

Exceptional Customer Service
SupportLinc Employee Assistance
Program (EAP)

Penn State Health



Disclaimer

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Objectives

This training is designed to help you:

- Define customer service
- Understand the core components of effective customer service
- Deliver exceptional customer service
- Learn to deal with difficult customers

Defining customer service

Assistance and other resources that a company provides to the people who buy or use its products or services.

The provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase.

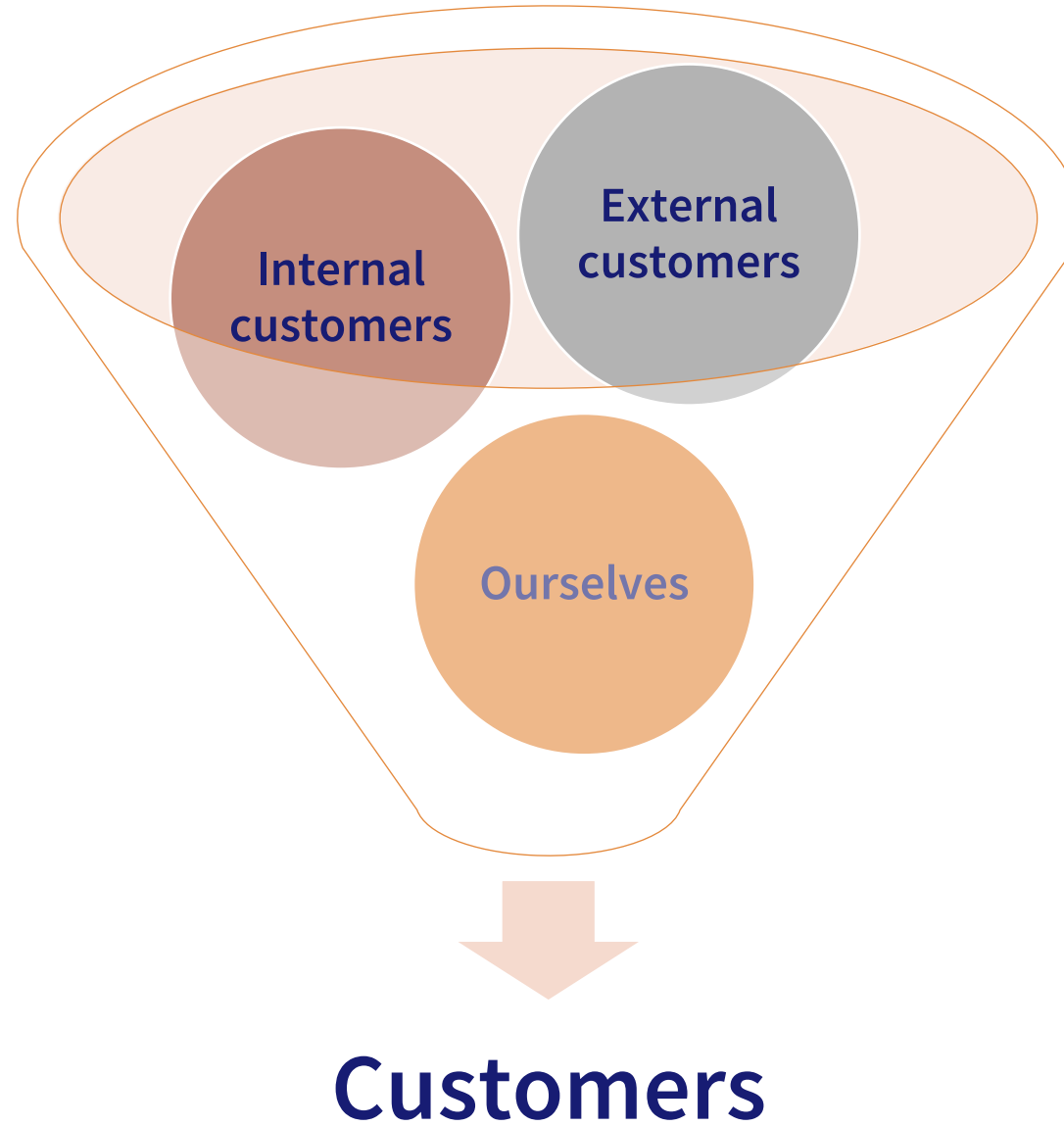
The ability to provide a service or product the way it has been promised.

Treating customers as you would like to be treated.

Any contact between a customer and a company that causes a negative or positive perception by the customer.

A proactive attitude: “I can” and “I can do.”

Types of customers

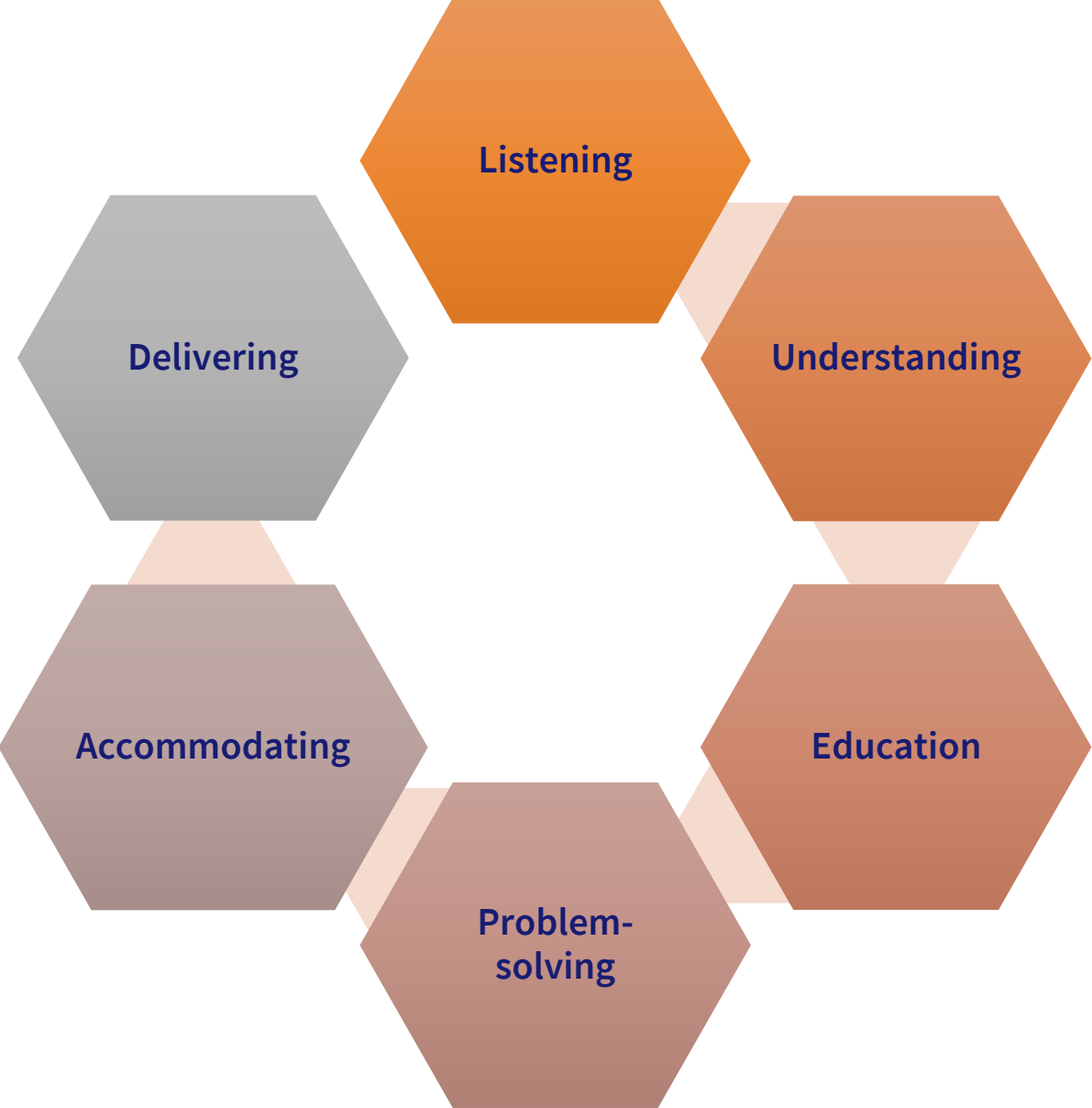


Customer values

Customers value the product or service provided based on five factors:

- Reliability
- Assurance
- Tangibles
- Empathy
- Responsiveness

Exceptional customer service




Listening

All customers want to be heard and respected:

- Let the customer have his/her say
- Demonstrate interest and attention
- Keep an open mind
- Watch your gestures and body language
- Be observant
- Think before you respond
- Really hear them





WHO
WHEN
WHERE
HOW
WHAT
WHY

Understanding

- Ask **who** has been affected.
- Ask the customer **what** they would like to see happen next.
- Ask clarifying questions to understand **where** the problem is.
- Ask **when** the problem occurred, or **when** they need a resolution.
- Ask **why**, if possible.

Education

- Educate the customer as to what services are available to them.
- The customer should know that he/she has choices.

Problem-solving

What is a customer looking for?

- Guidance
- Answers
- Solutions



Accommodating

What does
accommodating
mean?

- ➔ Listen and empathize
- ➔ Apologize
- ➔ Fix the problem
- ➔ Keep your promises
- ➔ Follow up

Delivery

Key aspects of service delivery



Difficult customers

- **Customers with unrealistic expectations**
- **Picky customers**
- **Fault-finding customers**
- **Customers who ramble**
- **Angry customers**

Dealing with difficult customers



Difficult people on the phone

- Learn the caller's name
- Listen respectfully
- Move into solution mode
- Don't escalate
- Hand the caller off



Scenario

The angry customer



Things to remember



- Ask customers what they want
- Don't cut corners
- Exceed customer expectations
- Make a big difference
- Repeat customers are important
- Practice self-care

Signs of success

- You recognize the opinion that your customers have about your business
- Customer comments indicate that you are exceeding expectations
- You can promptly take action when service problems arise
- You know how to respond to difficult customers

Interactive toolkits

Mindfulness

www.mindfulness.tools

Practical tools and exercises for incorporating mindfulness into everyday life.

Meditation

www.meditate.tools

Easy-to-use collection of resources that includes guided meditations, tip sheets and more.

Resiliency

www.resiliency.tools

Skill development resources to help you 'bounce back' from challenging situations.

Sleep fitness

www.sleepfitness.tools

Information and resources to help you learn good sleep habits and achieve healthy sleep.

What is SupportLinc?

The SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a health benefit, separate from your medical insurance, offered by your employer to help you manage life's daily challenges.

SupportLinc can refer you to professional counselors, services and resources that will help you and your eligible family members resolve a broad range of personal and work-related concerns.

What services are included?

Work-life benefits



Manager consultation

Expert guidance and referrals for: interpersonal communication, effective time management, conflict resolution, navigating team dynamics, cultural diversity in the workplace and more



Legal consultation

Free in-person or telephonic consultation with a licensed attorney

No employment law



Identity theft consultation

Free consultation with an identity theft recovery professional

Tailored recovery action plan



Financial consultation

Expert guidance and consultation from financial professionals



Dependent care referrals

Expert referrals to child and adult/elder care providers, facilities and other resources



“Convenience” referrals

Guidance and referrals to a variety of daily living resources: home improvement, entertainment services, pet care, auto repair, wellness, travel, handymen, volunteer opportunities etc.

Getting started



Call: 1-888-881-LINC (5462)



QR Code:



Visit: www.supportlinc.com



Log in or create account
(code: psh, or pennstatehealth)

SupportLinc

Support for everyday issues. Every day.

Additional resources

Most of us have to deal with difficult people from time to time, particularly if we are in the customer service arena. Difficult people not only create conflict, they may sabotage conflict resolution plans as well. Here are some quick tips on how to deal with some common difficult personality types to maintain a productive and pleasant workplace.

Difficult personality types

Certain personalities often prove difficult to deal with. Here are some common types of difficult personalities and tips for constructively managing their behavior.

Aggressive types want to force their viewpoint on you. They like to blow off steam. They may attack verbally. When dealing with aggressive behavior:

- Don't attack back.
- Do ask them firmly to calm down and speak their mind.
- Remain calm. Listen without interruption and when they are through, paraphrase the points made to show you heard and understood them. A calm response and the sense that they have been heard will often soothe an aggressive type.

Know-it-alls are “experts” who have no patience for other people's input.

- Don't be intimidated or let them take over a meeting.
- Try to keep them focused. These people often like to hear themselves speak and will go off on tangents.
- Do listen to them and try to benefit from their knowledge.

Victims often complain and feel they are being treated unfairly.

- Don't try to become their protector.
- Do ask them to provide positive ideas and solutions on how to improve the situation.

Sarcastic types use words as weapons, often destroying harmony in a group and causing resentment. They can be poor team players.

- Don't let them get away with this behavior. Let them know that sarcasm is unacceptable.
- Do compliment them when they say something positive or show team spirit.

Nay-sayers have nothing good to say about others' ideas.

- Don't try to reform them.
- Do invite them to suggest alternatives. Many times, they will back off if asked to say something constructive.

Additional resources

Yay-sayers will go along with anything just to gain approval.

- Discourage them from making more commitments than they can handle.
- Do make sure they follow through on what they agree to do.
- Do make sure they follow through on what they agree to do.

Withdrawn types seem to have nothing to contribute and are difficult to draw out.

- Don't nag them to open up.
- Do ask open-ended questions that require them to produce more than a yes or no answer.
- Be patient about waiting for their answer.

Winning over difficult people

Consider the following tips when dealing with difficult or angry people. These can be particularly effective for those in customer service who must deal with angry customers.

- Be calm. Becoming angry or overly excited in response isn't constructive and will only escalate the situation.
- Give them your undivided attention. Let them say what's on their mind without interruption.
- Express empathy and, if appropriate, say you are sorry.
- Paraphrase what they have said to make sure that you have accurately captured the content and the feelings.
- Begin active problem solving. Offer suggestions for solving the problem. If you don't have an immediate solution, explain that you will explore options and get back to them later.
- Mutually agree on the solution. Find solutions that are acceptable to everyone and execute them.
- Follow up. This is crucial. Just because anger is diffused or an issue is temporarily resolved, do not drop it. Follow through to make sure that action steps are working and to ensure that goals are being met.

Involve your manager

There may be times when, despite your best efforts, you may not be able to manage a difficult person on your own. In this case, you may end to speak to your manager, particularly if the situation is affecting your work or impending your chances of achieving goals. If this is the case, consider the following tips for discussing issues with your manager.

Additional resources

- Before you speak to your manager, write down all the topics you want to discuss and what you hope to communicate.
- Make sure you're clear about what you want or need from your boss. (e.g., I need your help in resolving this conflict with this customer.")
- In private, rehearse what you want to say to your boss. (e.g., I have tried to work this out on my own by... but unfortunately it has not worked.)
- When speaking to your boss, use qualifying words, such as "perhaps" and "maybe," rather than absolute words such as "always," "every," "all the time," and "never." Speaking in absolutes can raise a person's defenses and cause resistance.
- Make "I" statements, such as "I need guidance," instead of "you," statements, such as, "you haven't given me guidance."
- Avoid going to your boss when you're emotional. Give yourself a cooling-off period to collect your thoughts and composure, even if it is just a few deep breaths in and out and compose yourself.
- If at all possible, talk to your boss before issues become heated and you become emotionally involved.
- Be an active listener. Learn to really listen and understand what your boss says. If you missed or weren't clear about a certain point, ask your boss to repeat or clarify it.
- Try to repeat and rephrase the points your boss makes during a conversation to show that you're listening and understanding him or her.
- Practice good body language. Look at your boss, lean into the conversation and avoid fidgeting.
- Be assertive, not aggressive.
- Keep an open mind and try to be open to compromise.
- Avoid gossiping or spreading rumors to your boss.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Be sure to give your boss praise and recognition when it's due. (e.g., "thank you so much for helping me work through my issues with... I am much less distracted now and can better focus on my work.")
- Communicate regularly with your boss.

For further resources, please go to your portal and use the search bar to type in "Dealing with Difficult People" and "Effective Communication."

Moving ahead



What did you get out of today's presentation?

Which concepts are working in your life and why?

Who can be a support for you to make change?

Which concepts are *not* working in your life and why?

What 3 ideas are going to be the most helpful for you?

How can you support someone else with change?

What can you do in the next 24 hours to apply these concepts?

What are your biggest barriers for change?