

PREVIEW GUIDE



The Other Side of the Window

Providing Exceptional Service in Government

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TRAINING SESSION OVERVIEW

(LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR IN BOLD.)

Instructions: The video and exercises, as laid out in this Leader's Guide, will take from 3 to 4 hours, depending upon class size and how much time you allow for the large group discussions. The ideal class size should range from 10 to 18 learners. If your time is limited, choose only the exercises that would be most beneficial for your organization.

To open the training session, you may wish to summarize why the participants are in this session and what they will be doing for the next few hours. You could say:

Leader: "We're here today to learn about providing quality customer service. We're going to see the 15 minute video, "The Other Side of the Window," have some small and large group discussions, and practice customer service skills during role play exercises. The more you put into this class, the more you'll take away. Participation is important."

"This is an opportunity for you to reflect upon the customer service you and your organization provide to the public. It's a chance for you to assess your current skills and decide for yourself if there are areas you would consider changing. This class is about the choices you can make in how you interact with the public. Now let's get started and have some fun!"

If you have additional time:

- Review Learning Objectives
- Review the Class Outline
- Review the flipchart listing the following ground rules:
 - This is not a time to vent about the organization
 - Treat colleagues with respect
 - Speak in turn
 - Keep private information private
 - Participate!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this program, learners will be able to:

- Describe Quality Customer Service.
- Define empathy and describe how it feels for a customer who experiences poor service.
- Identify differences for both workers and customers in the public sector vs. the private sector.
- Describe three active listening techniques.
- Identify three techniques for dealing with difficult customers.
- Identify three techniques for diffusing anger.
- List three benefits derived from providing positive customer experiences.

OPENING EXERCISE 1

(10 MINUTES, LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY. LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR IN BOLD.)

Leader: “We’re going to start out the day with some introductions, but not the kind that you’re used to. Pair up with a partner, choosing someone you don’t know well. You can change seats. Exchange names with your partner. Write it down if you think you’ll forget. There’s no more talking until I say it’s OK to talk. Look at your partner for about 5 seconds. Don’t say anything. Just look at that person.”

“OK,” **motion to the person on the far right side of the front row**, “now introduce your partner and tell us what his or her favorite food is. Don’t ask him or her, and partners, don’t help out here. Tell us what you think that person’s favorite food is.” **After the introduction is complete, ask the person who is being introduced:** “Now it’s your turn. Tell us your partner’s name and what food you think he or she enjoys the most.” **After the second introduction has been done, ask the first person who was introduced:** “So, what is your favorite food? And now,” **point to the second person who was introduced and call by name** “What is your favorite food?”

Go around the room and repeat this exercise until everyone is introduced in this manner. Keep the class quiet. After everyone has been introduced and has a chance to correct wrong favorite food guesses, the Leader says, “How many people had the wrong food chosen for them?” **Allow time for participants to raise their hands in response.** “How many people hate the food picked as their favorite? How did it feel to have someone decide something about you without knowing you?”

Elicit responses such as:

- “I felt like I was being stereotyped”
- “He doesn’t know me at all. How could he know something like that?”

Tell everyone to go back to their original seats and lead a brief discussion about assumptions that we make about people without even knowing them. “Some of these assumptions are as silly as deciding what someone’s favorite food is, based upon a five second glance. More serious assumptions lead to negative stereotyping and judgments that often deprive people of their dignity.”

Sum up with, “That’s what this class is about: when you walked in here today, there were things that you thought were true. You may discover that truth is a slippery thing. What you thought was true, may no longer be true. Today we’ll be exploring how people interact and some of our assumptions may be called into question. The main character in this video goes on a journey and discovers some interesting things about himself. Try to be open to learning something new. You may have your own discoveries to make.”

DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE EXERCISE 3

(15 MINUTES, SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY. LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR IN BOLD.)

Leader: “We just heard from some of the customer service representatives we saw in the earlier video. They talked about what quality customer service means to them. Now let’s focus in on what quality customer service means to you. Move your chairs to get into groups of 3 to 4 people. I want you to brainstorm and list as many descriptors of quality service that your team can think of. Choose one person in the group to write down everyone’s idea. Remember, this is not the time to debate ideas. Every contribution is valuable.”

Pass out the Exercise 3 Handout. Give participants from 5 to 10 minutes, depending upon what is needed. When the time is up, ask each group to report five things from their list. Write these responses on a flip chart or on a whiteboard. You should have elicited things such as: (you can add these things if they haven’t been mentioned)

- A warm greeting is critical.
- Always treat people with respect.
- Listen and learn from your customers.
- Invite customers to help solve the problem.
- Get help or additional information if you need it.
- Always follow-up on unfinished business.
- If you can’t help the customers, write down options of where they can go to get the assistance they need.

After discussing the list, ask the participants, “Why is a positive greeting so critical?” **Since this is a critical point stress,** “The initial greeting sets the tone for the rest of the interaction. There is only one chance to make a first impression.”

Sum up with, “The foundation of this training is that you may not have control over the procedures you must follow, and you cannot control another person’s behavior. **The only thing or person you can control is yourself.** However, there are interpersonal skills that you can employ to impact the other person’s behavior. While there are many techniques that you can use to maintain self-control, empower yourself with the most valuable skill you possess: the knowledge that you have a choice in how you behave. Between an incident or an interaction and your behavior, there is a period of time. Use that period of time to decide how you are going to respond. You will learn interpersonal skills for improving your customer encounters and skills that can minimize and prevent the escalation of conflicts. But without giving yourself the time to make a conscious choice about your behavior, you’ll still be caught in a reactive mode, where you have minimal self control, therefore, little control over the situation.

“Why is this important? When you are at work, you are more than an individual. You are a representative of your organization. Your job may involve constant interactions with customers who have their own lives and concerns. You are the professional. They are not.”

“As you can see, the definition of quality customer service has many parts to it. It wouldn’t do it justice to sum it up with one sentence. Human beings are complex and so are our interactions. Try to keep all of these things in mind the next time someone comes to you and needs your help.”

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EXERCISE 4

(15 MINUTES, SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY. LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR IN BOLD.)

Leader: “We’ve talked about how it feels to be a customer and discussed both good and poor customer service. There are differences between the public and private sector that are worth acknowledging. Let’s make a list of some of those differences. **Ask the group to identify some of those differences. Write their responses on a flipchart or a whiteboard.**”

Elicit responses such as these:

- The private sector is often better resourced and has better tools, (i.e., more state-of-the-art technology) and thus may be better able to serve customers.
- Government agencies often have long convoluted procedures and policies that cannot be easily changed. Exceptions to the rules are hard to effect in the public sector. This lack of flexibility can make problem solving more challenging.
- Our customers usually can’t go somewhere else if they don’t like our service.
- Our customers may be coming to us already anxious about their business with us, such as filing taxes, or perhaps may be angry, as in the case of just receiving a parking ticket.
- There is a prevalent sentiment that civil servants don’t take pride in their work.
- Our customers believe we work for them personally. Afterall, their taxes do partially pay our salaries.
- The private sector is customer-service focused. They spend a lot of time and money trying to attract and retain customers. Their bottom line depends upon it.

Sum up this exercise with, “Serving the public is a noble profession. Most public employees do a great job and believe in what they do. These additional challenges make it all the more difficult and critical to provide quality customer service.”

“Poor customer service carries many costs. The most immediate cost is to the individuals involved. Unpleasant interactions are stressful. There is a direct relationship between repeated stress and poor health. And whereas private sector customers vote with their feet, studies show that public sector customers vote with their voices. They complain loudly. They insist on speaking to supervisors, write letters, emails, and call elected officials. This outcry has prompted significant public service changes within the IRS, new discipline matrices for terminating public employees, more and more privatization, and those telling initiatives at so many local elections, such as the threat that private school vouchers pose to the continued funding of our public schools.”

LISTENING SKILLS EXERCISE 5

(30 MINUTES, SMALL GROUP ROLE PLAY. LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR IN BOLD.)

Leader: “Now we’re going to practice some interpersonal skills that are helpful when interacting with customers. Listening is the most fundamental of all interpersonal skills. Without listening, there can be no communication. Can anyone tell me the difference between hearing and listening?”

Elicit responses until you get one similar to the following:

“Hearing is when words just come towards you. Listening is when you bring these words in, consider them, and give feedback.”

Ask the participants to list situations that call for effective listening skills. Write their responses on the whiteboard or a flipchart. Elicit responses such as these:

- When there is a misunderstanding or miscommunication.
- When there is a cultural or language difference that is hampering your ability to communicate clearly.
- When you want to diffuse someone’s anger or frustration.

“Listening is not a passive activity. Active listening requires that we actively engage the other person in a two way communication until the person feels understood, and we feel that we understand that person. You’re going to break up into groups of four and do a role play exercise. You’ll choose a person to be a customer, another to be a Customer Service Representative, and two people to observe and write down their observations. Then we’ll report back to the large group. I’ll be passing out scenarios that you’ll be acting out.”

After the groups have been formed, pass out the following four different Handouts. Make sure every scenario has at least one group assigned to it. Give the Customer ONLY Handout to the person in each group who has volunteered to play the Customer. Tell the customers that they can only reveal this information in the course of the role play.

Scenario 1: Asking Open Ended Questions Handout

Scenario 2: Reflecting back Handout

Scenario 3: Validating the Customer’s feelings Handout

Customer ONLY Handout

After 5 to 10 minutes, the role plays should wrap up. Give everyone one minute to wrap up. There will be a lot of energy in the room. Try to settle everyone down as the learners turn their chairs to the front for a group discussion.

Ask each group to describe their experience. When they are all done, write down the three Active Listening Techniques for everyone to see. Ask the clerks to describe how to use their given technique for the rest of the class and write down their response. Ask them for feedback on the usefulness of the skill they utilized.

LISTENING SKILLS EXERCISE 5 HANDOUT: SCENARIO 1

ASKING OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Instructions: Break up into groups of four for this role play. You will only act out this role play once. You have **5 minutes** to complete this exercise. Select a part from the following roles:

- Customer
- A clerk at the DMV who will make every attempt to solve the customer's problem
- Two observers who record their observations of the encounter and report back to the large group

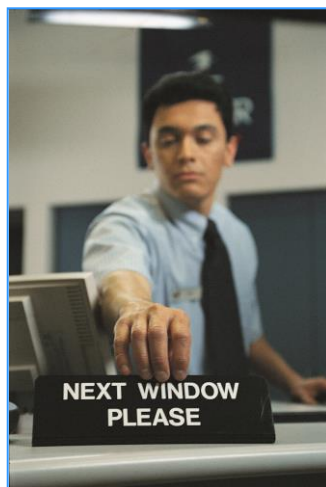
Situation: A customer has waited in the wrong line at the DMV for close to an hour. The clerk at the window hands him the written test to get his license. The customer is upset. He says he needs a new license. The clerk goes and gets him a form to fill out and explains that he needs to fill out the form and bring identification to verify his address to window "D." There is a long line at window "D". The customer explodes.

The clerk utilizes the technique of **Asking Open Ended Questions** to try to calm the customer down and help the customer get what he needs. These are questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," and require explanation. For example: "Start at the beginning. What happened. . . Then what happened. . . What would you like me to do?"

Materials Included With *The Other Side of the Window*

The workshop designed to accompany the video-based program is a flexible, yet comprehensive half-day training design. The workshop kit includes all the materials you'll need to run the program.

- ◆ The **chaptered DVD** of *The Other Side of the Window* provides the theory and examples to illustrate the workshop topics. This important video illustrates how bureaucratic systems and procedures, however necessary to workflow, can get in the way of providing the level of service – and respect – the public requires. Included are both a meeting opener and closer, and bonus discussion segments for facilitation convenience. The DVD is closed-captioned.
- ◆ The **Leader's Guide** provides step-by-step instructions for introducing activities, leading discussions, and making transitions between the video, group activities and exercises.
- ◆ The **Reminder Card** has the program's key learning points on S.E.R.V.I.C.E., and are distributed to participants at the workshop's conclusion for their use following the session. 10 Reminder Cards are included with purchase.



Program Information and Pricing

Purchase Price: \$695.00

Rental Price: \$275.00

Preview Price: Free

Running Time: 13 minutes (main program)

Materials included with purchase: chaptered DVD with Main Program, Meeting Opener/Closer, Discussion Segments; Leader's Guide; 10 Reminder Cards

Quantity Pricing Discounts

The Other Side of the Window Program

2 copies	10% off
3-5 copies	15% off
6-10 copies	20% off
11-15 copies	25% off

Industry discounts may apply; call your Sales Consultant for more information.

Reminder Cards (sold in packs of 10)

1-50 packs	\$5.00 each
51-250 packs	\$4.50 each (10% off)
251-500 packs	\$4.25 each (15% off)
501+ packs	\$4.00 each (20% off)

(contents, pricing & discounts subject to change without notice)