



***The Difference Between
Meeting
VS.
Exceeding Expectations***

by

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for the

Hoosier Hospitality Conference

March 16, 2010

The Difference between Meeting vs. Exceeding Expectations

Objectives for today:

- Define the Difference Between Satisfaction and Exceeding Expectations
- Discover Trends in Customer Service Expectations
- Understand the Value of a Complaint

Customer Interactions:

Whether you are dealing with internal or external customer interactions, all interactions have two components:

Taking Care of Business – means regardless of where the request comes from either internal or external, the person wants you to do something for them or they want something from you. They have needs that need to be met.

Treating them Right – means whether or not you can help them and get them what they need, internal and external customers expect to be treated right. They want respect, courtesy, understanding, and concern.

In working with today's customers the focus has to be on both of these components.

Customer Experience Hall of Fame and Shame

Questions to Consider:

- How many of you got what you wanted but still had a bad experience because of the way you were treated?
- How many of you were happy with your experience because you got more than what you wanted?
- As a customer experience provider you are trying to both meet your customers' needs and make them feel cared about at the same time. Both aspects are important.

Customer Perceptions:

Customers will tend to remember the negative experiences longer and more vividly.

They also tend to tell more people about a bad experience as opposed to sharing their positive experiences.

Why do Customers Switch?

- Found a less expensive product _____%
- Found a better product _____%
- Lack of personal attention _____%
- Service provider rude, unhelpful _____%

Source: Forum Corporation of Boston

Dissatisfied Customers

- Never complain about poor service _____%
- Never return _____%
- Tell at least 9 others _____%
- Tell at least 20 others _____%
- Will do business again if problem resolved _____%
- Will do business again if problem is resolved on the spot _____%

Source: TARP (Technical Assistance Research Program) White House Office of Consumer Affairs

The Flow of Customer Interactions

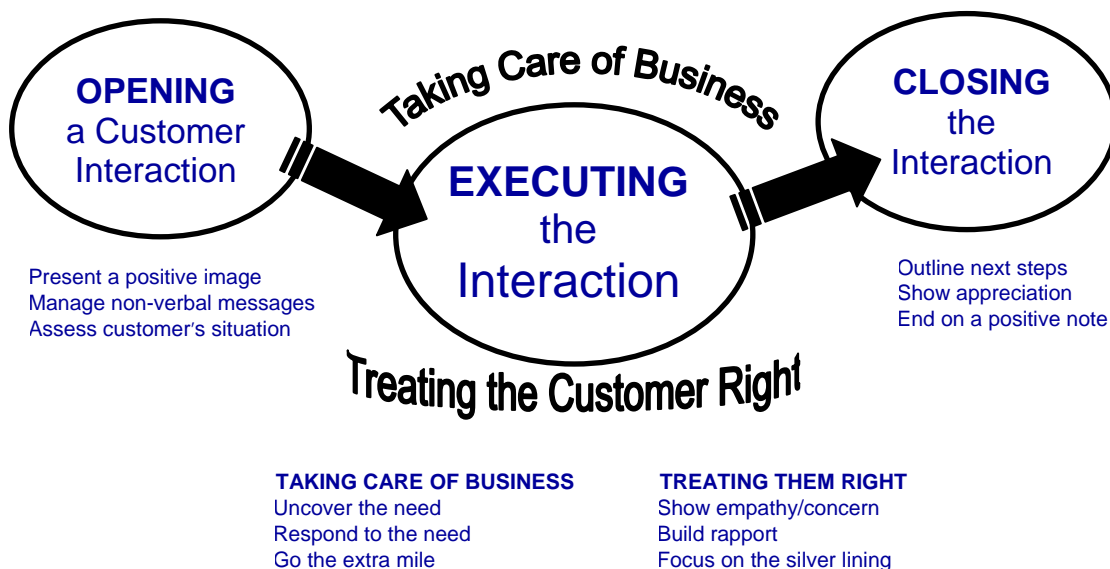
Every customer interaction has a flow of communication which includes the opening, execution and closing of the interaction.

The Opening – is your chance to make a positive first impression

The Execution – is where you do your best to uncover and meet the customers' needs, while demonstrating that you care about them and are concerned about treating them right.

The Closing – is your opportunity to wrap up the interaction making sure that commitments are communicated and end on a positive note.

If at any point the customer interaction becomes negative, the flow of communication enables you to shift gears, try a different approach and get it back on track!



Opening the Interaction:

Opening an interaction involves two steps:

- **Managing the “Moment of Truth” (your customer’s impression)**
- **Assessing the customer situation**

Managing the Moment of Truth:

“A moment of truth is any time a customer comes in contact with any aspect of an organization and has an opportunity to form an impression.”

Jan Carlzon

Scandinavian Airlines Systems

How many of your good and bad experiences started with your first impression?

Managing customer impressions whether on the phone or face to face means paying attention to not only what you say and do but how you do it.



First impressions begin before we even open our mouth!

Which factors have more impact when you're on the phone?

Thinking about your own customer experiences how could you tell the service you were going to receive from the start? What did the customer service person do or say to give you that impression?

When is it difficult to manage your first impression?

Messages are also filtered by the receiver based upon:

- Their background and beliefs
- Their need for consistency
- Their need to be self-fulfilled

Filters can also include:

- Premature evaluation
- Other things on your mind
- Jumping to conclusion
- Inattention
- Prejudice or stereotyping
- Inattention
- "Selective" hearing
- Generalizing
- Stress
- Blind spots
- Poor listening skills
- Hearing difficulties

Customer Situation:



In addition to managing your first impression you need to assess the customer's situation. What do you know or can you tell about the customer?

- What's his mood? Has she already been inconvenienced?
- Has he/she experienced your company before and what kind of experience did he have?
- What was her first impression?
- Is he/she currently having a problem or does he just need routine service?

Executing the Customer Interaction: “Taking Care of Business”

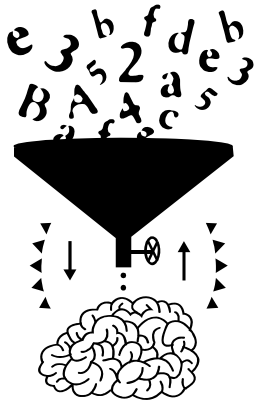
Taking Care of Business is about getting the customers what they want.

Getting the job done requires customer service personnel to:

- **Uncover the Need**
- **Respond to the Need**
- **Go the Extra Mile**

Uncovering the Need:

- Finding out what the customer wants is a large part of any customer service job. Use the funnel approach – to efficiently and effectively find out what the customer needs/wants.
- Questioning techniques can quickly help you fill the funnel of information, then efficiently shift through the information to pinpoint exactly what the customer wants or would like you to do.
- Funneling the customer information involves using both open and closed probes effectively to make sure you have all the information you need to do your job.



Funneling the Information

Open Probes

- Help you quickly fill the funnel with information you may need about the customer's situation.
 - Increase the level of communication.
 - Allow opinions and issues to surface.
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- Helps the customer feel important because you are letting them talk (in their own words), explain how they feel, what they need and demonstrates that you want to listen to what they have to say.
 - Open probes also give angry customers a chance to vent and get things off their chests.
 - Examples of open probes include:
 - How can I help you?
 - Describe...?
 - What/Why/How?

Closed Probes

- Give you control over the conversation.
- Allow you to gather specific facts.
- Close down the conversation.
- Require the customer to answer yes, no or choose from a number of responses you supply.
- Examples of closed probes include:
 - Do/does?
 - Is/was?
 - Have/had/has?
 - Will/would?
 - Can/could?

As you get more information you can use both open and closed questions to guide the conversation to get all the information you need to solve the problem or meet the need.

When you get to the bottom of the funnel and think you have identified the need, use **active listening techniques** to be sure you have an accurate picture and the right information.



Active Listening Techniques

- Active listening involves paraphrasing what the customer said and then checking to make sure you got it right by asking closed questions, such as “Is that it?” or “Did I understand you correctly?”
- It’s also good to ask one more question, like “**Is there anything else I need to know**” just to be sure you have all the information you need to help the customer.

Example 1:

Joey: I just don’t understand these instructions. One minute it says to push the red button and the next line tells me to push the first button. I can’t tell if they both the same or what’s going on!

Rachel: So what you’re saying is that the instructions to start the equipment confuses you...

Joey: Yeah, can you help me figure it out?

Example 2:

Rachel: I really enjoy this new program you have even though it takes me twice as long to get the same results.

Monica: You like the format of the program, but it takes too long to operate.

Rachel: Yes. I guess I feel both ways about it.

The Four Steps of Paraphrasing

- 1) Listen for the basic message being sent.
- 2) Restate to the person a concise and simple summary of the basic message.
- 3) Observe a cue, or ask for a response from the person that confirms or denies the accuracy and helpfulness of the paraphrase for promoting understanding.
- 4) Ask NO questions.

Paraphrase Openers

The following sentence stems, or openers, can be used when paraphrasing:

- "Now what I hear you saying is..."
- "Let me make sure I understand..."
- "If I have this right, you feel..."
- "I heard three things, they were..."
- "What I heard was..."

Taking Care of Business Responding to the Need

Once you know what the customer wants you have to give them the information they requested or explain how you will help them.

When communicating with customers it's important to think about what and how you tell them things.

- Be clear and succinct. Be careful not to use jargon, highly technical words or acronyms they may not understand.
- Customers only want to hear information that is important to them and their needs.
- If you have to give them a lot of detail, explain why it is relevant to the customer and why they should care.



Remember WII-FM!

- Taking the time to ask **clarifying questions** to make sure the customer accurately understands what you said. Examples include: "Does that make sense?" "Am I being clear?"

Responding to the Need Exercise

Delivering the Bad News

A mistake some customer service providers make is not softening bad news.

- Softening your message involves not only the words you use but slowing down your pace and softening the tone of your voice.

Examples:

- "I was hoping we could get that to you. Unfortunately that item has been discontinued ..."
 - "I have some bad news ... that item has been discontinued."
- Giving bad news can sound harsh at times and can make the customer feel you don't care about them if it isn't delivered in the right way.

What's Your Bad News?

Record some examples of bad news you have to give your customers e.g. "I'm sorry my computer is down and I won't be able to process your order."

Going the Extra Mile

Some times in order to take care of business for our customers we have to go above and beyond the call of duty. When we can't meet customers' needs we have to get **creative**.

We have to think about what we or anyone else in the organization can do to meet all or some of the customer's request.

Sometimes we may have to provide another option or do more than we would normally do.

When dealing with really important customers or customers we have already inconvenienced or angered, we have to go out of our way to exceed their expectations.

Going the extra mile means giving 110% effort but it doesn't have to mean taking heroic measures.

Thoughtful gestures and kind acts can go a long way with customers and helps us get out of our routine.

Many customer service positions are fast-paced and high-interaction, which makes it easy to just react to customer requests and not take the time to think about what more we could be doing to delight our customers.

Going the Extra Mile - means approaching service with a proactive viewpoint!

**“What’s the most I can do?
Not the least I can get away with?”**

Questions to Consider

When is it appropriate to go the extra mile for customers?

Should you do it with every customer interaction? Why?

Is it important to do it with internal customers? Why or Why not?

Discussion and Application

Think about a time when you have received excellent customer service. How did the person helping you go above and beyond the call of duty?

Record of how you can go the extra mile for your internal and external customers. Try to think of things you are not already doing.

Executing the Interaction

“Treating Them Right”

Dealing with Negative Situations Valuing Complaints

When customers are dealing with negative feelings it is important for *you* to keep *your* cool by focusing on the “person.”

- **Try not to take things personally** so you won't become upset as well. This will help defuse negative situations and keep them from getting out of control.
- If you don't **keep your emotions in check** it will be difficult for you to be creative and figure out how to help the customer. It will also make it hard for you to think about going the extra mile to fix the problem.
- Remember to **use your own non-verbal communication** to help you sooth upset customers by using a calming tone, slowing down your speech, etc.
- Be careful not to say **“I know”** because the customer is the only authority on what they feel and telling them how they feel may only upset them more.
- **Taking responsibility for your own mistakes** or problems created by others in your organization helps the customer see you care. Therefore, when necessary it's also good to add a simple apology before empathizing with the customer.
- Just be ready if the customer says being sorry isn't good enough... that's your clue that they also want your empathy.

Questions to Consider

Think about your own customer situations. Remember a time when you were upset or frustrated during a service interaction.

- What happened to make you feel that way?
- How did the customer service person treat you?
- Did they show you empathy?
- If yes, what did they do to acknowledge your feelings and treat you like a person?
- If no, what should they or could they have done to make you feel better about your situation?

Build Rapport

Service interactions require a lot of give and take between you and the customer. Many times you have to ask them questions or have them do things for you so you can assist them.

They also require that you and others in your organization do things that the customer may **never see or understand** in order to help them.

While all this is going on, it's important to help the customer **understand why you're doing what you're doing** or why they should do something. Talking customers through your actions and helping them see how you are trying to help will build rapport with your customer.

Helping customers understand how they are getting service, especially when you and others in your organization are really going the extra mile for them will help **them feel cared** for and that your company is treating them right.

Phone interactions can be **especially difficult** because the customer can't see what you are doing, and if they have to wait while you check your computer it will help them if you talk them through what you are doing.

- Example – “If you'll wait just a minute I can pull that up on my computer.”

Any opportunity you have to describe for your customers the excellent service they are getting will help you **build rapport** with your customers and make them feel better about working with you.

- Even if you can't meet their needs, if you explain how you are trying to help them it will make them feel better about the situation.

Focus on the Silver Lining

A **negative focus** plagues many people, and they just tend to see the glass half empty. The emphasis always seems to be on what went wrong as opposed to what went right.

In customer interactions it's important to remind them about what's going right!

Point out the silver lining:

- Let them know how you are trying to help and want to help.
- It's your job to let them know that your company wants their business, appreciates them and will do whatever they can to meet their needs.
- If you can only do part of what a customer wants acknowledge what you are **able to do instead of** emphasizing **what you can't do**.
- You can also make customers aware of the positive things they are doing to help you serve them. Examples – having their order numbers ready, being patient, having a lot of details about their problem, etc.
- Bringing out the **positive aspects** during a negative situation helps keep people calm and keeps things in perspective.

Closing the Interaction

When the party's over and you've done all you can do – you need to **close the conversation**.

Walk through what you'll do, what the customer will do and outline the next steps, if any.

Let them know **how you can be reached** or if someone else will be contacting them.

If you couldn't help them, **thank them for their time any way**.

- Studies show that only 30% of the time customers receive a thank you for their business.

Try to **end on a positive note** because last impressions can linger. You want to leave the customer with a good taste in his mouth.

- Try to leave them smiling.

Even if that interaction didn't go well, remember not to let that carry over to your next customer.

- Start fresh with the new customer.

Questions to Consider

- Think about how you close customer interactions.
- What are your typical closing statements? What do you say to your customers?
- How often do you thank them?

My Personal Service Commitment

One thing I will start, stop or change as a result of what I learned about exceeding guest expectations:

What benefit will it have for me?

What benefit will it have for my company?

What benefit will it have for my internal and external customers?

When will I accomplish this action?
