

# BUS 0861 - CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

---

## Catalog Description

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Provides the student with understanding and knowledge of the importance of meeting customer needs in a service economy. Emphasis on developing specific skills and abilities critical to providing excellent customer service. Introduction to the concepts of internal and external customers, customer satisfaction and retention. Topics include communicating with customers, developing a positive attitude, handling complaints and ethical issues. (pass/no pass grading) (noncredit)

## Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Analyze the extent to which customer service is facilitated by the effective use of technology.
- CSLO #2: Apply strategies for promoting a positive service culture.
- CSLO #3: Demonstrate effective problem solving in a customer service environment.

## Effective Term

Fall 2024

## Course Type

Noncredit

## Contact Hours

54

## Outside of Class Hours

108

## Total Student Learning Hours

162

## Course Objectives

1. Describe factors that have impacted the growth of the service sector in the US.
2. Identify the socioeconomic and demographic changes that have influenced customer service.
3. Identify the changes in consumer behavior that are impacting service.
4. Discuss the six major components of a customer-focused environment.
5. Explain how some companies are addressing the changes impacting the service sector.
6. Explain the elements of a service culture.
7. Identify customer-friendly systems.
8. Analyze strategies for promoting a positive service culture.
9. Explain the importance of effective communication in customer service.
10. Identify the elements of effective communication in a customer service setting.
11. Identify language that could send a negative message and harm the customer relationship.

12. Describe a professional customer service image.
13. Demonstrate effective feedback in customer service.
14. Demonstrate assertive communication techniques to enhance service.
15. Explain key differences between assertive and aggressive behavior in a customer service setting.
16. Identify various nonverbal cues and analyze their effect on customers.
17. Explain the influences that gender and culture have on customer service communication.
18. Describe why listening is important to customer service.
19. Define the steps in the listening process.
20. List the characteristics of a good listener.
21. Identify the causes of listening breakdown.
22. Analyze strategies to improve your listening ability.
23. Demonstrate information-gathering techniques learned to better serve customers.
24. Explain what behavioral styles are and why you should be concerned with them.
25. Identify four key behavioral styles and the roles they play in customer service.
26. Analyze strategies for communicating effectively with each behavioral style.
27. Respond to customer problems effectively while building relationships.
28. Use knowledge of behavioral styles to help manage one's own image.
29. Apply knowledge of behavioral styles in difficult customer situations.
30. Identify different types of difficult customers and effectively deal with them.
31. Use the emotion-reducing model to help keep difficult customer service situations from escalating.
32. Analyze effective strategies with internal customers.
33. Identify strategies for preventing customer dissatisfaction and problem solving.
34. Explain the six steps of the problem-solving model.
35. Analyze a front-line service recovery strategy, and roadblocks to service recovery.
36. Identify a variety of factors that make people diverse and that help to better serve them.
37. Analyze the extent to which customer service is facilitated by the effective use of technology.
38. Explain customer relationship management and its importance to quality service.
39. Identify the service provider characteristics that will enhance customer loyalty.
40. Describe the service provider's responsibility for establishing and maintaining positive customer relationships.
41. Identify strategies that can be used to make customers feel valued.
42. Discuss strategies that can enhance customer satisfaction.

## General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)

## Articulation Information

- Not Transferable

## Methods of Evaluation

- Objective Examinations
  - Example: 1. Sample quiz question: What are six common customer needs? 2. Sample final exam question: What obstacles exist to customer loyalty and how might they be removed? Exam questions will be graded using objective criteria that constitutes an accurate and complete answer that demonstrates proficiency of the course material.
- Projects
  - Example: 1. Sample project grading: Assess student research and written proposal skills for an "ethical dilemma" scenario by using a rubric of assignment criteria.

## Repeatable

Yes

## Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will lecture on key differences between assertive and aggressive behavior in a customer service setting. Students are to actively participate in the lecture by giving examples from the text and their own experiences.
2. Instructor will present the steps the six steps of the problem-solving model, followed by an open discussion to go over the topics.
3. Following a lecture about customers' wants and needs, create a brief survey (5 to 10 questions) that would help you decide what types of changes to make at your restaurant. Keep in mind that the best surveys use a combination of multiple choice, scale (1 to 5 rating), and open-ended questions.
4. Following an instructor provided scenario, decide whether the company's actions illustrate a proactive or reactive approach to customer complaints. Explain your answer. A theme park management team is preparing to open for the summer season. They are expecting higher than average attendance records, and one of the team members points out that the lines for their attractions was a major concern last season and might cause customer complaints this year. The team decides to brainstorm some ideas to solve the problem now so they can be implemented before the season gets too busy.
5. Problem Solving Exercise - Following a lecture on various community and/or workplace problems, students will research and present orally to classmates their results on the following: What is a problem you see in your community, your workplace/internship, or in college? How can you re-frame the way you look at the problem? Is there information you could research? Other points of view you should consider? What are possible solutions to this problem? How can you test these solutions? How does this exercise help with internal and external customer service?
6. Team work on Empathy - Following an instructor lecture on empathy, students will be put in pairs or small groups to practice mirroring and role-playing. Ask students to pair up with someone they don't know well. Have one student ask the other student about their workplace learning or internship experience so far this term. Have the student who is listening connect with the speaker about his/her experience by asking thoughtful questions, checking for understanding, and subtly

mirroring body language. Lastly, the instructor will ask the students to switch roles. Instructor will ask students to share with the entire class their observations of the exercise, including body language observation and comfort with mirroring. Students will ascertain how this exercise can help with customer service.

Distance Learning

1. Instructor will show a video explaining customer relationship management and its importance to quality service. Instructor will then start a discussion online to go over students' ideas on the process. (Objective 4)
2. Students will review video on strategies that can be used to make customers feel valued. They will then evaluate an instructor provided case which will be presented and discussed on the discussion board. (Objective 4)

## Typical Out of Class Assignments Reading Assignments

1. Following the reading of the textbook chapter and lecture notes, make a list of five to ten key culture elements. Besides these elements, create a list of strategies that you can/could implement as a service provider to improve them if you worked in such an organization. Share your list with others in the class. 2. Log onto the Internet and read information and research data on behavioral styles and other types of personal surveys. Specifically look for theories and surveys that describe and categorize behavior. Be prepared to present some of your readings and findings to your classmates.

## Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Interview a variety of people across social categories (e.g. culture, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) Find out whether they have preferences in the type of customer service they receive or in the kind of language used to refer to their group. Also ask about ways you can better communicate with and understand them and people from their group. Meet with your work group peers and discuss your findings and exchange ideas on how to better serve such people in the future. Write a brief summary report and share the results of your efforts with the other work groups. 2. Working in teams of 3 or 4 members, decide on a course of action to resolve the problem posed in the following scenario: You have been a cashier at Gifts Galore for a little over two months. A customer comes into your gift shop and wants to return a lamp that she says she purchased from your store as a wedding gift. Apparently, she discovered later that the recipient already had a lamp exactly like the one she bought. She tells you that she remembers the salesperson, Brittany, because her daughter's name is spelled the same way. You know that Brittany used to work at the gift shop, but quit about the time you started. The customer has no receipt, and you do not recognize the product as one that your store sells. You are empowered to make exchanges or give refunds up to the product value of \$50. The customer says the lamp was \$49.95 before tax. Store policy says that the customer must have a receipt if a refund is to be made. What questions would you ask to clarify the situation? How would you handle the problem?

## **Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)**

### **Required Materials**

- The Service Culture Handbook
  - Author: Jeff Toister
  - Publisher: Toister Performance Solutions
  - Publication Date: 2017
  - Text Edition: 1st
  - Classic Textbook?: No
  - OER Link:
  - OER: Yes

**Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.**