

***THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARIZONA LIBRARY***

**CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS
FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

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CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

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Outline:

- **Introduction: names, team, favorite store.**
- **Who uses our services and what do they need from us? Where do they fit in to the big picture?**
- **Why call ‘em “customers” anyway?**
- **Customer service**
 - **Causes of Customer Dissatisfaction**
 - **Basic skills**
 - **Quality service skills**
- **Your role as a customer service provider**
- **Dealing with difficult situations**
- **Telephone skills**
- **Evaluation of session and self evaluation**

1) EXERCISE: Nominal group technique

Who uses our Library? Name three types of users.

READ mission statement and emphasize that we are in this business to serve customers. Mention increased competition from other sources: CCIT, Bookstore, Printing and Publishing, on-line service providers.

HANDOUT: LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

Who uses the Library?

All University affiliates
Community users/visitors/Disgruntled customers
Customers looking for specialized information
Faculty
First year undergraduates
Graduate Students
Library staff
Newcomers to the University or community
Other Libraries and/or Institutions
People who are not familiar with computer technology
Remote/virtual users
Scholars
Secretaries
Students
University Staff

Why Call 'Em Customers Anyway?

- Historic role of libraries /none or very little competition
- Information Explosion
- Technology Explosion
- Increased Competition from information brokers, vendors , the WWW.
- Customer Focus as a Library Value
- Our need to stay in business and be remain competitive
- Shrinking resources, increased external competition

The University Of Arizona Library

Vision

To be recognized as the primary community for access and appropriation of information

By developing excellent services that meet expressed and anticipated needs of the learner, and that aim to exceed expectations

By building a diverse staff, valued for their knowledge and abilities in gathering, organizing, and distributing information, prepared for collaborative learning, and recognized as partners contributing to the research enterprise

By outreach with students, staff, faculty, colleagues and citizens to insure their success and enrich their lives.

Mission

The University of Arizona Library is dedicated to meeting the diverse information, curricular and research needs of students, faculty, staff and affiliated customers. In an environment of free and open inquiry and with a commitment to excellence, the Library participates in the scholarly communication process to promote life-long learning skills and continuous educational achievement.

Values of the University of Arizona Library

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND LEARNING

Quality and continuous learning are woven into the whole fabric of the organization.

- We provide an environment for learning and growth
- We strive to exceed our expectations, raise our standards, and challenge ourselves.

Incorporates: risk-taking, teamwork, excellence, efficiency, staff development and meaningful work.

DIVERSITY

- We value, respect, and are strengthened by viewpoints and experiences outside the dominant culture.
- We strive to build a multicultural organization

CUSTOMER FOCUS

- We actively seek to identify, meet and exceed customer wants and needs.
- We welcome, guide and support customers, both internal and external, with attention and respect.
- We create and sustain partnerships.
- We provide access to information in its most useful form.

INTEGRITY

- We honor our commitments by doing what we say.
- We hold ourselves and each other accountable and behave in a consistently ethical and responsible manner.
- We support freedom of information and academic freedom.

Incorporates: respect, ethical practice, trust and honesty.

FLEXIBILITY:

- We respect varying approaches to problem solving and meeting customer needs.
- We value and support collaboration, teamwork, and other creative methods as a basis for making decisions and developing programs.

What makes our customers unhappy and what behaviors/attitudes exemplify bad customer service?

- rude attitude: making the customer feel like they are interrupting or bothering you
- not listening to what is said; having to repeat oneself
- half hearted answers
- lack of knowledge/ inadequate knowledge of products services, policies or procedures
- having to wait too long (long lines, being put on hold) to get help/to be acknowledged
- being give incorrect information and the run-around
- not getting service providers attention for one reason or another
- not knowing one's job
- being treated like a dummy
- defective or inferior products
- no response/responsibility
- not finding alternative solutions
- overzealous service providers
- grumpy employees
- exasperation on the part of the employee
- language choices/tone of voice
- no follow up on special requests
- not being acknowledged because of gender
- Lack of attention to customer/service provider involved in extraneous conversations while attending to the customer
- Service provider does not follow through on promises made
- Conflicting messages from employees
- Feelings of being victimized by the business or operation
- Lack of communication between parties in dispute
- Feelings of being dismissed or discounted by the personnel.
- Business integrity or honesty that was questionable.
- Not being helpful/being referred without telling you where to go or without good direction
- No greeting or demonstration of a desire to be helpful
- Making incorrect assumptions about customers needs ie. gender bias.
- Making assumptions about race or language ability.
- Being sexually harassed.

Your role as a service provider

- *You are the expert.*
- *Your attitude matters and shows*
- *You represent the Library*
- *Always think twice before you tell a customer no.*

BASIC STANDARDS:

- *Always look like you are ready to help the customer.*
- *Always greet the customer in a friendly, professional manner.*
- *Use a clear speaking voice, not too loud or soft , but loud enough to be heard by the customer.*
- *Listen for understanding—use active listening skills.*

BASIC CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

Exercise: Nominal Group technique

What are basic customer service skills that you think anyone should have when they begin working at the information desk? Write down three skills on a sheet of paper and be prepared to share your answers.

Emphasize these:

- Customer friendly, pleasant and helpful attitude
- Being Approachable / Body language awareness
- Knowledge of the job, the product, the policies of the company etc. and one's limitations
- Basic understanding of troubleshooting and where to go for help
- Always look like you are ready and willing to assist the customer.
- Always greet the customer. One way to do this is to say, Hello, how may I help you?
- A professional and accurate business transaction
- Focus on what the customer can do rather what the customer cannot do.
- Focus on choices or alternatives.
- An apology for any delay.
- A quick resolution to problems
- A sincere thank you for their business
- Follow up as appropriate
- Don't blame customers for your internal process problems
- Management listening to customer
- Making the customer feel satisfied
- Always identify yourself
- Don't use jargon
- Ask for clarification/don't assume the customer knows what you know
- Be aware of diverse traditions and cultural mores.
- Perceptive service/ being able to read the customer
- In-depth service/difference solutions/
- Showing eagerness to help
- Not rushing you
- Eye contact/focused listening and attention
- Conversation
- Patience

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

What makes for excellent customer service skills? What would you say excellent performance looks like?

Emphasize these:

- Ability to deal well with conflict situations.
- Willingness to go the extra mile.
- Showing goodwill
- Try to find someone to help right then and there, establishing a live human contact point before sending someone somewhere else.
- Being helpful and courteous without being nosy or gossipy
- Checking into all aspects of the situation to resolve a problem—going the extra mile.
- Giving the customer your full attention
- Greeting the customer
- Listening carefully to the customer
- Working with the customer to show them how to do something
- Finding out for the customer
- Asking, “Is there anything else I can help you with?”
- Encouraging the customer to return
- Help people when you are off duty
- Bending the policy
- Finding alternative ways to fill a need
- Sticking to something even if it can’t be done right away
- Proper use of physical space
- Ability to listen well and respond
- Doing whatever it takes to make the situation right for the customer
- Being available
- Ensuring follow-up possibilities
- Recognizing the needs of customers with disabilities
- In depth knowledge of company’s products or services
- In depth knowledge of policies
- In depth knowledge of technology
- Respecting customers as people.
- Deferring judgment

**HANDOUTS: CUSTOMER SERVICE
THE FIVE STEP APPROACH
PROJECTING THE POSITIVE
BODY LANGUAGE**

4) DEALING WITH CONFLICT SITUATIONS:

Exercise:

What about working with customers scares you? Write down three things.

Not having the answer.

No backup.

The customer may not know exactly what he/she needs.

Language/communication barriers.

Angry customers

Not being able to help or refer customer to appropriate service point or person

Panicking in an emergency

Customer is so mad that they threaten to go above your head

Customer uses profanity or insults you.

Invading personal space

Physical or verbal assault

Working with unbalanced people

Getting too long a line without any back-up

Having to ask someone to leave

Not know what to do in an unusual situation

SIX BASIC CUSTOMER NEEDS:

Friendliness

Understanding and empathy

Fairness

Control

Options and alternatives

Information

HANDLING DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

1) Let the customers vent their feelings. Don't tell them to calm down--this will make things worse. Learn to zip your lip and not take what they are saying personally. Think of a complaint for what it is, an opportunity to get valuable feedback from your customers. You listen better if you don't feel threatened.

2) Don't get trapped in your negative filter about the customer. Instead, focus on asking yourself the question, "What does this person need and how can I provide it?"

3) Express empathy for the customer's situation by using empathic phrases and apologizing.

4) Work to actively solve the problem. Gather the information you need by using the questioning techniques and the bridging technique.

5) Double check all the facts with the mirroring technique.

6) Come to a mutual agreement on the solution with the customer. Remember to under promise and over deliver.

HANDOUTS:

WORKING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT

STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING CUSTOMER CONFLICT

TELEPHONE SKILLS

Answer the phone with a greeting before identifying yourself or your company. Doing so starts the conversation off on the right foot.

When on the phone:

- **smile while you are talking**
- **practice stressing words**
- **breathe (deep long and slow)**
- **exaggerate your tone**
- **watch volume and pacing.**

Four good things to do:

- **Pick up the phone within three rings.**
- **Greet the caller.**
- **Give your name.**
- **Ask the customer if you can help.**

Putting a customer on hold:

- **Ask customers if you may put them on hold.**
- **Wait for a response.**
- **Tell customers why they are being put on hold.**
- **Give a time frame.**
- **Thank customers for holding after returning to the line.**

How to transfer a call:

- **Explain why the customer is being transferred and to whom**
- **Ask the customer if he or she minds being transferred**
- **Make sure someone is there to pick up the call before you hang up**
- **Tell the person to whom you are transferring the call the caller's name and the nature of the call.**