentials
- Dealing with Difficult Situations
- Time Management
- Managing Differences
- Telephone Communication

Please see the next two pages for topic summaries.

Time Required: Three days



This program provides a foundation for customer-focused service that builds customer satisfaction, loyalty, and organizational success. It brings together important topics and a building block approach that promotes a service culture and improves critical skills.

Participants will learn how to take responsibility for providing quality service, communicate effectively, handle challenging interactions, manage differences and conflict, delight the most difficult customers, and manage their time. Experiential exercises and custom case simulations combined with “best practices” enable customer service professionals to gain mastery of new skills and techniques.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE?

Essentials for Customer Service is designed to meet the needs of front-line service professionals who interact with external customers and internal partners.

CUSTOMIZATION: This program can be customized to reflect your organization's procedures, policies, cases, examples, and terminology. Please inquire about these optional consulting services.

TOPIC SUMMARIES

Providing Quality Service

In this module, participants identify good and poor customer service, and the reasons that customers leave. Participants learn the value of lifetime customers, and discover how to cultivate lifetime customer relationships. They learn that it costs far less to keep a customer than it does to find and attract a new customer. Finally, they discover that *everyone* has a customer – whether internal or external – and discuss what having an internal customer entails.

Communication Essentials

This module will give participants a clearer understanding of the skills they need to communicate effectively with customers. Participants will assess their specific strengths, identify opportunities for improvement, and practice skills that will make them better communicators. They will learn how to send clearer messages, control non-verbal communication, become effective active listeners, give and receive feedback more successfully, and sharpen their internal and external email communication. Participants will be taught tools to improve their weak areas, and develop individual communication action plans to help them make the changes they need to become more successful communicators.

Dealing with Difficult Situations

This module is geared toward helping employees deal with customers who display difficult behavior, while at the same time gaining insights into themselves and their own behavior. It introduces the Johari Window method for learning more about oneself and others. Participants learn about all four behavior styles, discover how to deal with individuals of each style, and learn which behavior style they themselves follow. The module identifies proven strategies for coping with, circumventing, reducing, or even eliminating difficult behavior. An appendix introduces six specific difficult behaviors, along with techniques for managing each of them.

TOPIC SUMMARIES *(continued)*

Effective Time Management

This highly interactive module helps participants gain mastery over how they spend their time. Participants will discuss their unspoken assumptions about time, and learn both strategies and systems for effective time management. They will also master powerful tools for handling or eliminating procrastination and other time wasters. The module covers effective priority-setting, planning, creating an action plan for the day, and saying “no” when appropriate. In each case, skills are both taught and practiced. Participants will interact extensively with both the instructor and each other. They will experience relevant simulations, exercises, and practice sessions, and learn how to apply them meaningfully to their own everyday work situations.

Managing Differences

This session helps participants learn the sources of conflict, and uses our ***Managing Differences Inventory***[®] to identify and manage nine different styles of handling differences and conflict. Participants identify their own natural style, practice several useful styles, and learn how to choose the right style for each situation. The focus is on developing “flexibility” by using realistic case examples, exercises, and simulations to practice new conflict-resolution skills that can be immediately applied with today’s customers.

Telephone Skills

In this highly interactive module, participants discuss the importance of telephone communication, learn how it differs from other types of communication, and show how it can enhance or destroy a company’s image. Participants are given tips for improving their company’s image through more effective telephone communication, and learn specific ways to improve their personal telephone styles. They are introduced to the difference between listening and “waiting to talk.” They see what makes a good listener, how to give listening feedback, and how to overcome listening barriers. Finally, they learn proven strategies to deal with long-winded and/or angry callers. Throughout, they are given multiple opportunities to apply this module’s tools and techniques to the specific challenges they face in their own workplaces.

Other topics can be added or substituted to the Essentials Program. Please consult the Quest Syllabus for descriptions.