



Safely delivering sustainable solutions that are innovative by nature.

2019

Customer Service
SDG&E Auditing Services

Introduction

"You are what you do, not what you say you'll do."

-- Carl Jung

Introduction

"Well done is better than well said."

-- Benjamin Franklin

Introduction

"Trust: The reputation of a thousand years may be undermined by the conduct of one hour."

-- Japanese Proverb

Introduction

"If you don't care, your customer never will."

-- Marlene Blaszczyk, Motivational Specialist

Introduction

"Ask your customers to be part of the solution,
and don't view them as part of the problem."

-- Alan Weiss, Author "Million Dollar Consulting"

Introduction

"Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place,
but far more difficult still,
to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

-- Benjamin Franklin

San Diego- Auditing Services

What are your common customer encounters?

- Field/Phone
- Successes
- Challenges

Customer Expectations

Customer expectations are built on two sets of needs:

1. Technical needs
2. Personal needs

To be successful at building customer relationships, your company can provide the tools, resources, and training to meet the technical needs of your customers. However, it is up to you to meet their personal needs.

Customer Expectations

Technical Needs: Technical needs involve the specific services, products, problems, and solutions that are the focus of your work. You can think of meeting a customer's technical needs as "taking care of the problem."

Personal Needs: Personal needs involve the way you relate and communicate with customers as people. You need to establish a personal connection, make the customer feel comfortable and confident, and take the time to discover and respond to all of the customer's concerns. You also need to provide explanations or recommendations and verify that the customer feels good about the experience with your company. You can think of meeting a customer's personal expectation needs as "taking care of the person."

Five Personal Needs

- ***To be recognized as a unique individual.*** No customer wants to be treated like a number or a routine problem. The customer wants to feel important and be given personal attention.
- ***To be right.*** Customers don't want to feel as if a problem is their fault.
- ***To be able to express oneself freely.*** A customer wants to be able to speak their mind and to feel comfortable with the fact that they will be heard.
- ***To be treated fairly.*** Customers don't want to feel like they are being cheated, taken advantage of, or treated unjustly.
- ***To feel assured.*** A customer wants to know why you're asking particular questions or taking a specific course of action. And they want to feel that you're really going to take care of the problem.

Factors that Drive Customer Perceptions

Dimension	Definition
Professionalism	The perception that the representatives conduct themselves in a businesslike manner, operate with a good understanding of tree biology and care, engage in safe and cautious practices, and demonstrate respect for the customer's property.
Courtesy	The perception that representatives demonstrate a pleasant and friendly demeanor.
Responsiveness	The perception that representatives actively attempt to identify customer needs and acknowledge the importance and legitimacy of those needs, and then do everything possible to meet those needs.
Accessibility	The perception that representatives are accessible throughout the line clearance service, and that they provide the customers with the information regarding the trimming that will take place on or near their property.
Customer Control Over the Encounter	The perception that the representatives permit customers to exercise a degree of control over the line clearance encounter, including the ability to choose between options and alternatives.
Personalization	The perception that the representatives treat customers as individuals, thereby minimizing feelings of powerlessness associated with dealing with a large, impersonal utility provider.

Initial Greetings

Effective initial greetings include the following elements:

- Using the customer's name
- Making eye contact, if in-person
- Identifying yourself and the company by name
- Explaining the purpose of the call or making an offer to help

Initial Greetings

To ensure a successful opening, always try to meet the following criteria. We call them the **3 C's**:

- ❖ **Clear:** The greeting is clear and understandable. The customer understands immediately who you are and what company he or she has reached. (If a customer is asking you to repeat yourself, slow down.)
- ❖ **Caring:** Your tone and manner communicate empathy and concern, so you create a personal connection. The customer feels that he or she is meeting a real person. (If your greeting sounds monotone, smile. You can hear a smile!)
- ❖ **Confident:** The customer believes that you are someone who has the skill, knowledge, and ability to take care of the problem or situation. Your greeting and presentation tell the customer that you're confident and you can help.

Active Listening

The next critical element is listening.

Listening is a subtle and complex skill. We all consider ourselves to be above average listeners. Yet, many customers complain that employees don't listen to them.

To develop lasting customer relationships, no single skill is more important than listening. Listening is critical in understanding what the customer wants and how the customer feels.

The Seven Deadly Sins of Ineffective Listening

- 1. *Interrupting the customer.*** If you commit this sin, it's almost impossible to recover. Not only is it poor service, it's bad manners.
- 2. *Listening without full attention.*** In many companies, people are trained to do two things at once. That's fine as long as listening isn't one of them. Effective listening requires full attention. The only other activity you should do at the same time is taking notes on what the customer is saying.
- 3. *Listening for facts without feelings.*** Facts are important, but there are two dimensions to listening. If you listen carefully, you can hear their feelings. So don't overlook how your customers are feeling.
- 4. *Thinking about what you're going to say.*** You can think a lot faster than you can listen. So it's natural for minds to race ahead and start formulating what you're going to say next. This is a sure-fire way to get off track and out of sync with the customer.

The Seven Deadly Sins of Ineffective Listening

5. ***Assuming you know all the facts.*** As a professional, you see the same situations time and again. In the interest of productivity, it's easy to assume that you already know all the facts. But every situation is unique – at least to the customer. Make sure you really do have the information you need before you go ahead.
6. ***Jumping to conclusions.*** This sin is particularly tricky because, after all, the purpose of listening is to reach conclusions. Remember that the goal is not just to take care of the problem but also to take care of the person. And this means that you need to guide the customer to reach the same conclusions that you do.
7. ***Listening without participation.*** Even if you could gather all the information you need by just passively listening, the customer needs more from you. People need reassurance—to know that they've been heard and understood, and that their feelings and perceptions are validated. So, periodically let customers know that you're listening by paraphrasing or confirming what they've said.

Your Body Language

Your body language shows the talker that you are interested in what he or she has to say. It also helps you direct attention to the talker.

- Lean forward slightly; don't slouch
- Stand or sit face-to-face with the talker
- Keep arms and legs uncrossed
- Remain relaxed, not tense or fidgety
- Use appropriate facial expressions
- Maintain eye contact

Critical Skills for Establishing Rapport

It's important to consider three critical skills for establishing rapport when you respond.

❖ **Assuring**

❖ **Empathizing**

❖ **Apologizing**

Critical Skills for Establishing Rapport

1. Assuring

If the customer is not expressing a particular emotion, you can generally respond with a simple and confident statement assuring the customer you can help.

When you assure, you tell the customer that you will do everything you can to take care of the problem. You might say something like this:

- I can take care of this for you.
- I'll be glad to help you clear this up.
- I'll do everything I can to take care of this problem.
- Let me get some more information from you and see how I can help you with this problem.

Critical Skills for Establishing Rapport

2. Empathizing

The second critical skill for establishing rapport is empathizing. If the customer's situation calls for an emotional response, you can begin by empathizing with the customer. When you empathize, you acknowledge and validate how the customer is feeling. In effect, you agree that in a similar situation, you might feel the same way.

You generally say something like this:

- I understand how you feel.
- I don't blame you for feeling angry.
- I know how frustrating that can be.
- I can imagine how annoying that is.
- I appreciate your concern.

Critical Skills for Establishing Rapport

Empathizing is especially important if the customer is angry or upset. It's an effective way to help calm the customer. Since you've acknowledged and validated the customer's feelings, the customer doesn't have to justify those feelings any more and can start to let go of them.

It's also effective – and important – to empathize with a "good news" situation. So, if the customer tells you something that makes him happy or proud, let him know that you empathize. You might say something such as:

- That's great!
- Congratulations!
- I am glad to hear that.
- I am happy for you.

Critical Skills for Establishing Rapport

3. Apologizing

The final critical skill for establishing rapport is apologizing. If the customer is angry or upset, you should begin by apologizing and empathizing with the customer's situation. When you apologize, you acknowledge that the customer has had an unpleasant experience and you express your personal concern. It doesn't mean that you are accepting blame for the situation. You might say something such as:

- I'm sorry that happened.
- I'm sorry you've had that experience.
- I'm sorry you've had this problem.
- I apologize for the inconvenience.
- I'm sorry you feel that way.

Apologizing is a way of putting yourself on the customer's side so you can start to work together to solve the problem. You can also empathize and provide assurance. Remember, always respond to the customer's personal needs or emotions first!

Customer Bill of Rights

All customers possess these inherent rights:

- I. The right to receive full value in the form of quality services.
- II. The right to be heard completely with our full attention.
- III. The right to ask questions and receive answers that make sense and help solve problems.
- IV. The right to complain if the company has made an error or oversight
- V. The right to be treated with respect, fairness, and courtesy.