

Beyond Service Excellence:

Connecting with the People We Serve

In today's world it is vital that everyone learns to improve their service excellence skills because we all serve somebody. But in such a competitive environment if your goal is "satisfaction" – you are aiming too low.

Studies show that people who are rationally satisfied behave no differently than those who are dissatisfied but those who are emotionally engaged are a different breed because they feel personally connected. This requires a working knowledge of the key opportunities to make a connection with others and the behaviors that weaken or strengthen it.

I. Organizational Success

- The Three Type of People We Serve
 - Promoters – emotionally satisfied
 - Customers – rationally satisfied
 - Detractors – emotionally dissatisfied
- Participants are asked to give real life examples of Promoters, Customers and Detractors and then in columns, delineate the different effects each will have on an organization.
- Research and case studies from the Gallup Organization are given to support the qualitative difference between emotionally attached customers, rationally satisfied customers and dissatisfied customers.

II. Improving Loyalty

- The Service Ladder – to gain a Promoter you must achieve success on all five rungs:
 - Bottom Rung – Efficiency
 - Second Rung – Excellence
 - Third Rung – Courtesy
 - Fourth Rung – Innovation
 - Top Rung – Personal Connection
- Participants are asked to prioritize each rung from the perspective of staff and students.
- Participants are asked to grade the success of the organization; their department; and themselves with respect to all five rungs.

The Four Opportunities to Create an Emotional Connection

III. Opportunity Number One – Attitude

- **Disinterest Creates a Disconnect** – disinterest is when you come across as impersonal, indifferent, rude, or disingenuous.
- Participants are split into small groups and asked to share their own experiences where they have encountered people with bad attitudes and how it affected their level of commitment.
- A psychological analysis is presented on why some people have a bad attitudes.
- **Enthusiasm Creates a Connection** – Enthusiasm is when you demonstrate a sincere belief in what you offer coupled with a genuine desire to help others.
- Each group is asked to simulate one of the stories of encountering a bad attitude in a role-play; and then to role-play the same situation with an example of positive enthusiasm.
- A psychological analysis is presented on why some people have good attitudes.
- The mental technique of developing and maintaining a positive outlook is explained and practiced.

IV. Opportunity Number Two – Communication

- ***Self-Centered Communication Creates a Disconnect*** – self-centered communication is when you talk more than listen.
- Discussion is conducted to determine ways in which people feel processed rather than served.
- ***Altruistic Communication Creates a Connection*** – altruistic communication is when you listen more than talk. This includes inquiring, empathizing, and validating their needs (“let me ask you what we can do”).
- Aspects of making a good impression are reviewed. They include:
 - Being Accessible
 - Showing Interest
 - Demonstrating Balance

V. Opportunity Number Three – Performance

- ***Unremarkable Performance Creates a Disconnect*** – unremarkable performance is an experience that is ordinary.
- Discussion of how easy it is to disengage when service is simply satisfactory.
- ***Outstanding Performance Creates a Connection*** – outstanding performance is when there is something unique and extraordinary about the service you offer.
- Participants are asked to share stories about outstanding performance within the organization and to articulate what is unique about the organization (or their department).
- Emphasis is placed on creating a memorable experience rather than simply giving good service. In discussion groups, specific action steps are formulated for creating such an experience.

VI. Opportunity Number Four – Service Failures

- ***Defensiveness Creates a Disconnect*** – defensiveness is when you refuse to admit or correct a service failure.
- Participants share stories of their own experience where a service failure occurred and the person was defensive and refused to take responsibility.
- ***Taking Ownership Creates a Connection*** – taking ownership is when you do everything within your power to completely rectify a service failure.
- Participants share stories of their own experience where a service failure occurred and the person took extraordinary measures to make things right.
- Participants brainstorm about potential frustrations and grievances people might have and appropriate corrective responses.

Conclusion

- Participants are paired off with a partner and asked to share a story of when they made a strong emotional connection with someone they served. Facilitator debriefs and captures the specific factors involved.
- Participants are asked to complete a personal action plan that articulates ways they can improve on creating emotional connections with the people they serve.