



INSURANCE REGULATORY AUTHORITY AGENTS FORUM

**SELLING SKILLS AND CUSTOMER
CARE TO INSURANCE AGENTS**

BY COLLEGE OF INSURANCE



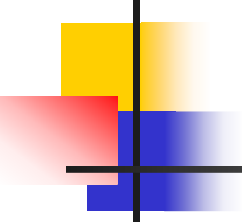
VALUING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

- “The purpose of any business is to make a customer”.



What is a customer?

- Whether you call him a client, a buyer, a student or anything else -----
- A customer is a person or an organization whose need is satisfied by an organization's product at particular time.
- A customer is the most important person in the organization, whether he or she comes in person, telephone or writes to us.

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- A customer is not dependent on us.
 - We are dependent on them for our living.
 - A customer is not an interruption to our work; they are the purpose of it.
 - They are doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to serve them.
 - A customer is not someone to argue with.....no one wins ever wins an argument with a customer.
 - *"Without A Customer, There Is No Business"*



TYPES OF CUSTOMERS

- Customers are classified into:
 - Status
 - Product or
 - Sales Volumes



A. Status

- Customers status exists in three categories:
 - 1) Current customers
 - 2) Potential customers
 - 3) Dissatisfied customers



Cont....

- Current customers are those in the books of an organization.
- Potential Customers are those that have been approached by the sales people and are yet to make buying decisions.
- Dissatisfied Customers are those who might have changed or thinking to change the service provider.
- The challenge of the marketing is to convert the last two into current category



B. Product

- Customers are personal buyers if they are individuals
- Customer are commercial buyers if they are organization



C. Sales Volume

- Customers can be classified according to the sales volumes generated.
- Largest % of an organ's sales is usually obtained from relatively small number of the customer base.
- It follows the rule that 80% of the sales come from 20% of entire customer base.



ESTABLISHING CUSTOMER EXPECTATION

- Buyers make buying decisions based on the need and financial ability.
- Service providers have the challenge of both relating the product to the customer's need and making the product to be perceived as meeting the need of the customers
- Needs can be identified through market research hence products are designed to satisfy those needs.
- At the time of making a sale an agent will have established insurance requirements of a customer whose expectations exist in three levels



Conti-

- Basic level expectation
- Below level expectation
- Incremental quality level expectation



A. Basic Level Expectation

- Customers expectations are met according to the contract entered into.
- A competitor can win over this kind of a customer since there is no incentive for the customer to remain with the service provider.



B. Below level expectation

- When an organization fails to perform according to the contract, the service it delivers is below the expectations of the customer.
- The customer has a reason to change to a new service provider.



C. Incremental quality level expectation

- When organization adds some element of quality into the product at reasonable cost, the act exceeds customer's expectation.
- The customer will be satisfied and have no reason to change the service provider



Customer Perception Of Your Organisation

- Lowenstein thinks that a wall in every office should bear this sign: *"Perception Is Reality When It Comes To Being Judged By Others"*.
- The right mental attitude is constructive, helpful, courteous and cooperative.
- It builds relationships.



Attitude towards your own company

- Your customer will notice that something is lacking especially if you are critical of your company. This leads to loss of confidence and good will.

Attitude towards your own colleagues



- We are all fallible and from time to time make mistakes which cause difficulties for ourselves and our colleagues at work.
- It is easy to be critical of people at such a time and this can destroy customer relationships.
- Give everyone the support which team effort demands.



Attitude towards the customer

- Customers come in all kinds.
- We have to cope with the talkers, the silent, the aggressive the bad tempered, the know-all.
- It is easy to be irritated with such people but this can only destroy customer relationship.
- Your heart should be big enough to handle any kind of customer.



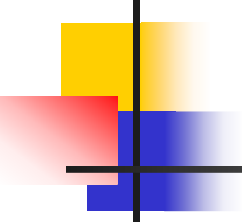
STEPS TOWARDS LEARNING WHAT CUSTOMERS CONSIDER REALITY

- Decide exactly what business you are in
- Identify market segments all customer groups.
- Determine needs and wants of all customers
- Set up systems for listening to customers
 - Ask customers what they want
 - Allow them to tell you
 - Make it easy for the customer to communicate with the company.

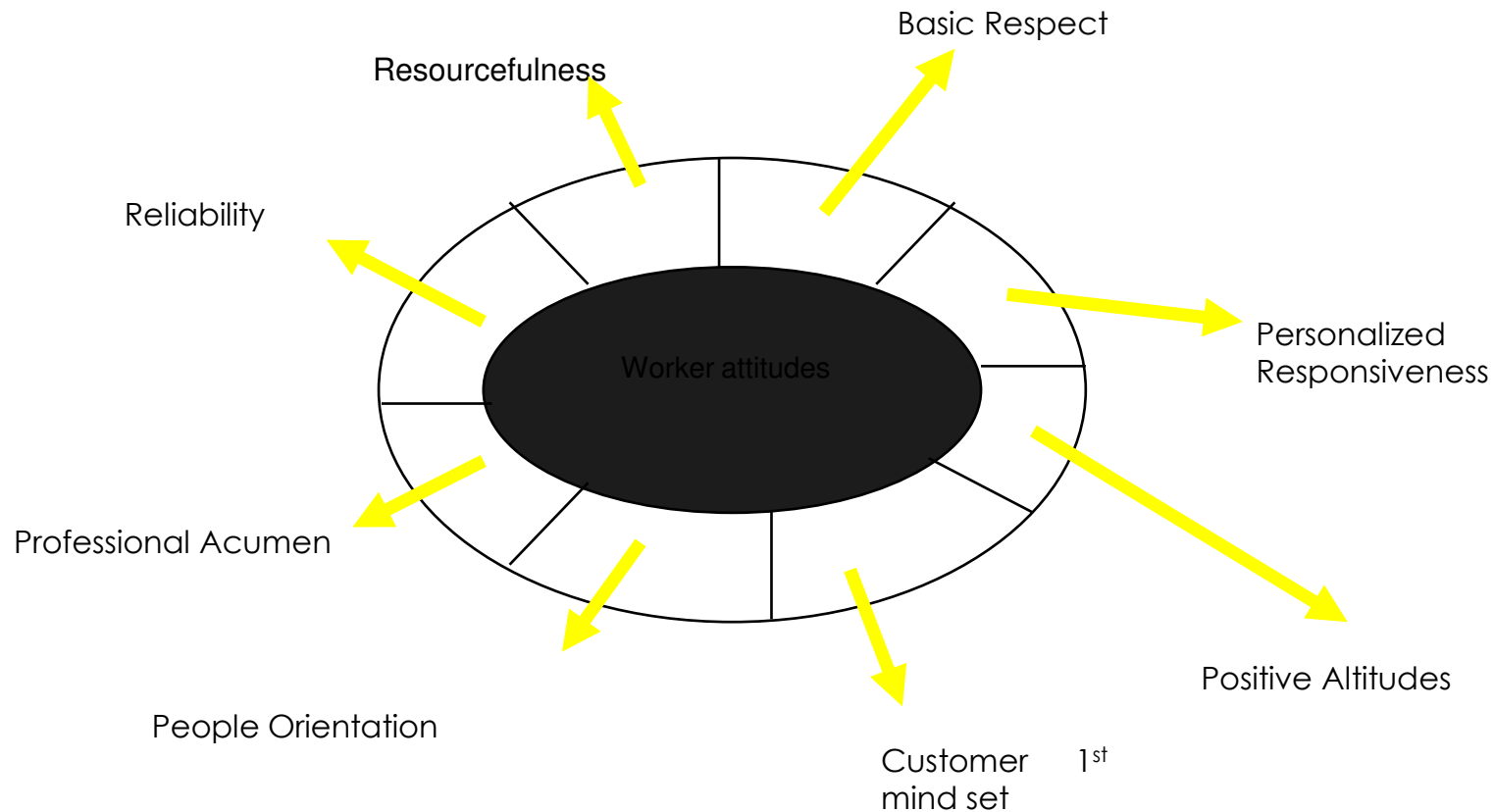


WHAT DO CUSTOMERS WANT?

- Reason: One reason is that they have less time for buying;
- So: They want the buying process to be fast and efficient e.g. customer care: fill fuel tanks check the oil, clean windows, polish the chrome
- Service; People want and expect more of it.

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- A survey: What customers care about:
 - Product quality - 100%
 - Customer service - 97%
 - Price - 92%
 - Location - 65%
 - Money back guarantee - 80%

THE CORE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND ATTITUDES





CUSTOMER 1ST MIND SET

- Puts needs of customers first
- Ensures customer needs are met
- Goes out of one's way to ensure satisfaction



POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- Displays can do attitude
- Demonstrates enthusiasm



PROFESSIONAL ACUMEN

- Strives to be acknowledgeable
- Willing to get information from others



RESOURCEFULNESS

- Resolves problem
- Suggests alternatives
- Bends rules when appropriate to resolve or avoid problems



PERSONALIZED RESPONSIVENESS

- Strives to understand customer's preference and expectations
- Takes into account customer's situation when providing customer with information



BASIC RESPECT

- Shows common courtesy to everyone
- Avoids embarrassing customers
- Respects other's needs



PEOPLE ORIENTATION

- Take initiative in establishing rapport
- Demonstrates a personal interest in someone by:
 - Eye contact
 - Smiling
 - Calling them by name
 - Strives to make customers feel comfortable



RELIABILITY

- Takes the time to do the job right
- Demonstrates reliability
- Does what is best rather than what is easiest



CULTURE

- Culture consisted of internal values shared by member of an organization on desirable ways.
- Culture as an unwritten code of behavior can be recognized through
 - Management style
 - Attitude towards customers
 - Staff attitude and practices
 - Values and beliefs
 - Norms
 - Structure



LAWS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

- The law of gravity is working all the time....for or against you.
- You may not know those laws, you may not understand them but they affect you none- the less.
- Ignorance of the laws of gravity does not exempt you from the consequences.
- And that is the way it is with laws of customer service. They are always at work.
- Let us look at these laws of customer service and then decide to make the laws work for us rather than suffer the consequences.



Law of first impression

- How people perceive you determines how they intend to react to you.
- You put out bad vibes, glaring hostility and you will be perceived as unfriendly person and one to be avoided if at all possible.



Law of harvest

- “what you plant is what you harvest”
you plant beans you get beans
- The same way with customer care,
plant friendly, courteous and prompt
service and you get harvest of respect,
loyalty and prosperity
- It also involves abundance i.e. one seed
produces 3 or 4 corns



2nd law of thermodynamics

- In layman's terms it simply means' anything left to itself goes to rot" or deteriorates e.g. our house: never paint it, roof it, in few years it will be shambles.
- Customer service is like that too.



SIMPLE STEPS TO ESTABLISH THE LAWS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Establish customer service as philosophy, policy and standard operating procedure
- Plant seeds of friendly, courteous and prompt services everyday. Plan to reap big harvests
- Check your attitudes
 - **Smiles**
 - **Knowledge of their jobs**
 - **Pleasant voice**
 - **Willingness to be of service**



TEN WAYS TO APPRECIATE CUSTOMERS

- (From General Motors)
 - Obey golden rule
 - Use praise
 - Be sincere
 - Use customer's name
 - Be a friend (it takes one to know one)
 - Smile (best way to hear what the customer is saying)
 - Listen (it's the shortest distance between two people)
 - Give (the customer will see and appreciate)
 - Think 'you' and not I
 - Care for the customer (action speak louder than words)



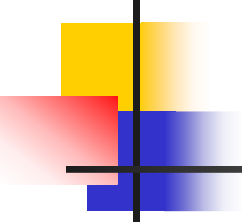
GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PROBLEM RESOLUTION

1. Act Fast

- Many companies have established policies of responding within 24hrs or sooner.
- Even when the full resolution is likely to take longer, fast acknowledgement remains very important.

2. Admit Mistakes But Do Not Be Defensive

- Acting defensive may suggest that the company has something to hide or is reluctant to fully explore the situation.



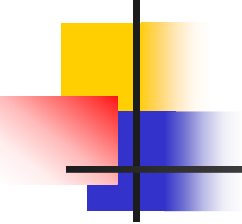
3. Show That You Understand The Problem From Each Customer's Point Of View

- See the situation from the customer's eye. It is the only way to understand what they think has gone wrong and why they are upset.
- Personnel should avoid jumping into conclusions with their own interpretation.



4. Don't Argue With Customers

- The goal should be to gather facts to reach mutually acceptable solutions, not to win a debate or prove that the customer is an idiot.
- Arguing gets in the way of listening and seldom diffuses anger.

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5. Acknowledge The Customer's Feeling
- Either tacitly or (e.g. " I can understand why you are upset")
 - This action helps to build rapport – first step in rebuilding bruised relationship



6. Give Customers The Benefit Of Doubt

- Not all customers are truthful and not all complaints are justified but customers should be treated as though they have a valid complaint till clear evidence to the contrary emerges.
- If a lot of money is at stake(as in investigations warrant. It is good to check on the history of dubious complaints by the same customers.



7. Clarify The Steps Needed To Solve The Problem

- When instant solutions aren't possible, telling customers how the company plans to proceed shows that corrective action is being taken.
- It sets expectation about the time involved. We should be careful not to over promise.



8. Keep Customers Informed Of Progress

- Nobody likes being left in the dark.
- Uncertainty breeds anxiety and stress
- People tend to accept disruptions if they know what is going on and receive period progress report.



9. Consider Compensation

- This type of recovery strategy may reduce the risk of legal action by an angry customer

10. Persevering To Regain Customer Goodwill

- The biggest challenge is to restore the disappointed customer confidence and preserve the future relationship



SELLING SKILLS



The main roles of the salesperson

Kotler describes six main activities of a salesperson:

- **Prospecting** - finding new customers
- **Communicating** - with existing and potential customers about the product range
- **Selling** - contact with the customer, answering questions and trying to close the sale
- **Servicing** – providing pre and post-sale support and service to the customer.
- **Information gathering** - obtaining market information for marketing planning process
- **Allocating** - allocating products in times of shortage



The Personal Selling Process

- Prospecting
- Making first contact
- The sales call
- Objection handling
- Closing the sale
- Follow up



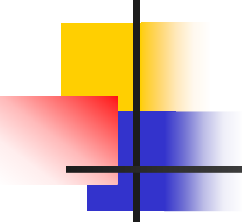
Characteristics of a good salesperson

- Go getter
- High energy
- Self confident
- Chronic hunger for money
- Likes good things of life
- Natural tendency to be competitive
- Empathy-ego drive(wants to succeed)



Qualities a Good Salesperson

- Presentable, Smart, Clean, Well-groomed.
- Pleasant, Patient, Persistent, Consistent.
- Sensitive, Empathetic, Considerate.
- Persuasive, Confident, Knowledgeable.
- Honest, Reliable, Decisive, Informed.
- Good time- utilizer, Planner, Organizer.
- Good Communicator, Listener, Questioner.

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- Self-motivated with initiative and innovation.
 - Fast learner, Adaptive and Flexible.
 - A Person of Integrity, Resilient and stress-tolerant.
 - Helpful
 - Ambitious



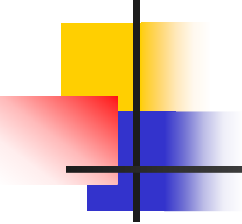
Pre-approach

- This is the preparation that a salesperson goes through before they meet with the client, for example via e-mail, telephone or letter. Preparation will make a call more focused depending on:
 - experience of the sales person;
 - importance of customer ;
 - the relationship with prospect.



Pre-approach plan....cont

- Set SMART objectives prior to the sales call
- Save time & keep time by promptly stating the purpose of your call
- Anticipate desired outcome before you leave
- Establish the prospect's status in respect to; finance, authority and need for your product or service
- Do your homework to show your customer that you are fully committed to matching their need.

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- Have all presentation tools & samples ready in very good condition
 - Sending some information before hand, to wet prospect's appetite.
 - Be mentally & physically ready, cool, confident efficient.
 - Humour, is fine, but be sincere and friendly.

"To fail to plan is to plan to fail "



The Sales Call (or Sales Presentation)

Types of opening

Work on reputation by legitimizing your intention

- Referral Method:- Handling over a note or card
- Product approach:- Hand over product to see/feel
- Compliment:- Sincere observable comment
- Introduction:- Unless known, introduce your company.



The Sales Call (Sales Presentation)

- Introduce yourself
- Capture the prospects
- Assess the situation and use info to proceed
- Ask permission to proceed
- Suggest how much time you need
- If too short ask for reschedule
- Never force a presentation especially if customer is not ready.
- Reschedule and leave the information leaflets.



Presentation Approaches

- **Canned Approach** - Memorized presentation - *good for telephone or door to door using prospects*
- **Formulated Approach** - Identify buyer's needs and formulate an approach.
- **Needs satisfaction/problem solving approach** - play role of business consultant
- **AIDA Model** – take the prospects thro' these stages
 - Awareness - There is a new VW car
 - Interest - VW cars are getting better. Discuss benefits
 - Desire - Bridging gap between wants and benefits
 - Action - Agree the course of action, order, demonstration, commitment



Presentation Techniques

- Start with an impressive statement in a relaxed manner to put your client at ease
- Use all channels, eyes, ears, nose, hands, mouth
- Introduce yourself highlighting expertise
- Introduce the company and its strengths
- Ask how the company is currently coping
- Ask if they have seen other presentation
- Be enthusiastic about your product or service. If you are not excited about it, don't expect your prospect to be excited.
- Focus on the real benefits of the product or service to the specific needs of your client, rather than listing endless lists of features.



...Techniques

- Appeal to customer interests and needs by being persuasive in the presentation.
- Let the prospect do at least 80% of the talking allowing him/her to give you invaluable information on his/her needs..
- Get feed back if presentation is going well by ask relevant questions
- Sense when it is time to close
- Attempt a trial close and anticipate objections



Be Positive When handling Objections

- Use positive body language
- Respond in a manner that keeps the prospect friendly and in a positive mood.
- Do not personalize objections.
- Respond respectfully and sincerely ; show interest.
- Politely correct objections based on incorrect information.
- Be realistic as all products have drawbacks.
- Demonstrate overriding benefits of your products.



Listen & Hear Out Objections if Any

- Don't irritate or create suspicion by leaping into the objection before the prospect is finished.
- Identify hidden objections.



Needs Satisfaction Approach

- Start with a search for real needs by encouraging the customer to talk
- Calls for good listening and problem solving skills
- Sales person plays the role of a knowledgeable consultant



Identification of Needs

- This is achieved by use of Q's
- Open ended questions
 - Begin with - which, when, who, what, how, why?
 - Cannot be answered with YES or NO
 - Compels buyer to give information
 - Most useful and effective
- Closed end questions
 - Give info to prospect & salesperson
 - Can be answered with Yes/No/Don't know



Selling benefits

- **Benefit - Tag questions**
 - **State a benefit, then ask a question to confirm if important to prospect**
 - **Use one benefit at a time**
 - **Can be answered with Yes/No/Don't know**
 - **Prepare your questions in advance**
 - **The more in number, variety - The better for you**



Selling benefits...cont

- After identifying the needs of the prospects, the sales person now needs to match the benefits of his product/service/proposal to satisfy them
- This calls for a thorough product/service knowledge. Its features and benefits
 - **Features**
 - Characteristics
 - What it is, its presentation, colour size, shape etc.
 - **Benefits**
 - What does it mean to the prospect?
 - the salesperson must identify, confirm & clarify prospects needs and present proposal benefits to satisfy identified needs



Problem Solving Approach

- Buying Motives
- Why do people buy?
 - To make a gain
 - To avoid loss
 - To avoid pain
 - Pleasure
 - Pride
 - Social approval



Problem Solving Approach..cont

- Benefits your present should appeal to one or more of these
- Know buyer's needs and adopt a problem solving mentality
- People mainly buy two things :-
 - Solutions to problems
 - Good feelings

*If your proposition is not meeting this criteria,
Position/Tailor it to do so*



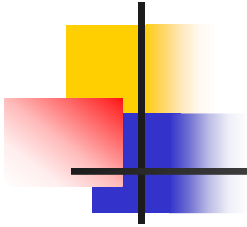
Why Use a Planned Presentation?

- It enables you to:-
 - Assemble all tools
 - Mentally get prepared
 - Minimize risk of failure
 - Get opportunity for role play
 - Follow a logical sequence
 - Cover all vital points
 - Avoid ambiguity



..cont

- Eliminate unnecessary repetition
- Save time
- Give impression of cool confident efficiency
- To control the interview
- Use sales aids to best effect
- Be sensitive to likely objections



Q & A