**Customer Service Basics – Learning Activities**

1. **Make it Personal** – This game serves as a gimmick to make students realize that there are literally hundreds of ways they can offer good service to customers. Each participant uses the letters of his/her first name to inspire service-oriented actions. It’s a fun activity to use as an energizing “filler” or as a warm-up to more intensive customer service training.

Time: 10 minutes

What You’ll Need: Each student will need a piece of paper and a pen.

What to Do: Tell each student to write his/her name vertically along the center of a sheet of paper. Demonstrate by writing the following on a flip-chart of white board:

M

A

R

Y

Tell students that now their task is to use each letter of their name to come up with an action that they can take to offer great service to their customers. Each letter of their name must begin a word in the action phrase, but it doesn’t necessarily have to be the first word of the phrase. Actions can be phrased either positively or negatively. For example:

Be **M**otivated to serve

**A**sk if there’s anything else I can do for them.

**R**espect their needs

Don’t **Y**odel in the customer’s presence.

Encourage students to have fun with this activity and to be as creative as possible. Almost anything goes!

After seven or eight minutes, ask for some volunteers to share what they came up with. Point out to students that their hundreds, even thousands of ways to give great service to their customers.

TIP: If the students like what they came up with, they can post it on the bulletin board.

1. **Five Pillars of Success** - This is a role-play game in which students identify five basic communication skills that are essential to success in face-to-face customer service.

Time: 10-15 minutes

What You’ll Need: Two copies of handouts **(attached)**

What to Do: Ask for two student volunteer “actors” to role play in front of the class. Assign each actor a role and give them both a script. Give them a few moments to look over their roles, and then ask them to play out their customer service encounter **(Take One)**. Tell the rest of the students to pay close attention to what the actors do and how it affects their interaction.

After the interaction, ask what they noticed. Then have the actors role-play **Take Two**, and ask the rest of the group to look for five things that the customer service representative does that have a positive influence on the customer.

Debrief the role-play by asking the group to identify five things that the customer service rep did well. They may come with more than five, but they should identify the following: greet the customer, make eye contact, smile, use open body language, and thank the customer.

**Discussion Questions:**

Q: Why should you greet the customer?

*A: It’s common courtesy, and it shows your willingness to serve.*

Q: Why is it important to make eye contact?

*A: Making eye contact reassures customers that your attention is focused on them.*

Q: Why smile?

*A: You’ll put the customer at ease, and you’ll be more relaxed and eager to serve. You’ll also make the customer feel valued.*

Q: What is the importance of using open body language? What are some examples of open body language?

*A: Open body language tells customers you’re willing to help them and it helps establish rapport. Some examples of open body language are facing the customer, uncrossing your arms, relaxing your posture, and looking at the customer when he or she talks.*

Q: Why thank the customer?

*A: It shows courtesy for the customer and reinforces that you value the customer’s business.*

1. **Now That’s Rapport**- Students read a case study of a customer service interaction in which the employee did a great job. They have to identify what the customer service representative did to build a strong rapport with the customer.

Time: 10-15 minutes

What You’ll Need: one copy of the handouts **(attached)**

What to Do: Give one copy of the handout to each student and ask them to read it. Review the second handout **(Techniques for building Rapport)** with students. Ask students to work in groups or two or three to review the scenario **(first handout)** and underline the passages that show what the customer service representative said to build a good rapport with the customer.

Review each group’s answers and discuss as needed.

1. **The Great Service Debate** – This is a lively game in which the class is divided into two teams which must debate each other to determine the best solution to a difficult customer service situation. It is best suited to discuss debate etiquette before you begin.

Time: 15-20 minutes

What You’ll Need: Two copies of the handout (attached). Students will need paper and pens. You will need a flip chart or white board and markers.

What to Do: Divide the class into two teams of equal size. Tell them they will review a customer service scenario and will then hold a debate to determine what course of action should be taken by the customer service representative.

Give each team a copy of the handout and assign each team a position to defend. Give them a few minutes to discuss their position and to elect a spokesperson. Then hold the debate.

As the debate takes place, you can write the “pros” of each side’s position on the flip-chart or board divided into two columns. The objective of this debate is not for one side to win but for the class to examine and discuss a diverse variety of customer service issues.

**Discussion Questions:**

Q: What did you learn from the debate?

Q: How many of you represented a position that you would not have taken if given a choice?

Q: How would a similar situation be resolved if it took place here in our classroom?

**If You Have More Time:** Hold a second debate, this time focusing on a customer service situation that the students might face in their own world of work.

1. **Customer Service Means** - Students will work in groups to piece together several definitions of service. The objective is to help students understand the meaning of serving customers.

Time: 10-15 minutes

What You’ll Need: One copy of the service definition sheet and one envelope for each three students.

What To Do: Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group an envelope containing the contents of the handout. Write, “Customer Service means….” On a white board or flip-chart.

Explain that in the envelope are phrases that, when assembled, provide seven definitions of service. Their job is to work together as a team to assemble the phrases in a way that completes the sentence, “Customer service means…” Each phrase must be a complete, logical sentence. They must use all the pieces and each piece can be used only once.

If the groups are slow to get started, advise them to start each phrase with a verb such as “finding.”

After five minutes, have each team read its definitions out loud.

**Answers: Customer service means:**

* Doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.
* Going beyond what’s expected.
* Adding value and integrity to every interaction.
* Being at your best with every customer.
* Discovering new ways to delight those you serve.
* Surprising yourself with how much you can do.
* Taking care of the customer like you would take care of your grandmother.

**Discussion Questions:**

Q: Are all these definitions true?

*A: Be prepared for class answers to differ.*

Q: Which definition do you like best?

*A: field answers*

Q: Why isn’t there one common definition?

*A: Because customer service means different things to different people. Notice, though, that all these definitions talk about putting energy and enthusiasm into your interactions with customers.*

**If You Have More Time:** Ask students for their definitions of customer service. List words and phrases on the board or flip-chart. Develop into a definition of customer service for your class.