Delivering Memorable Customer Service at Every Touch Point in the Visitor Experience

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THE GRAND CANYON STATE WELCOMES YOU
Workshop Questions and Agenda

The City of Customer Service: What role do you play?

What is the importance of customer service to your destination and organization?

The customer service landscape: What does it look like in your city and organization?

What is required of you to deliver service that visitors will remember?

What techniques can be used to enhance your effectiveness in customer service interactions?
Primary Workshop Goal

• Gaining insights on how to make visitors feel valued and welcomed.
About Galen Collins

- A professor at NAU since 1987.
- Industry and consulting experience includes work with various hospitality organizations.
- Authored a textbook entitled *Overcoming the Customer Service Syndrome: How to Achieve and Sustain High Customer Satisfaction*.
- Has taught a course on managing customer service in the NAU School of Hotel and Restaurant Management since 2004.
The City of Customer Service: What role do you play?
The City of Customer Service

• The basic principles of customer service apply to and are important to all organizations within a community.

• Visitors are welcomed by Service Professionals or Ambassadors or anyone who interacts with them.

• The words Customer Service are often mentioned in service professional job descriptions because all types of organizations – visitor centers, gasoline stations, hotels, restaurants, theme parks, grocery stores, gift shops, etc. - are judged by their responsiveness to customers.
Service Professionals Are Always on Stage
What is your role in the City of Customer Service?

Making visitors feel appreciated by:

- Warmly greeting and welcoming them with a smile at every touch point along their journey from the gasoline station, to the visitor center, to the hotel, to the park....
- Being responsive to their requests.
- Knowing the area and freely sharing that knowledge with them.
- Maintaining a positive, can-do attitude and demonstrating a genuine passion for the area.
- Asking them about their experiences and sharing this information with those who make their experiences better.
- Thanking them for visiting your community and inviting them back.
The Hospitality Creed
by Galen Collins and Ann Averitt Collins

Help us to serve
Our guests with
Sensitivity and concern
Providing for their requests
Inspired by their needs
Transmitted through their words
Always looking for better ways to
Lighten their burdens and to
Improve conditions for them as they
Travel through life and
Yearn for the best...
What is the importance of customer service to your destination and organization?

- Customer Satisfaction
- Repeat Visitation and Loyal Patronage
- Recommend Your Destination to Others
- Profitability

A business that improves its customer satisfaction by 1 percent a year over five successive years will on average achieve a cumulative increase of 11.5 percent in return on investment over that period (Claes Fornell, Director of the National Quality Research Center at the University of Michigan).
Importance of Tourism to Your Local Economy

- Tourism is important to our state and is the only export industry generating revenue throughout all Arizona counties,” said Sherry Henry, Director of the Arizona Office of Tourism. “Unlike any other export industry, travel and tourism-related earnings are spread throughout the entire state and have shown a relatively consistent growth, exerting a stabilizing effect on the Arizona economy.”
Importance of Tourism to the State Economy

- “Arizona’s tourism industry continues to be an economic driver thanks to the state’s beautiful landscapes, vibrant culture and success it has had in hosting folks from all over the country for events.” Governor Brewer
- “Direct travel spending by all Arizona visitors increased 7.9 percent to $17.7 billion in 2010.” Arizona Office of Tourism
Every customer touch point affects how your destination brand is perceived

• A visitor's experience in a destination can be greatly influenced by the quality of the services and the personal interactions with host community industry employees throughout their stay.

• The delivery of a high quality customer service experience is essential to the sustainability of any tourism business, community or destination.
Importance of Customer Service

How much is your reputation at risk?

- **Poor customer service** will give hospitality businesses and possibly the destination a *bad reputation*.
- Just **one poor review** can be *bad for* your *business* in the tourism industry.
- People may opt to choose other destinations if afraid of having a bad trip.
Are You Delivering Great Customer Service?

• A 2005 survey of 362 companies revealed that 80 percent believed they were delivering outstanding service, while only 8 percent of them were rated as providing a superior experience by customers (Allen, Reichheld, Hamilton, & Markey, 2005).

• There is a huge disconnect in the mind of the customers.
Growing Gap between Expected and Actual Service Delivered Causes Negative Customer Behaviors

Customer Service Syndrome (CSS)

Factors widening gap:
1. One-dimensional view of service quality
2. Unrealistic and rising customer demands
3. Overburdened service professionals
4. Commodization of services
5. Business and consumer cultures and practices
6. Service professionals not properly trained/support and mismatched to jobs
How do Very Dissatisfied Customers Act?

There is a wide range of behaviors that dissatisfied customers can voluntarily perform, which may result in lost business, high costs of operation, and low employee morale:

- **Disrespectful**: Openly criticizes employees and disturbs other customers.
- **Disobedient**: Fails to abide by existing rules or norms.
- **Destructive**: Damages an organization’s reputation.
- **Disengaged**: Does not honor commitments, such as skipping scheduled appointments.
- **Dishonest**: Lies about service performance.

Bruce Silverman will teach you how to get something back for your troubles - everything from free airline tickets, luxury hotel suites and south sea cruises to thousands of dollars in cash! Silverman ingeniously - and sometimes hilariously - shares the techniques he's developed over the past 20 years as the "King of Complainers;" you'll never feel powerless again!
How do Dissatisfied Customers Act?

- **Word of Mouth:** An unhappy customer might tell 12 to 20 people about the experience.

- **Web Postings:** “Consumers now have the opportunity to make what essentially was a private action between family and friends into a public action for the consumption of whoever accesses the site. Where traditional word of mouth is limited by size of a social network, “word of web” can include a social network that spans the globe.”

- In recent years, disgruntled consumers have launched hundreds of Web sites to air their grievances—from starbucked.com and ihatestarbucks.com to boycottwalmart.org and againstthewal.com.

UAL is not known for rewarding its best, but rather, for punishing them, in particular, anyone who dares speak out, especially whistleblowers.
How do **Very Dissatisfied Customers** Act? **Disrespectful**.

**Gross Service**

"I am writing to tell you about a problem I had recently with the food service at your hotel. I am quite upset...Our waitress seemed so stressed out over having a table of 6 people that she couldn’t handle our order. We finally got our food in shifts, like 10 minutes apart. We all let that go, but what was the real topper was when I went to the restroom and took a wrong turn and ended up in the area where the waitresses take the old food. I was sickened by what I saw! I saw our waitress eating the food off of my very own plate! I know it was my plate because I remember exactly what I left on my plate. Also, some of my friends had commented on the bad service of this particular waitress. We thought she shouldn't be working with the public. She should be checked for contractible diseases because she eats other people's leftovers. She could have hepatitis. Who knows what she could spread to the public if she does not wash her hands. I, for one, will not go to this hotel...We will go to another place for now on. At least I know they have strict regulations to follow and I have a better chance of having a nice waitress and less of chance of catching a disease! . . . Here's what I would like them to do: I want them to monitor if the waitresses wash their hands and if they are that hungry, give them something to eat so I don't have to see this grossness again. It spoiled my appetite for going out for meals!"

The above is an example of an online customer complaint with many assumptions. Service professionals frequently deal with customers whose actions are insulting, such as those who snap their fingers to get the attention of restaurant servers.
How do Very Satisfied Customers Act?

- When the service experience exceeds a customer’s expectation, the customer is satisfied.
- A very satisfied customer is almost six times more likely to be loyal and to repurchase and/or recommend a service than a customer who is just satisfied.
- Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, was the first to propose that customer service (click on customer satisfaction video) rather than profit should dominate management thinking.
How do Service Professionals feel about customers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5 (SA)</th>
<th>4 (A)</th>
<th>3 (N)</th>
<th>2 (D)</th>
<th>1 (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Customers are more and more demanding.</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The number of customers displaying negative emotions or behaviors is increasing.</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dealing with customers is often stressful.</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventy service professionals completed a one-page questionnaire. Responses were received from 17 states in the United States and two countries in Europe. The average number of years of service-related work experience was 10. The majority of the respondents' service-related work experience was in hotel and restaurants.
What does the Customer Service Landscape entail in Williams, Arizona? What are the possible touch points during visitor stays?

Williams, Arizona, Gateway to the Grand Canyon, a picturesque mountain town with Route 66 as the Main Street. Less than an hour from the Grand Canyon, Williams has many things to do:

• The Grand Canyon Railway.
• Bearizona.
• Walk, dine, and shop in historic downtown on route 66.
• Nestled in one of the largest Ponderosa Pine Forests in the world and there are miles of hiking trails, fishing, horseback riding, and skiing.
• Cowboys swagger through downtown and a gunfight breaks out every night right in the middle of the Mother Road April through October.
• Experience the down home friendliness of Williams year round during Festivals that range from rodeos, car shows, mountain men fests, home town beauty pageants, and the Christmas season Polar Express.
How would you rate the level of customer service in Williams, Arizona? Examples?
Days Inn Williams

“Great Hotel for Families”

Reviewed April 17, 2012

Convenient to the Grand Canyon, large, clean rooms, great pool, we enjoyed our stay. All staff were helpful and breakfast was good and plentiful. We would stay here again when in the area.
Red Baron Restaurant

“Excellent service and food”
April 25, 2012

We were recommended the Red Raven by our motel and we were not disappointed. We took our two children (aged 1 and 4). The menu and service were excellent and the food was brilliant.
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

- Customers typically evaluate service quality based on five attributes:
  - **Reliability**: The ability to perform promised service dependably and accurately. Customers want to do business with organizations that honor their promises.
  - [Pizza Promise Video]
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

• **Responsiveness:** The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. This involves being attentive to and promptly dealing with customer requests, questions, complaints, and problems.

• Whenever possible, let customers know of progress in handling their situation or service request.
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

• Statements from various companies regarding the time frame for responding to customer email messages. Which statements clearly define the service standard?

• All messages are answered as soon as possible. 
  Messages are answered 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. 
  Messages are answered 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. 
  Messages are answered in a timely fashion. 
  Messages are answered at the convenience of correspondents. 
  All messages are answered within 48 hours of receipt. 
  Messages are answered during business hours so weekend or evening requests may not be answered until the next available business day. 
  Messages are answered based on priority. 
  Messages are answered by the right people as quickly as possible. 
  Messages are answered as promptly as possible. 
  Messages are answered within an acceptable time frame. 
  Messages are answered personally as soon as possible. 
  Messages are answered in the order in which they are received. 
  All messages are answered; please allow 20 working days for a response. 
  Messages are answered each morning. 
  Most messages are answered within 1 to 6 hours. Some are answered within 5 minutes of receipt. 
  Messages are answered as soon as Jane Doe returns.
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

- **Empathy:** This is defined as the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. Customers want to be understood by and be important to the businesses that service them.

- Service professionals show empathy through their actions, words, tone of voice, and body language.
Jeff MacNelly's Shoe / by Chris Cassett & Gary Brookins

SO, WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?

YOO-HOO... ANYBODY HOME?

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

YEAH... YOU'VE BEEN IGNORING ME ALL NIGHT.

OH, I'M SORRY...

IT'S A BAD HABIT I PICKED UP...

FROM WORKING IN CUSTOMER SERVICE.
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

• **Assurance:** This is the trust and confidence that customers have in a business and its employees.

• Everything about a business has to be trustworthy, including the marketing, public relations, advertising, and Web site, as well as the organization’s culture and climate, training, policies, procedures, and systems.
Assurance: Building Credibility through Advertising

Don’t do this!

Undermining Credibility
A Dunkin Donuts value proposition in a 1991 advertisement damaged the credibility of the company: "FREE 3 muffins when you buy 3 at the regular 1/2 dozen price." In 1994, they used the same deceptive tactic: "FREE DOZEN DONUTS: Buy a dozen donuts at regular price, get the second dozen at 1/2 price."
How Customers Evaluate Service Quality

- **Tangibles:** This addresses the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
- Provide realistic and accurate physical images and descriptions in all communication mediums.
- Create comfortable customer service areas.
Tangibles

Provide realistic and accurate physical images and descriptions in all communication mediums.

Ambergris Caye's long ribbon of beach (this one is at Mata Chica) is beautiful, although seagrass and shallow water near shore can make beach swimming less than ideal. Many Amergris Caye hotel brochures portray delighted couples frolicking on the sand.
## Service Attributes and Advertising Tags

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Advertising Tag</th>
<th>Service Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motel 6</td>
<td>&quot;We'll Leave The Light On For You&quot;</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Farm Insurance</td>
<td>&quot;WE Live Where YOU live&quot;</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ritz-Carlton</td>
<td>&quot;How may we be of Assistance&quot;</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burger King</td>
<td>&quot;BURGER KING is flame-broiled burgers, fries and soft drinks at a good value, served quickly and consistently by friendly people in clean surroundings.&quot;</td>
<td>Reliability, Responsiveness, Tangibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Express</td>
<td>&quot;Don't worry. There's a FedEx for that.&quot;</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westchester Hospitals</td>
<td>“Care for Life”</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is required FOR YOU to Deliver Service that Visitors will Remember?

• **Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to Connect with and Influence Customers; to be informationally and emotionally responsive.

• **Empathy:** The caring and individualized attention that you provide customers.

• **Strong Emotional Muscle:** The ability to not internalize tense, emotionally-charges service interactions.

• **Training and Knowledge:** The ability to Select and Execute the Proper Steps and Tactics for Handling Requests and Complaints **Reliably** and **Responsively.**
Factors Creating Consistently High Levels of Customer Service

How do you think 500 restaurant operators in a 2009 survey ranked the following factors for creating a consistently high level of customer service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Rank (1 = highest importance and 6 = least importance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treating employees well &amp; providing a good place to work</td>
<td>• 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant, ongoing reinforcement of service standards</td>
<td>• 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating servers on the correlation between good service &amp; higher tips</td>
<td>• 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to good customer service training resources</td>
<td>• 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring the right people</td>
<td>• 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching employees basic social skills such as smiling, eye contact,</td>
<td>• 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive attitude and conversational skills</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Informationally Responsive

• There are two types of service interactions: informational and emotional.

• Informational responsiveness refers to the ability of service professionals to speak in a way customers will understand.

• An informationally responsive service professional does not use technical terms or impart irrelevant information.

• Good Listening skills enable a service professional to respond in an appropriate manner with accurate information (Click on Video: Listening Skills).
Informationally Responsive Exercise (pass out handout)

- Chem 7
- SOP
- Cover
- Do you want a Hockey Puck?
- ABOR
- He needs 2 HA classes?
Emotionally Responsive

• You must have the ability to emotionally connect with people Emotional (self mastery) and Social (interaction with others) Intelligence).

• You are able to empathize with people and interpret emotional states (body language, tone of voice, etc.), understand them, develop a rapport with them, to persuade them, and to work with them.
Connecting with Customers

SAY WHAT?

Face-to-Face Communication
* 55% body language
* 38% tone of voice
* 7% words uses

Telephone Communication
* 82% tone of voice
* 18% words used

Never underestimate the Power of a Smile both in person and on the phone. When you smile, customers smile back.
Connecting with customers

• According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), customers want to be understood by and be important to the businesses that service them. To show empathy for you customers, you might use the following phrases:
  • I apologize about....
  • I understand...
  • I know how you feel...
  • That must be frustrating...
  • I’m sorry...
  • I can appreciate.....
Empathy and Body Language Exercise
(pass out handout)

EMPATHY
-the power of understanding and imaginatively entering into another person's feelings
-identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives.
Connecting with customers

- **Customer:** Is it possible to get a booth? My mother, who has a painful neck condition, finds restaurant booths more comfortable.
- **Service Professional:** We do not have any booths available at this time.
- **Service Response Rewrite:**

> Is not necessary to express empathy in every customer service interaction, but when a customer is in a difficult situation, it is essential for a service professional to show concern. There are many ways to show empathy for customers – through actions, words, tone of voice, etc.
EI and Persuasion

• Service professionals adept at **persuasion**, the ability to arouse specific emotions in the other person, have the ability to recognize when either a logical or an emotional approach is needed. Click on [Video](#) about Hotelier Paul Rusesabagina.

• The reasons for losing customers and clients are 70% EI-related.

• Service professionals (any service professional – Johnny the Bagger) can enhance their EI Skills. Visit this site ([www.queendom.com](http://www.queendom.com)) to assess your EI.
What is your Emotional Intelligence? (pass out assessment)

- Online emotional intelligence test at qeendom.com.
- This emotional intelligence test will evaluate several aspects of your emotional intelligence and will suggest ways to improve it.
Build Emotional Muscle

• Service professionals are attuned to other people’s feelings and needs while remaining fully aware of their own emotional experiences.
• Service professionals with strong emotional muscle do not internalize emotions associated with uncomfortable situations.
• An employee with a weak emotional muscle might be thinking:
  • “He can’t talk to me like that.”
  • “Who does he think he is?”
• There is a danger that the employee will verbalize this “self-talk.”
• The employee needs to resist talking and to:
  • Breath
  • Relax
  • Listen
  • Focus
Prepare for Complainers and Requests

• **Step 1: Listen attentively** as the customer discusses problems. Throughout difficult situations, service professionals **must flex** their **emotional muscle to stay calm and focused**.

• **Ask** the **questions** necessary to identify and define the problem: who? what? when? where? Why? And how?

• **Restate content and feelings** to assure confirmation. This is referred to as **active listening**. “**So you need tickets for 4 adults and 2 children? Is that correct?**”
What are Barriers to Listening?
Barriers to Listening

• Listening Barriers include:
  * Noisy Space
  * Visual Distractions
  * Tiredness
  * Customer Speaks Too Fast, Too Slowly, Too Much
  * Stress
  * Customer Uses Emotionally Charged Words or Statements
Mirror Customer’s Communication Style

- Communicating with customers is enhanced by **mirroring their communication styles**:
  - **Speech pattern**: Match the speaker’s delivery rate (e.g., slow, rapid). [Bert and Ernie Video]
  - **Language**: Use their words.
    - To the visual say: “I see what you mean”
    - To the auditory say: “I hear what you say.”
    - To the feeling say: “I feel the same way.”
  - Use words that convey a can-do attitude.
  - **Step 2: Acknowledge the customer’s feelings.** The moment that service professionals communicate their awareness of the problems customers face, the customers know they are being taken seriously and become less apprehensive.
Customer’s Self Esteem Important

• **Step 3:** Maintain the customer’s self-esteem. The customer’s name should be used frequently during the conversation.

• **Do not make excuses** when confronted with a problem (e.g., “It is not my fault or I can only do one thing at a time”). And never take a problem as a personal insult!

• Say things to create a positive impression such as: “Thank you for bringing this problem to our attention.” A sincere apology can help calm a customer, especially if the service professional has made a mistake. However, **keep the apology short** and then refocus on solving the problem.
Resolve Problem ASAP!

• **Step 4: Resolve the situation.** Tell the customer what can be done immediately to resolve the situation. A service professional that cannot resolve the problem should contact someone who can while the customer is present, if possible. **Customers get upset when they feel service professionals are not tending to their problems with a “sense of urgency.”**

• Be prepared to deal with customers whose resolution demands are unreasonable. To shift the focus, offer the customer options. Try the sandwich technique.
Customer Service Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sandwich Technique consists of two phrases wrapped around a filling of recommended actions:</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **What I will do is....**  
This phrase tell customers that you want to help them, along with specific action you will take to get their problem(s) resolved. The alternative actions you offer may not be exactly what the customer wants but will usually help create an acceptable resolution to the problem and reduce the customer’s feelings of frustration |
| **What you can do is....**  
The second phrase tells customers that they have some control over the outcome of the situation and that you consider them your partners in getting the problem resolved. Possible suggestions for customers may involve recommendations for a fix to the problem or actions that the customer can take in the future to prevent this occurrence from happening again. |
# Customer Service Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complainer Type</th>
<th>Service Professional Communication Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Unresponsive          | When someone has little to say, ask open-ended questions that require full-sentence answers:  
  • *What is the problem?* |
| Whiner                | Whiners like to talk about their feelings and their disappointments. You need to get them to "action" communication and short answers through close-ended questions. Ask questions like:  
  • *How could it have been done better?*  
  • *When do you need the extra towels brought to your room?* |
| Controlled anger      | When people keep their anger bottled up, you cannot communicate with them. The words may not indicate their mood, but their *tone of voice* will.  
  • *Express what you see.*  
  • *Get them to talk.*  
  • *Once they have expressed their anger, move on to action questions. "What do we need to do...?"* |
| Rude                  | Keep cool and smile. Ask questions like:  
  • *"What would you like me to do to solve this problem?"* |
| Hostile               | Let them shout. They need to diffuse their anger. Then:  
  • *Listen actively.*  
  • *Lower the pitch and pace of your voice. Allow them to talk.*  
  • *Restate main points that are making them angry.*  
  • *Restate the facts and what can be done.* |
| Abusive               | No employee should be verbally abused. Tell the customer:  
  • *"I'm sorry, but if you cannot speak on professional basis, I'll have to refer you to my manager."* |
Customer Service Techniques

• **Admit Mistakes** – Customers respect service professionals who are honest and open about mistakes and take responsibility for quickly resolving them.

• **Technique**: Admit the mistake in a short sentence and then move on to problem resolution.
Customer Service Techniques

• **Allow Venting**– Many customers will calm down if allowed to let “blow off some steam.” Customers respect service professionals who are honest and open about mistakes and take responsibility for quickly resolving it.

• **Technique**: If you allow a customer to vent but he or she is getting more agitated, more active measures are needed such as empathy statements and attempts to refocus.
Customer Service Techniques

- **Change Venue**: Some angry customers will “play to the audience.” Move this type of complainer to a private area.

- **Technique**: For example, you could say: “Mr. Collins, this is an important matter, let’s discuss this with my supervisor in her office.”
Customer Service Techniques

• **Suspend Conversation:** Stop the interaction with the customer when it becomes heated, which allows both parties to calm down and to think more clearly.

• **Technique:** Tell the customer that you need to access additional information regarding the situation. For example, you could say: “Mr. Collins, let me talk this over with my supervisor, and I’ll get back to you within three minutes.” For unreasonable and very upset customers, have them talk to a supervisor. A “fresh start” with a manager will often result in faster resolutions.
Customer Service Techniques

• **Redirection:** Redirect the customer’s attention to an object (e.g., sign) so the customer breaks eye contact with you.

• **Technique:** For example, you could say: “Mr. Collins, take a look at the computer screen, you will see that you have only been waiting 10 minutes.”
Customer Service Techniques

• **Ignore Insults**: Do not respond to insults and abusive comments made by a customer. **Do not take the bait**. Acknowledging these unpleasant customer comments will prolong complaint resolution.

• **Technique**: Not taking the bait requires you to flex your emotional muscle with the understanding that from time to time you will encounter an unpleasant customer.
Customer Service Techniques

• **Avoid Command Statement:** Customers do not like to be ordered around. Statements such as “go to the business center to get that photocopied” can come across harsh to some customers.

• **Technique:** Rephrase command statements into questions. For example, the following response leaves the customer with a much more positive feeling about the service professional: “Were you aware that business center provides photocopying services?”
Customer Service Techniques

• **Proactively Address Problems:** Address customer problems beforehand. By acknowledging the problem first, it demonstrates concern about the customer’s experience and helps minimize negative interactions.

• **Technique:** For example, immediately apologize to a customer that has had a long wait.
Customer Service Techniques

• **Set Parameters:** Define boundaries for unacceptable customer behaviors (e.g., profanity and yelling).

• **Technique:** Set limits beginning with an “if... statement” followed by a “then... statement.” For example, you could say: “If you continue to swear, then I will have to end this conversation.”
Service Recovery Model

• Prepared organizations have clearly defined service recovery models that specify remedies (e.g., apology, repair, etc.) based on the severity and type of complaint and the degree to which the organization is at fault.
Follow Up Leaves a Favorable Impression.

• **Step 5. Follow up.** This is the key to leaving a customer with a favorable impression. **Suggest a realistic time frame** for resolving the problem and provide the customer with timely status updates. Once action is taken, **make sure the customer is satisfied with the solution.**

• “Customers have more tolerance for poor service than for poor service recovery. And **if the customer experiences a second failure of the same service, there is no recovery strategy that can work well.**”

• “After a failed service recovery, what annoys and even angers customers is not that they were not satisfied, but they believe the system remains unchanged and likely to fail again” (online.wsj.com). **How would you handle this baggage complaint?**
Customer Service Interaction Exercise
(pass out handout)
Basic Steps in Connecting with Customers

• **Greet customers** with a smile and direct eye contact to show responsiveness.

• **Address customers by name** whenever possible to make them feel important.

• **Talk to customers** with enthusiasm and genuine interest to establish rapport.

• **Use open body language** to make them feel comfortable.

• **Carefully listen** to customer questions and restate or paraphrase to gain a clear understanding of their needs and feelings.

• **Thank customers** to reassure them that they are valued.
Creating a Destination Service Culture is a Community Effort

• The late James Lavenson during his tenure as the president of the famous Plaza Hotel in New York City inspired the entire hotel staff to think of themselves as members of a sales team. This initiative was coined “Thinking Strawberries,” the code word for salesmanship.

• Unprofitable in the year before his assumption of the hotel's direction, the Plaza was profitable each year of Lavenson's tenure until it was sold in February 1975.
Cultivating Teamwork

• How did he get 1400 Plaza employees selling hotel products and services, which included a thousand guest rooms, six restaurants, a nightclub, a theatre, and a commercial laundry (Lavenson, 1973)?
Nametags Help Build Rapport

• Every employee had to wear nametags.
  “We began to build an atmosphere of welcome with the most precious commodity in the world — our names — and our guests' names.

“Customers like to know who they’re being served by and it makes it easier for the staff member to build rapport, thus making it easier to sell on. Badges also make staff more accountable for their actions and attitude as customers know who to complain about.”
Communication Skills Important

• Language barriers had to be eliminated. Almost a third of the staff of the Plaza were Hispanic and they did not know how to read or converse in English. They put their house magazine in both English and Spanish and provided lessons in Spanish for supervisors and lessons in English for the staff.
Educate the Destination Community Service Professionals

• Employees had to be educated about products and services and encouraged to “ask for the order.”
• Lavenson stated that employees had no idea what the product was that they were supposed to be selling. “They didn’t know who was playing in the Persian Room. They didn't know that the Plaza had movies, full-length feature films without commercials, on closed circuit TV in the guest rooms.”
Consistent Quality Service Requires Prepared Service Professionals

• Consequently, orientation and training became important. For example, front desk agents went through a week of orientation, which included spending a night in a guest room, touring all the guest rooms, and a meal in the restaurants.

• They talked to the room attendants about suggesting room service, to the doormen about suggesting Plaza restaurants, and to cashiers and bellmen about suggesting return reservations to the parting guests.
Constantly Sell the Best Things that your Community has to offer

• And they talked to the servers about selling strawberries. They widened the aisles so that servers could wheel the dessert carts up to each table. On top of the cart were bowls of fresh strawberries and freshly whipped cream. The servers would then extol the virtues of the luscious strawberries, and one out of two of guests would order them.

• During one six-month stretch in the 70s, they sold $250,000 worth of strawberries. Consequently, “Thinking Strawberries” became the Plaza's sales password.
Recognize Outstanding Performances

• They also created the “Order of the Strawberry Patch,” a strawberry insignia worn on the employee's name tag who gave the Plaza sales manager a lead for rooms or banquet business. If that lead was converted into a sale, the employee was also given a savings bond. A laundry employee, for example, provided a lead which resulted in a 500-person luncheon. The laundry employee and hundreds of other Plaza staff members wore the strawberry patch on their name tags.
Final Thoughts

• Under Promise and Over Deliver
• Have Fun!
Welcome to Williams, Arizona

We make visitors feel appreciated by:

- Warmly greeting and welcoming them with a smile at every touch point along their journey from the gasoline station, to the visitor center, to the hotel, to the park....
- Being responsive to their requests.
- Knowing the area and freely sharing that knowledge with them.
- Maintaining a positive, can-do attitude and demonstrating a genuine passion for the area.
- Asking them about their experiences and sharing this information with those who make their experiences better.
- Thanking them for visiting our community and inviting them back.