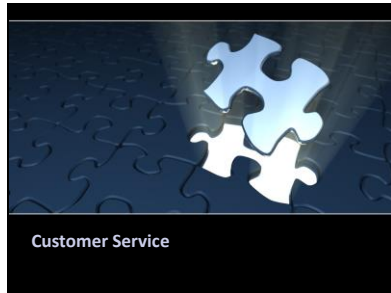


Slide 1



Welcome to lesson one in the Customer Service module. Customer service is a relatively complex puzzle. While engaging customers, we are attempting to offer services in a manner that moves our customers in a positive way while holding them accountable for their efforts in building their careers. Our customers are critical to our success; each customer is a critical piece of the customer service puzzle. How you greet and engage each customer will be the difference between good and poor customer service.

Slide 2



In this session, we will talk about the definition of customer service with a focus on what good customer service is. We will also talk about the ten principles of good customer service. As we are discussing the ten principles of good customer service, we will also discuss who our customers are, how we meet our customers' needs, and what positive communication is.

Slide 3

What is customer service?



- According to the dictionary, customer service is “the assistance that a company provides to individuals who buy or use its products or services”

According to the dictionary, customer service is “the assistance that a company provides to individuals who buy or use its products or services.” This seems simple enough, but “customer service” can be positive or negative. What do we mean by this statement? Customers can be assisted in a helpful manner with kindness and attention, or customers can be served in a manner that disconnects them from the workforce system. When providing quality customer service, the key to making the puzzle come together is YOU!

Slide 4

What is good customer service?

- There are a variety of definitions for good customer service
- Is good customer service measured by how happy customers are when they leave?
- Is it measured by the receipt of services needed?
- Is it measured by positive feedback from customers?



There are a variety of definitions for “good” customer service. Not all definitions are the same because they focus on different measures as to what good customer service is. For example, is good customer service measured by how happy customers are when they leave? Is it measured by the receipt of services needed; or, is it measured by positive feedback from the customers? The customer’s success alone is not enough to measure if the customer had a positive experience when accessing services in the One-Stop Career Center.

Slide 5

What is good customer service?

- Think for a moment that you are interviewing for a Customer Service Representative position and are asked, “what is good customer service? ”
- What would you say in response to this question?
- Would you think back on a positive experience and try to define or describe it?




Think for a moment that you are interviewing for a job as a Customer Service Representative. You are asked by the interviewer, “What is good customer service?” How would you answer that question? You may think back on a positive experience and try to describe the experience. Think now about a business you like to patronize on a regular basis. Is it a restaurant or a store? Is it enough that they have a product that you like; or, do you return to this business because the staff treat you with respect?

Slide 6

What is good customer service?

- Good customer service is engaging each customer in a manner that
 - Meets the customer’s needs to the best of the company’s abilities
 - Is engaging and thoughtful
- The customer leaves happy
- The customer is willing to tell others about his/her positive experience
- The customer is willing to return



Good customer service is engaging each customer in a manner that meets the customer’s needs to the best of the company’s abilities and in a manner that is engaging and thoughtful. Essentially, the customer leaves happy and is willing to tell others about his or her positive experience. More importantly, the customer is willing to return to the One-Stop Career Center and continue receiving services. This brings us to the principles of good customer service. How do we provide positive customer service to everyone who comes into our One-Stop Career Center?

Slide 7



Let's discuss the principles of positive customer service with a focus of helping everyone who comes to the One-Stop Career Center in a thoughtful and engaging manner. The first principle is to accept that our customers are the focus of our business. The core of our business structure is to offer services to our customers.

Slide 8



Think of it this way, our customers are very important to our company. Our customers are not just a statistic or survey result but unique people who have unique needs like you and me. In fact, if our goal is to secure positive results on a customer satisfaction survey, we must focus on our customers. Our customers are not dependent on us; in fact, we are dependent on them. They are the reason why we do our work. Without our customers, we would not be here.

Slide 9



The second principle is to "know who your customers are." Let's discuss this principle.

Slide 10

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 2

- Our customers are

1. Job seekers who are looking for work for the very first time
2. Job seekers who are or have been working but now want a career
3. Job seekers who are changing careers
 - A. Some because they want to
 - B. Some because they have to
4. Job seekers who are trying to advance

Our customers include a variety of job seekers. Some of our job seekers are looking for work for the first time, while others have a “job” and now want to start a career. Some of our job seekers have a career but access services through the One-Stop Career Centers because they want or have to change careers; while other job seekers are in careers but are trying to advance to the next level.

Slide 11

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 2

- Our customers will need help

- Conducting an effective job search
- Learning how to complete an application
- Learning what to say (and not to say) during an interview
- Understanding Labor Market Information
 - What jobs are available in the community
 - The education requirements of specific jobs
 - What jobs have a bright future or are expected to hire in the coming years

Regardless of the type of job seeker, our customers will need help with conducting an effective job search.

For example,

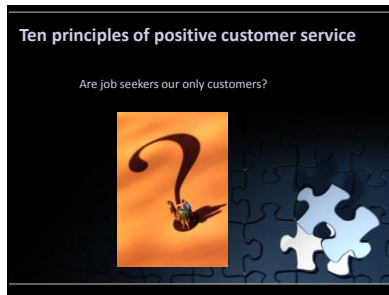
- If the customer is looking for a job for the first time, the job seeker may not have experience looking for work in the community and may need help filling out an application, learning what to say in an interview, or learning what jobs to look for based on his or her education and training level.
- On the other hand, a job seeker that is changing careers may also need help conducting an effective job search. Because he or she has not had to look for work for an extended period of time, the customer will need help brushing up on how to fill out an application and what to say in an interview.

In addition to learning what to say during an interview, the job seeker

customer will need help accessing Labor Market Information. All types of job seekers need to understand the types of jobs available in the community, the education requirements associated with specific jobs, and the jobs that will be hiring in the future.

For example, the career changer will need to contemplate if he or she needs to return to school based on those jobs that are growing and will be hiring in the future. Job seekers who are trying to advance will need to ensure that they are ready to put in for the advancement. Career advancers will need to ensure that they are ready for the interview and understand what employers are looking for.

Slide 12



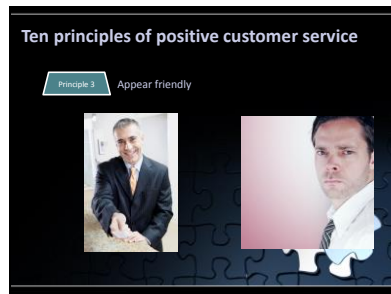
Are job seekers our only customers?

Slide 13



No, the workforce system has a variety of customers. Who else do we serve in the workforce system? We serve businesses who employ or hire our job seeker customers; we work with community partners, and other not-for-profit companies, as well as schools and colleges; we also work with our colleagues in the workforce system; that's right, our co-workers are our customers too!

Slide 14



Let's move on to the next principle. Principle three is "appear friendly." While this concept may be simple, it goes a long way with customers. Take a look at these two pictures. Who would you rather talk to?

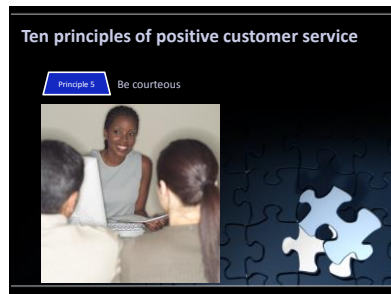
According to principle three, we must smile and talk directly with our customers. We also need to make sure that we are engaging each customer with a positive attitude even when we are having a bad day. So, how do we appear friendly on a bad day? We have to take it "one customer at a time" and remember that we are offering job seekers, employers and partners, life or business changing opportunities.

Slide 15



Principle four is quite controversial; however, this principle is just a business reality. Not everyone we work with will want what we have to offer. Do not take it personally. Like principle three, take a deep breath and engage one customer at a time. If you accept that some individuals will not want what you have to offer them, you will be able to move on and help those customers who want your help.

Slide 16



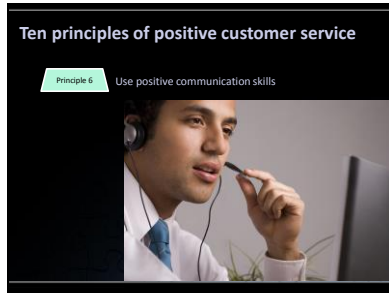
It is not enough to appear friendly; you have to be courteous and respectful to customers. What are some ways that you can be courteous to customers?

Slide 17



First, greet your customers with a smile. First impressions go a long way. Make sure customers know you are happy to do business with them. Next, use the customer's name and make sure that the customer knows your name, too. Do not answer the phone while talking to the customer, and do not eat or drink while meeting with a customer. Finally, listen and make sure you are responding to the customer's needs.

Slide 18



Principle six requires all of us to use positive communication skills both when we are on the phone and when we are meeting with customers face-to-face.

Slide 19



Whether you are on the phone or meeting with customers face-to-face, make sure you greet customers with a smile. Believe it or not, customers can hear your mannerisms on the phone; so, make sure you sit up and communicate as if they were sitting across from you. It is true, customers can hear you smile. Make sure you also speak clearly and face customers when talking to them; when on the phone, do not mumble or turn away from the headset. Additionally, make sure you use every day, or “customer-friendly,” language.



What are ways you can show that you are listening and paying attention to what the customer has to say? First, open body language. What does this mean? Do not stand or sit with your arms crossed; keep your body open, make eye contact with your customers. Standing on one leg with your hands on your hips can give a message of anger or frustration. If you are standing, stand on both legs to show you are balanced. If you are not sure what to do with your hands, place them by your side or clasp them together.


Next, make sure you are not thinking about what you want to say next while your customers are talking. Try very hard to listen to customers, and give their information an opportunity to process fully. Once customers are done talking, offer information. This leads to the next concept, try not to interrupt customers. We often want to share our perspective, and we get excited by the opportunity to share what we are thinking. Unfortunately, this can actually lead to appearing disrespectful instead of engaged. Finally, as you are listening to what customers have to say, show that you are engaged through positive reactions. Make sure that you respond verbally with “I understand” or “I had not thought of that” and other appropriate and respectful responses. You should do this whether you are meeting with customers in person or over the phone. It is imperative your customers know you are listening and not distracted by other people or other work.

Slide 21

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 6

- Stay free of distractions
- Positive communicators are not worried about everything they have to do before the end of the day or working on other tasks during phone or in-person meetings. They are paying attention to the customer
- Believe it or not, your customer knows if you are paying attention

A woman is shown working at a desk with a headset, surrounded by papers and a puzzle piece graphic. The puzzle piece is a light blue color and is positioned to the right of the woman. The background is dark with a grid pattern.

Which brings us to our next element of positive communication, stay free from distractions. Sometimes this is hard to do. You may be on the phone with a customer when a co-worker walks into your area to ask a question; or, you may be meeting with a customer when your phone rings. Yes, you will be tempted to be distracted or even work on another project during your conversation with the customer. Do not give into temptation; make sure that you focus fully on your customer. Believe it or not, your customer knows if you are paying attention.

Slide 22

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 6

- In today's workplace, we have to talk with customers by voicemail, text and other media (like Twitter). We will discuss how to leave voice mails and texts for customers using positive communication techniques
- Be careful when conveying a message by voicemail and text
- A good rule to work by is to think, "what would happen if someone heard or read this message?"

In today's business community, we communicate with our customers using a variety of media. We talk to our customers in person, by phone, and through text messages. We also leave messages for our customers through media, such as Twitter. When using such media, we need to be very careful about our communication techniques. Do not leave personal information on answering machines, especially if you are working with customers engaged in a mandatory program, such as the Welfare Transition program. Do not text personal information over a phone or using Twitter. A good rule to work by is to think, "What would happen if someone else heard or read this message?"

Slide 23

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 6

- When leaving a voicemail message
 - Do not disclose any confidential or personal information
 - Leave emotion out of it
 - Keep your messages
 - Short
 - Concise
 - Clear
 - Dated

Let's focus on leaving phone messages. You can leave an informative message without disclosing any confidential information by keeping your messages emotion-free, short, concise, clear and dated. Short and concise are easy to understand; simply leave only essential information. Make sure that you speak clearly, meaning that you speak slowly and carefully. Do not rush, especially when you leave your phone number. Make sure that the customer can easily understand your message. Make sure the customer can write down your name and write down your phone number without having to listen to the message multiple times. Also, leave the date and time that you called.

Slide 24

Ten principles of positive customer service

When texting

- Do not disclose any confidential or personal information
- Leave emotion out of it
- Keep your messages
 - Short
 - Concise
 - Clear
 - Dated

Principle 6



You can use the same principles when texting a customer. When texting, make sure that you do not disclose any personal information. If someone looks at the customer's phone, the person should see nothing more than a benign message. Make sure your message is emotionally neutral, as well as short, concise and clear. Lucky for us, the phone will automatically provide the date and time the message was sent.

Slide 25

Ten principles of positive customer service

An example of a negative text message

- I cannot believe you missed your appointment with me today. If you do not call me by 5:00 PM, I am going to stop your benefits, and you cannot get any more services!

An example of a positive text message

- Sorry I missed you today at our 1:00 PM appointment. Please call me at XXX-XXXX before 5:00 PM. Thanks, Professional



Here is an example of a negative and positive text message. The first message is conveying too many details and is full of emotion. It also includes information that could be construed as personal. For example, I can tell from this message that the customer is getting benefits, which is confidential. Additionally, the customer does not know the name of the person who sent the text or how to reach the workforce professional. While the customer may have missed his or her appointment, the customer simply needs to be notified to call the staff member as soon as possible or

no later than close of business. This is shown in the positive text message on the right side of the screen.

Slide 26



You should also make sure that your voicemail greeting is professional and conveys a message of respect and consideration. You can do this by making sure that your tone is friendly and upbeat. You also want to ensure that your voicemail message is informative. For example, does your voicemail message give your name and extension number so individuals calling another staff member do not accidentally leave messages on your voicemail? Does your greeting say, “I will return your call within 48 hours” instead of “at my earliest convenience”? Make sure to tell customers exactly when they should get a call back from you, as this may help reduce multiple messages, as well as customer frustration. Additionally, when you are going to be out of the office, make sure your voicemail greeting states the dates you will be out of the office, the date you are returning, and the date that the customer can expect a return phone call.

Slide 27



Ever been to a business that says “welcome” when you walk in the door? Ever been to a business where they mean it? Is this a business that you return to?

The reality is, you will work with a variety of customers, and the traffic in the One-Stop Career Centers often ebbs and flows. When you are working with one person and another customer approaches or needs assistance, simply let the approaching customer know that you will be right with him or her. This lets the approaching customer know that you recognize his or her needs and are assisting someone else. It also tells the customer that he or she is important and will be assisted until the matter is concluded.

What if the customer you are helping will require an extended amount of time? Consider getting help for those customers who are waiting. You do not want to keep people waiting too long.

Slide 28

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 7

- What happens if you are serving customers on the phone and are managing multiple calls?
 - Engaging customers via the phone means effectively placing callers on "hold"
 - Ask the customer, "would you prefer to be placed on hold or shall I call you back?"
 - If you are going to leave the "conversation" to check on another customer, excuse yourself and place the customer on hold

What happens if you are serving customers on the phone and are managing multiple calls? Professional telephone etiquette is important. If you need to leave the phone line, it is courteous to give the caller the option of waiting or being called back. You might ask, "Would you prefer to hold or shall I call you back?" If the caller chooses to wait, give a progress report every 30 seconds or so. This lets the caller know that he or she has not been disconnected or forgotten. When you return to the line, thank the caller for waiting. Whenever you are going to leave the caller to help someone else, excuse yourself and place the customer on hold.

Slide 29

Ten principles of positive customer service

Principle 7

- What steps do you need to take if you are transferring a call?
 - Tell the customer why you are transferring him/her
 - Let the caller know who you are transferring him/her to
 - Give the customer a direct phone number of the staff member you are transferring him/her to in case he/she gets cut off

What if you need to transfer a customer to another staff member? What steps do you need to take to transfer the call? First, tell the customer why you are transferring him or her to another person. Next, let the caller know who you are transferring him or her to. Finally, give the customer the direct phone number of the staff member you are transferring him or her to in case he or she gets cut off.

Slide 30



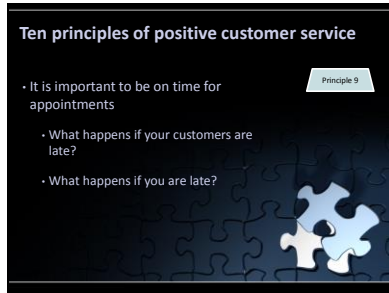
Principle number eight requires staff members to go the extra mile. This may include walking customers to their classrooms instead of pointing through a door. It may include moving around the desk to sit next to customers who are upset while listening to their issues. It may include noticing a customer is having a hard time using the computer and recommending a computer class. Going the extra mile can make all the difference in the world to your customers. This principle requires us to pay attention to their needs and be responsive to those needs.

Slide 31



Do not make promises unless you can keep them. Reliability is critical to a positive relationship.

Slide 32



It is important to be on time for appointments and sessions; being late shows you are not reliable. Let's take an example, your customer, Anny, arrives fifteen minutes late to her appointment. You are disappointed, because today you were going to review her application for school to see if she is ready for a scholarship. Now, you cannot see Anny for another week; this means her progress is delayed; she may even miss the scholarship deadline. Now, let's reverse this scenario. You are fifteen minutes late for the appointment with Anny. Instead of meeting this customer at 3:00 p.m., you go to the lobby at 3:15 p.m. Unfortunately, Anny also has a doctor's appointment at 4:00 p.m. and cannot stay more than fifteen minutes. Anny feels that she has to rush through her appointment and is scared that an important detail will be missed. Anny's thirty minute appointment would have given her plenty of time to review her scholarship paperwork, but now her appointment will be cut in half. Anny now feels she is not getting the attention she needs to really move forward.

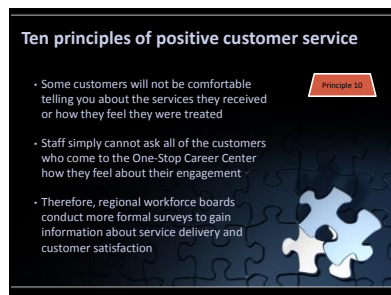
Now, we can empathize with Anny's disappointment. We know how it feels when a customer is late, and their progress is delayed or even stopped. We can also understand the disappointment of customers when we do not keep our commitments to them.

Slide 33



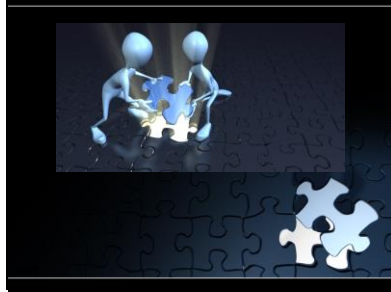
We have to measure our success and identify ways that we can improve our customer service and program delivery. How can you tell what your customer satisfaction level really is? Why not simply ask our customers how we are doing. We can ask in a variety of ways. For example, you can ask a customer “How was the service you received today?” You can use the customer’s response to improve how services are delivered and how you can engage customers better. The key is to actively listen to what your customers have to say, then take the information and use it for your own professional development, as well as to improve customer service.

Slide 34



Some customers will not be comfortable telling you about how they feel. Additionally, staff simply do not have the time or ability to ask all of the customers coming into the One-Stop Career Center how they feel about their engagement. Therefore, regional workforce boards conduct more formal surveys to gain information about service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Slide 35



As a workforce professional, you are critical to helping put the customer service puzzle together to ensure that our customers receive quality customer service and are able to use our services appropriately. You are surrounded by job seekers, businesses, partners, schools and co-workers, all of whom are your customers. To provide good customer service, you must:

- identify the principal customers of the workforce development system and their unique needs; and,
- match appropriate services to the customer's needs; and,
- demonstrate positive communication skills.

Providing good customer service may be a challenge, but as a workforce professional, your first priority is to focus on providing the highest quality customer service that you can.

This concludes the first lesson of the Customer Service module.