

Customer Service 101



Bowie State University

Objectives

- Discuss how customer service looks at BSU
- Identify effective methods of communication in customer service
- Recognize how to overcome common challenges in customer service
- Provide tips on how to improve customer satisfaction



“There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.”

-Sam Walton



Customer Service at Bowie State University

Customer Service Complaints at BSU

- “I’ve been waiting forever”
- “I keep getting passed from one person to another”
- “They don’t care”
- “They’re rude”
- “When I talk to someone, they don’t know what they’re talking about”
- “I never hear back from them”



What Does Good Customer Service Look Like at BSU?

- “Treating people with a helpful, friendly attitude”
- “Helping customers in a friendly manner”
- “Always being positive and willing to assist customers to the best of your ability”
- “Giving a good impression”



Understanding Our Customers

We Need to Understand:

- Our customers' demographics
- Our customers' perceptions and expectations
- The services and products we have to offer
- Whether we have the capacity to meet our customers' expectations.
 - If not, what do we need to do to get there?



Case Study: Chick-fil-A

- **Known for its “Second Mile” approach to customer service**
 - Delivering food to tables with a smile
 - Putting fresh flowers on the table
 - Meeting customers in parking lots with umbrellas when it’s raining
 - Always answering with “My Pleasure” when a customer says thank

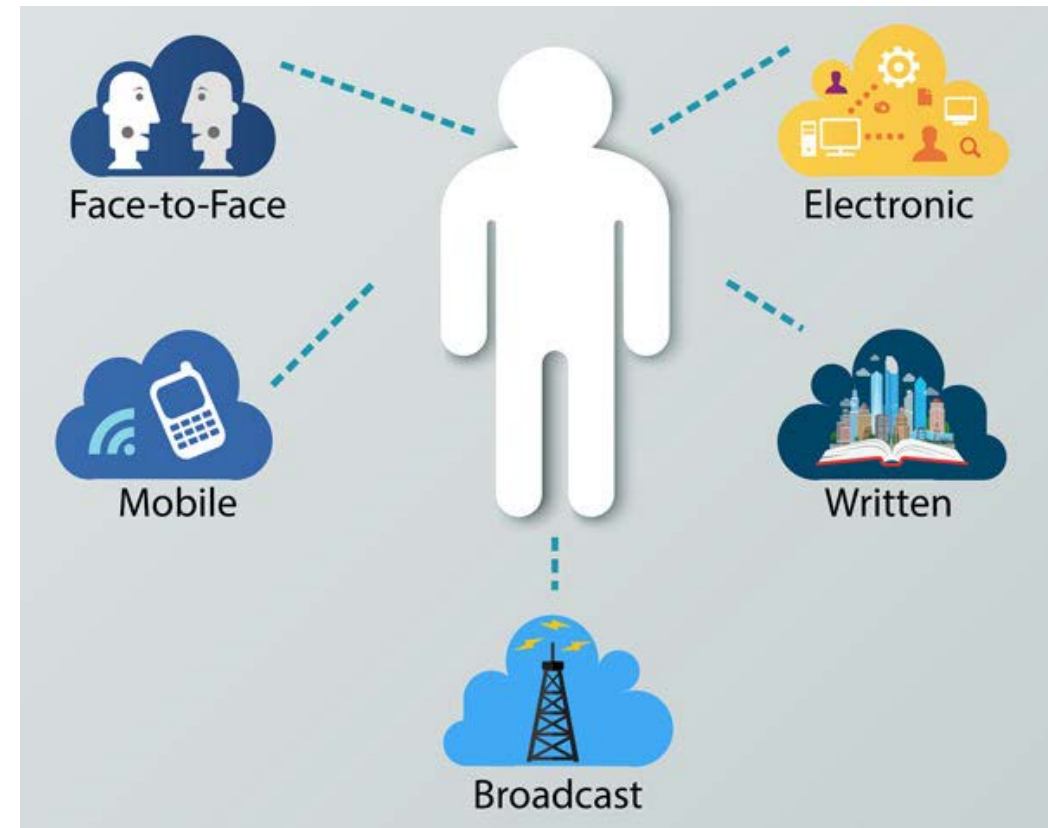




Communication in Customer Service

Methods of Communication

- Listening
- Speaking
- Writing
- Reading
- Non-verbal



Listening

A Good Listener:

- Conveys sincerity
- Focuses on the customer and what they are saying
- Does not interrupt
- Listens with their eyes and their mind

Bad Listener:

- Formulating what they want to say while the customer is talking
- Thinking about other things while the customer is talking
- Jumping to conclusions

Speaking- Vocal Quality

Be Mindful Of:

- Tone/Pitch
- Inflection
- Rate
- Volume



The Power of Words

Say.....

- How can I help you?
- Consider this
- I will find out
- I'll be happy to

Avoid....

- What do you want?
- This is how it is
- There is nothing I can do
- That's not my job

Effective Communication

- Open- ended questions
- Closed-ended questions



Open-Ended Questions

- Use if you need more than a “yes”, “no”, or one-word response
- Useful when you want general information
- Usually starts with the words what, how, or why



Closed-Ended Questions

- Use if you need a “yes”, “no”, or one-word response
- Useful when you need specific information, to limit talking, or to control the direction of the conversation
- Usually starts with the words who, when, did, which, would, are, can, have, do, is, will, or may



Non-Verbal Body Language

Be Mindful Of:

- Posture
- Feet and arms
- Hands
- Head and eyes



Telephone Customer Service

- Smile through the phone
- Answer with professional greeting
- Give answers and assistance as efficiently as possible
- Thank the caller
- Conclude the call in a positive way



Telephone Etiquette

- Familiarize yourself with the features of your phone
- Answer in as few rings as possible
- Avoid side conversations
- Reduce background noise
- Never eat or drink while on the telephone
- Ask permission before placing someone on hold
- Thank customer once he/she is off hold



How to Use Voicemail Effectively

- Identify yourself
- Speak slowly, clearly, and directly
- Keep it short
- Identify the type of response needed



Email Customer Service

- Proofread before sending
- Respond/answer promptly
- Avoid slang and acronyms
- Be careful with sensitive information
- Be clear and concise

Understand that email can be permanent and sent to anyone!



Face to Face Customer Service

- Smile
- Use a professional greeting
- Make eye contact
- Be aware of body language
- Give contact information for future questions
- Thank customer for coming in with their inquiry





Customer Service Challenges

Barriers to Providing Good Customer Service

- Poor communication skills
- Staff not empowered to make decisions
- Lack of adequate training
- Policies that don't make sense
- Poor leadership
- Unmotivated staff



Why Are Customers Challenging?

- They may not have an understanding or expertise of the situation
- They may not speak our “language”
- They may have difficulty in making decisions
- They may be impatient, hostile, non-communicative, immature, etc.



How to Work with Challenging Customers

- Listen and don't interrupt
- Ask questions
- Show empathy
- Solve the problem
- Follow up
- End on a positive note



How to Handle a Very Difficult Customer

- Listen to their concerns
- Speak clearly and calmly
- Set limits
 - Be clear that abusive or offensive language/behavior will not be tolerated
- Consider involving a supervisor for assistance or a new perspective
- During phone calls, ask for a call back number and call back later
 - This will allow the customer time to cool off



How to Handle a Very Difficult Customer

- During face to face interactions, direct them out of the lobby area to a place with less customers
- Reassure customer that you will follow up
- Don't make promises that you cannot keep
- Document the incident
- Understand what campus resources are available for further assistance



How to Communicate Bad News

- Acknowledge the customer's feelings
- Share the responsibility of the problem
- Convey sincerity
- Ask for the opportunity to correct the problem
- Request the opportunity to continue to serve them again in the future



What Happens When You Are Wrong?

- Admit your mistake
- Apologize for the error
- Find a solution
- Document the error
- Find ways to lessen the likelihood of repeated future error





Improving Customer Satisfaction

Evaluating Customer Service Staff

- Shadowing face to face contacts between staff and customer
- Secret “shopper”
- Phone monitoring
- Evaluating email responses
- Conducting a knowledge assessment



Case Study: The Ritz Carlton Hotel

How Does the Ritz Carlton measure customer satisfaction?

- Monthly computer-generated surveys are sent to recent guests
- Includes 30 questions with a rating scale from 1-10
- “Guest Engagement Number” is the final sum total of questions
- Goal is for number to continuously go up



Improving Customer Service Staff

- Coaching, counseling, and mentoring
- Leading by example



Assessing Customer Satisfaction Levels

Evaluating Your Customers Through:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Comment cards
- Suggestion boxes



Benchmarking

- Used as a self-improvement tool
- Comparing your organization to others
- Identify strengths and weaknesses and learn how to improve
- Great way of finding and adopting best practices





Final Thoughts

Our Goal: Providing Good Customer Service at Every Interaction!

Noticeable Benefits:

- Satisfied customers/students
- Increased retention
- Improved graduation rates
- Positive reputation and respect of students, their families, and work colleagues
- Personal fulfillment
- Resolution of problems



Resources

- <https://evollution.com/attracting-students/customer-service/students-as-customers-the-new-normal-in-higher-education/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/customer-service-higher-education-should-you-view-your-jeff-wyatt-mba>
- http://customerservicezone.com/db/Customer_Service_By_Sector_Or_Industry/Education_Sector/
- http://www.educationalpolicy.org/publications/pubpdf/1701_PolicyPerspectives_small.pdf
- <http://time.com/3419314/college-student-amenities-customer-service/>
- <http://www.sigmasd.com/partner/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/improving-efficiency-and-customer-service-in-higher-education-research-brief.pdf>