

**EXCEPTIONAL  
CUSTOMER SERVICE:  
CREATE AN IMPRESSIVE  
REPUTATION FOR YOUR  
ORGANIZATION**

**Iowa Communications Alliance: CX Summit**

**November 3, 2022: 9 – 10 a.m.**

**Brenda Clark Hamilton, MA Ed.**

# BRAGGING TIME!

Please tell  
one thing  
that you do  
well in your  
work...



# **EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE: CREATE AN IMPRESSIVE REPUTATION FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION**

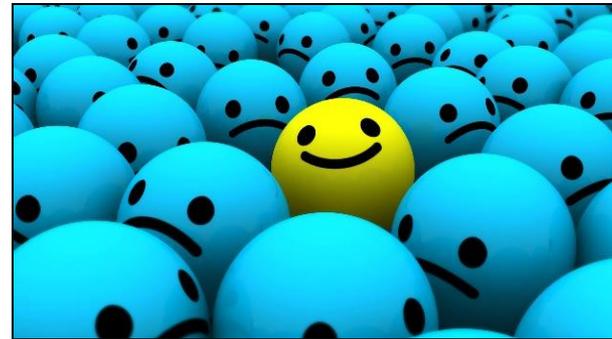
- I. Laying the Foundation**
- II. Principles of Excellent Customer Service**
- III. Telephone Customer Service**
- IV. Internal Customer Service**
- V. De-escalating Upset Customer Situations**



# **I. LAYING THE FOUNDATION**

## **YOU HAVE A LOT OF POWER EACH DAY...**

- **To make your coworkers' and customers' days better...or worse**
- **To make your coworkers and customers feel more energized...or more drained**
- **To contribute to creating a positive workplace environment...or a negative one**
- **To influence how well your own day goes... or how poorly it goes**



**What do you want  
people to say  
about your  
organization--  
its employees, leaders,  
products, services,  
and organization  
as a whole?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Do our team members have  
a reputation of 'Mojo' or 'Nojo'?**

# MOJO vs. NOJO

(Marshall Goldsmith, *Mojo: How To Get It, How To Keep It, How To Get It Back If You Lose It*)

- Take responsibility
- Move forward
- Run the extra mile
- Love doing it
- Appreciate opportunities
- Make the best of it
- Inspirational
- Grateful
- Curious
- Caring
- Zest for life
- Awake

- Play the victim
- March in place
- Satisfied with the minimum
- Feel obligated to do it
- Tolerate requirements
- Endure it
- Painful to be around
- Resentful
- Uninterested
- Indifferent
- Zombie-like
- Asleep



## II. PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Who are your customers?



**“In the nursing home industry, we often think of the customer as the resident, but in reality, the customer is anyone who comes into contact with the facility.”**

**--Phyllis Thornton**

# THE “MEAT & POTATOES” OF GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE!

1. Be friendly, kind, and a good listener.
2. Do what you say you will do...or more!
3. Find a way to say ‘yes’ or to pleasantly surprise customers.
4. Recognize that each employee is a representative of your company. Their attitude, integrity, and professionalism (or lack of) speak volumes about your company.
5. Realize that your words, actions, tone of voice, and demeanor constantly broadcast to customers how much you value them! Leave no doubt in customers’ minds that they are important to you.



# HOW DO YOUR CUSTOMERS **RATE** YOU?

- **Reliability**

- **Assurance/Trust**

- *Product Knowledge*
- *Company Knowledge*
- *Listening Skills*
- *Problem-Solving Skills*

- **Tangibles**

- **Empathy** (*including recognizing individual customer preferences*)

- **Responsiveness**



(Texas A & M University)

# **TOP 10 SERVICE EXPECTATIONS OF BANK RETAIL CUSTOMERS**

**--FROM DELIVERING KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF SERVICE, PERFORMANCE RESEARCH, NEW YORK: AMACOM**

- 1. Being called back when promised.**
- 2. Receiving an explanation of how a problem happened.**
- 3. Knowing who to contact about a problem.**
- 4. Being contacted promptly when a problem is resolved.**
- 5. Being allowed to talk to someone in authority.**
- 6. Being told how long it will take to resolve a problem.**
- 7. Being given useful alternatives if a problem can't be solved.**
- 8. Being treated like a person, not a number.**
- 9. Being told about ways to prevent a future problem.**
- 10. Receiving updates on the progress in fixing a problem.**

# A Final Thought on Daily Customer Service Excellence

- The Williamsport hospital study:
  - A. ER Doctor
  - B. ER Nurse
  - C. ER Receptionist



“...people will never forget how you made them feel.” (Maya Angelou)

# III. TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Remember the old adage, *“Customers can hear your smile on the phone.”*
- Your tone is huge—pleasant, friendly, helpful. Avoid sounding rushed or irritated!
- Answer phones promptly.
- Use a loud enough voice, and speak slowly enough to be understood.
- Minimize background noise; maintain a professional office environment.



- Remember that eating, drinking, chewing gum, and having side conversations do not mix with answering phones!

- Five Qualities of an Effective Phone Voice:

1. *Alert*
2. *Pleasant*
3. *Conversational*
4. *Articulate*
5. *Expressive*

(Anderson, *Great Customer Service on the Telephone*, American Management Association)



- ‘Big 3’ of Answering the Phone in a Professional Setting:  
**Greeting; Identification; Offer of Assistance**

- **Really listen to what the caller is saying; Give them affirmation that you are listening. Focus as you work through the call!**
- **Do not interrupt.**
- **If you have to look up information such as the customer's account, keep the customer informed of what the pause is.**
- **Do not bash your company if computers are slow.**
- **If transferring a call, tell them who you are transferring to, and update the recipient on what you know so far.**
- **Be polite, friendly, and professional, and do your best to address the issue in the call. (*The Blow Dryer Incident of 2016...*)**



# A NOTE ABOUT TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY...

- “You’ll have to talk to someone in finance.”
- “It’s the computer’s fault. Sorry; I can’t help you.”
- “That’s not my department.”
- “They always mess things up over there. They can never get their paperwork right.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “Sorry. The computers are down.”
- “I don’t have the answer to that here.”



# IV. INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

**“Internal customer service is the service we provide fellow employees and other departments within our own organizations, as well as our suppliers and anyone else with whom we work to get our jobs done.”**



**“It is what we do when a colleague asks for information she needs to complete her main task for the day; it is what we say when someone from marketing asks for the addresses of good contacts; it is how we greet the vice president of sales when he walks into our office with an ‘I need something from you’ expression on his face.”**

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/51804>

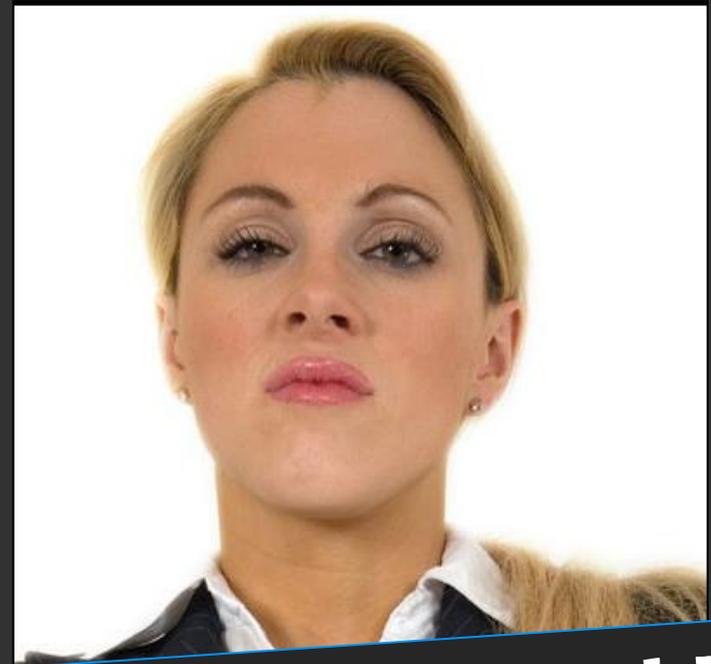
**“All these things can be seen as interruptions that take us away from our ‘real’ jobs, yet they are vital to our company’s success. If you see a gap between your ‘real’ job and the needs of others in your organization, you need to rethink what your real job is. In helping others in your company, you help your company succeed. Superior internal customer service improves morale, productivity, employee retention, external customer service and, ultimately, profitability.”**

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/51804>

# SERVICE TO EACH OTHER?

True or False,  
and Why?

“As long as I’m providing great service to our customers, it doesn’t matter if I’m inconsiderate or short-tempered to my colleagues. We’re just coworkers, after all.”



**“That’s not my job!”**

# CUSTOMER SERVICE... TO EACH OTHER

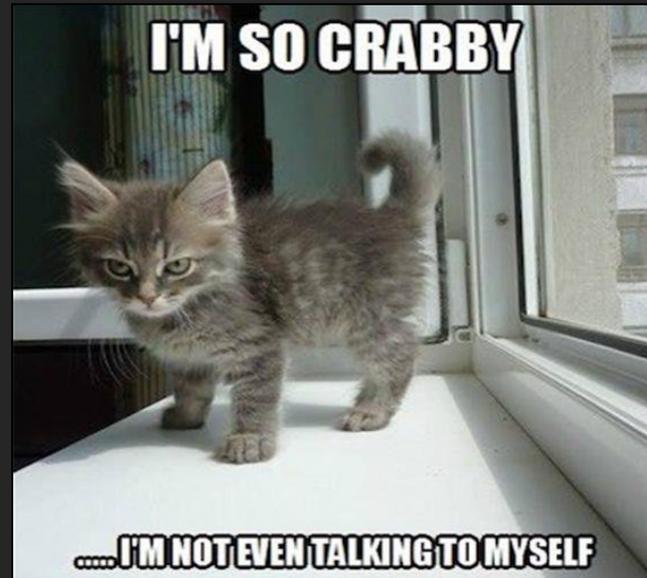
- What does it look like, sound like, and feel like when we are providing **excellent service** to our internal customers?

- What does it look like, sound like, and feel like when we are providing **poor service** to our internal customers?



# **PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

- *Part of your pay...*
- *It's contagious...*  
*Leave a bad mood or  
personal problems at  
home!*
- Be friendly, kind, helpful, and pleasant to coworkers.  
*Realize that you each play a role in impacting the  
quality of service and culture of your organization  
each day.*



- **If you had to rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 regarding how pleasant, helpful, easy to get along with, accommodating, and considerate that you are to your coworkers, what number would you give yourself?**
- **Would others describe you as someone who goes ‘above and beyond’ to provide excellent service/teamwork to your coworkers?**
- **Are you someone who contributes to teamwork/cooperation between team members, departments, and locations?**  
**Or someone who nitpicks others and contributes to divisions between individuals and/or departments?**



**Please be aware of the energy  
you bring into this space.**



**“May I borrow \$20?”**

- **Smile, use pleasantries and basic courtesies:**  
*Good morning; Did you have a good weekend?*  
*Please, Thank You, Excuse Me, I’m Sorry*
- **Be considerate of others’ time/world.**
- **Carefully read your email; Respond promptly to needs.**
- ***Manage Up* your coworkers and organization.** (Studer)
- **Do not gossip, chronically complain, or ‘stir the pot,’ and don’t encourage those who do.**
- **Be quick to forgive, knowing you are not perfect, either.**
- **Avoid TMI or excessive chit-chat.**
- **Always be aware of the 93% of communication!**

# V. De-escalating Upset Customer Situations

The average  
American tells \_\_\_\_\_  
people when they  
have had a poor  
customer service  
experience.

(American Express, 2017)

a. 3

b. 5

c. 10

d. 15

e. Everyone they know



- **47%** of customers say they will stop buying from a company if they have a subpar experience.

- Attracting a new customer is **6-7 times more costly** than retaining a current one.

- It takes **12** positive customer service experiences to make up for one poor one.



(Sales Force, 2019)

# UPSET CUSTOMER REALITIES...

- Anyone in the service industry will have customer complaints.
- If you handle a complaint well, it is an opportunity to gain a more loyal customer.



**'Honest Mistake' vs. 'Being Blown Off'**

# WISDOM, PLEASE...

Based upon your experience as a customer yourself, and in working with customers, what are the do's and don'ts of handling an upset customer?

YES, MA'AM, I'M HAPPY I WAS ABLE TO HELP YOU FIX THE PROBLEM, IT'S MY PLEASURE...

NOW PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE TO TELL MY BOSS IF I WAS A GOOD BOY

# THE **HEAT** METHOD OF SERVICE RECOVERY



- **H**ear them out (*Let them talk, then paraphrase; Fix the person first, then the problem*)
- **E**mpathize (*Acknowledge their inconvenience*)
- **A**pologize (*Sincerely apologize; Let them know you are here to help; Tell them what you will do, and when*)
- **T**ake action (*Follow through; Thank them for making you aware of the situation*)

# During service recovery, remember...

- **QTIP: Quit Taking It Personally**
- **Better they tell you than fifty (or five thousand!) others.**
- **Stay calm in your words, body language, and tone of voice.**
- **Always try to provide something that you can do and/or reasonable options.**
- **Consider getting upset customers away from other customers.**
- **Know that you do not have to tolerate customer swearing. Calmly tell them you'll have to end the call; most will back down.**



# DO'S AND DON'TS OF DEESCALATING SITUATIONS WITH UPSET CUSTOMERS

## DO NOT...

- Interrupt.
- Say, *“Calm down.”*
- Blame another department.
- Argue back.
- Use confusing jargon.

## DO...

- Humanize yourself and them as much as possible.

## DO...

- Use voice match.
- If it's complicated, ask them if it's okay if you take notes so you get it right.
- Remember that people under stress hate to be left in the dark.
- De-stress yourself regularly.



# PHRASES TO USE IF YOU WANT TO MAKE ANGRY CUSTOMERS MORE ANGRY!

- **“No.”**
- **“I can’t.”**
- **“I don’t know.”**
- **“You’ll have to...”**
- **“You should have...”**
- **“I’ll be honest with you...”**

--adapted from *Beyond Hello*, Davis, Aurora: Now Hear This Publishing



# SELF-ASSESSMENT

**Customer Service  
Self-Assessment...**  
**for External  
and Internal  
Customers!**



**EXCEPTIONAL  
CUSTOMER  
SERVICE!**

**What is one point  
that will stick with  
you from this  
session?**

**RAISING A  
TOAST IN HONOR  
OF THE  
AWESOME ATTENDEES**



**OF THE IOWA COMMUNICATIONS  
ALLIANCE CX SUMMIT!**

# CLOSING WISDOM..



**A lesson from Craig Pugsley and the  
100 cars entering Custer State Park!**



- ☛ 515.295.2379
- ☛ [frcoffee@ncn.net](mailto:frcoffee@ncn.net)
- ☛ 214 Robinson Drive,  
Algona, IA 50511

[www.BrendaClarkHamilton.com](http://www.BrendaClarkHamilton.com)

[www.facebook.com/BrendaClarkHamilton](http://www.facebook.com/BrendaClarkHamilton)

*LinkedIn:* Brenda Clark Hamilton