



Customer Service Essentials

Telephone Customer Service

For Teachers

Introduction

More than ever before, the selling of goods and services is a very competitive market. Customers will go somewhere else if they don't receive excellent customer service. Gaining and retaining customers presents an increasing challenge for businesses. Smart businesses work hard to gain and retain customers by using first-class customer service. The focus of this program is telephone customer service. It explores how telephone customer service differs from other forms of customer service. It also provides practical examples of how staff can deliver excellent customer service when dealing with everyday customers or conflict over the telephone.

Timeline

00:00:00	Introduction
00:04:06	Customer service phone techniques
00:08:34	Using phone technology correctly
00:13:54	Handling conflict
00:17:44	Credits
00:18:26	End program

Related Titles

Customer Service Essentials – Online Customer Service
Customer Service Essentials – Person to Person Customer Service

Recommended Resources

- www.csia.com.au/
- <http://www.customerserviceskills.org/>
- <http://sbinfocanada.about.com/od/customer-service/a/custservrules.htm>

Student Worksheet

Initiate Prior Learning

1. If you've experienced the following scenarios how do they make you feel. If not, try to imagine how they would make you feel?

a) The customer service operator who answers your call mumbles and grunts at you.

b) The customer service operator offers you a bargain deal, but doesn't answer your query.

c) You get a recorded voice message instead of a person to help with your query.

d) You find yourself going around in circles with a recorded voice message and are unable to get the help you need or an operator, and have to hang up and ring again.

Active Viewing Guide

1. After navigating through an automated answering system what sort emotions will some people be feeling?

2. What are the three essential elements of communication over the telephone?

3. What conveys the first impression with telephone customer service?

4. List three telephone customer service techniques.

5. In customer service, how frequently will you need to professionally and correctly put calls on hold, mute calls and/or transfer calls?

6. a) What should be set up so everything is organised, tidy and within reach?

- b) What is important to minimise?

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7. List four things that must be done in customer service when using the telephone.

8. Part of any telephone customer service is dealing with what sort of people?

9. While complex problems should be dealt with calmly and effectively, don't assume that the customer is always what?

10. List three key strategies that will help to minimise conflict.

Extension Activities

1. List the main way you could assess whether the person on the other end of the phone is angry.
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2. As a group, discuss strategies for dealing with complex problems calmly and effectively, without assuming that the customer is always right.

Suggested Student Responses

Active Viewing Guide

1. After navigating through an automated answering system what sort of emotions will some people be feeling?
Frustrated or impatient.
2. What are the three essential elements of communication over the telephone?
Listening carefully, establishing what the customer wants and listening for emotion.
3. What conveys the first impression with telephone customer service?
The greeting.
4. List three telephone customer service techniques.
Give a good first impression via your greeting.
Take the customer's frustrations seriously.
Do something to avoid future occurrences/problems.
Find out what the customer wants.
Clarify by using both open and closed questions.
After action is decided, use a summary of the discussion and transaction to provide a checklist.
Finish on a positive note.
5. In customer service, how frequently will you need to professionally and correctly put calls on hold, mute calls and/or transfer calls?
It is likely to be done many times every day.
6. a) What should be set up so everything is organised, tidy and within reach?
Workspaces.

b) What is important to minimise?
Noise.
7. List four things that must be done in customer service when using the telephone.
Use the phone correctly and professionally.
Master the equipment.
Master the manner in which you carry out your job.
Keep track of callers and their inquiries.
Keep your focus on the customer, especially when multi-tasking.
No eating or chewing.
Answer calls promptly.
Answer calls in an appropriate manner.
Vary tone and expression during conversation.

8. Part of any telephone customer service is dealing with what sort of people?
Unhappy people.
9. While complex problems should be dealt with calmly and effectively, don't assume that the customer is always what?
Right.
10. List three key strategies that will help to minimise conflict.
Remain calm, polite, don't interrupt.
Use active listening (and confirm you are listening by making reassuring comments).
Clarify problems and take appropriate action.
If you are unable to help, know who to refer to and how to escalate the matter if need be.
Don't assume the customer is always right.