

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITY

COURSE OVERVIEW FOR THE AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

This course is designed to help you learn about the best practices in customer service and what you can do to perform these services more effectively. The text will provide you with a wealth of material to help you improve your performance in important areas of customer service.

TEXT

While *we will not cover all this material included in the text*, it can be very useful as a future tool and reference book. We will look specifically at six areas of customer service, with readings and examples by experts in their respective fields.

SECTION OVERVIEWS

An overview will be provided for each section with key points addressed. All chapters within each section should be included in the assignments. Clarification, if needed, can be addressed to the program coordinator, Sherry Blackburn, 317-274-5052.

ASSIGNMENTS

A paper, no longer than 1 page, will be due with each reading assignment. The papers must include your thoughts and opinions about the reading and cover the elements you feel have the greatest application for your organization as you see it. (See page 8)
All assignments are due by the date listed in the Assignment Cover Sheets. Any late assignments must be cleared in advance through Sherry Blackburn to receive credit.

FINAL PAPER & GRADING

The final will be a 2-3 page paper summarizing what you have learned. Your paper will be an application of the customer service techniques and information as applied to a customer service plan constructed for your organization. You will be graded on your ability to construct a plan, incorporating text information, ***not on your organization's current customer service policies and practices.***
(See page 8)

AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

SYLLABUS

<u>LESSON</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT/READING</u>	<u>DUE DATE</u>
1	15	Part 1: Great Customer Service Read Chapters 1,2,4 Paper, Part 1 (lesson 1) (See page 8)	7-08-08
2	15	Part 2: Practical Models Read Chapters 6,7,9 Paper, Part 2 (lesson 2) (See page 8)	7-15-08
3	15	Part 3: Unleashing The Power Read Chapters 13,14 Paper, Part 3 (lesson 3) (See page 8)	7-22-08
4	15	Part 4: Customer Service-Front Line Part 5: Improving Customer Service Read Chapters 15,20,24 Paper, Part 4&5 (lesson 4) (See page 8)	8-05-08
5	15	Part 6: Customer Problems and Problem Customers Read Chapters 26, 27 Paper, Part 6 (lesson 5) (See page 8)	8-19-08
6	<u>25</u>	Final Paper (lesson 6) (See page 8)	8-31-08
100	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE		

SECTION 1 OVERVIEW

GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE, RETENTION & GROWTH

Chapter 1 deals with the importance of serving customers well, yet poor service is still all too common. The author of this article suggests that business does not relate excellent customer service to excellent business results. After reading the chapter, what do you think?

Important Points:

1. What is a marketing concept?
2. What benefits do customers value?
3. What is the systems view?

Chapter 2 focuses on creating positive impressions above the normal customer expectations. The author maps out three important check- points to get your customers excited about what your company has to offer. What do you think about these checkpoints and why are they important?

Important Points:

1. Why are the three checkpoints important?
2. How is the value of a customer calculated?
3. What are barriers that impede customer service?

Chapter 4 highlights the role of service in building a company's competitive advantages. The process begins with finding out what your customers want and expect from your company.

Important Points:

1. What methods and tools are available to organizations for increasing awareness of customer needs?
2. What is a vision and mission and why are they important to an organization?

Remember, when writing your paper, your opinions about the material is **very important** to include.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SECTION ASSIGNMENT.

SECTION 2 OVERVIEW

PRACTICAL MODELS FOR MANAGING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Chapter 6 suggests methods for dealing effectively with your customers. More than ever, customers are rewarding companies that meet their expectations. This article will show you processes for setting up customer service initiatives and determining your customers' requirements.

Important Points:

1. What is customer service and what are the benefits of a customer service plan?
2. What elements would be included in a customer service plan for your company?
3. What six behavioral skills are important to communicate to your customers to show your organization values to them?

Chapter 7 introduces the Ishikawa Diagram and its uses to establish a foundation for exceptional service. The author explains the difference between the perspectives of Japanese and American Companies in the use of this tool. What do you think of this tool?

Important Points:

1. How do the Japanese use the diagram?
2. When do American Companies tend to use the diagram tool?
3. What are the potential advantages of using the Ishikawa Model?

Chapter 9 discusses the need to determine why your customers feel as they do about your product before you can accurately improve customer service. This article will help you see the difference between current offering satisfaction and perceived ideal quality.

Important Points:

1. What are the differences between satisfaction and perceived quality?
2. How does your industry or company fit into the EI Matrix?
3. What common mistakes do companies make when measuring customer perceptions?

Remember, when writing your paper, your opinions about the material is **very important** to include.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SECTION ASSIGNMENT.

SECTION 3 OVERVIEW

PRACTICAL METHODS FOR LEADING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Chapter 13 offers suggestions on how to foster an environment that promotes caring relationships-an environment critical to maintaining a competitive edge. The author shares ideas for creating a culture of a high-quality service effort.

Important Points:

1. What most of all, are customers looking for?
2. What are the three working relationships?
3. What drives the dynamics of the other relationships?

Chapter 14 recommends a process designed to improve value delivery called “value mapping”. This process can help when your customers’ value proposition is out of alignment with their perceptions of values. How can you use mapping in your organization?

Important Points:

1. What are the components of the value equation?
2. What is process creep?
3. What are the eight basic steps in building a value map?

Remember, when writing your paper, your opinions about the material is **very important** to include.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SECTION ASSIGNMENT.

SECTIONS 4 & 5 OVERVIEW
CUSTOMER SERVICE ON THE FRONT LINE
STRATEGIES & TECHNIQUES

Chapter 15 offers a wealth of specific skills you can put to use immediately. The author suggests six ways of customer retention, ten mistakes employees make with customers, fourteen tips for calming upset customers, and four ways to rebound from customer annoyances.

Important Points:

1. Take and score the customer service assessment.
2. Must an unhappy customer be an upset customer?

Chapter 20 addresses the problem of mediocre service and how your organization can benefit from it. The author describes ten practices that can make your organization exceptional in the environment of mediocrity, giving you the edge in customer retention.

Important Points:

1. Why is mediocrity good for your organization?
2. What's the difference between mediocre service providers and great service providers?
3. What common practices do the best service providers have in common?

Chapter 24 deals with a growing, powerful market-the world of customers over age 50. The authors discuss the characteristics of a mature market so your organization will know more about what this influential group wants and needs.

Important Points:

1. What is a cyclical lifestyle?
2. What are the needs drivers for the 50+?
3. What are the new century trends?

Remember, when writing your paper, your opinions about the material is **very important** to include.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SECTION ASSIGNMENT.

SECTION 6 OVERVIEW

CUSTOMER PROBLEMS & PROBLEM CUSTOMERS

Chapter 26 focuses on the instances when we fail to meet our customer's expectations. The author points to recovery techniques so important to customer retention and growth. Learn how to turn complaints into quality improvement.

Important Points:

1. What do customers expect when things go wrong?
2. Why is a recovery system important?
3. Successful learning from service recovery has what three components?

Chapter 27 points out that when your customer has a problem, your company has a problem and that most customers who leave for the competition do so because of an attitude of indifference on your part or your company's.

Important Points:

1. Why do customers leave?
2. What are the steps to implement HEAT?
3. What are the benefits of applying HEAT?

Remember, when writing your paper, your opinion about the material is **very important** to include.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SECTION ASSIGNMENT.

FINAL PAPER OVERVIEW

Page 8 discuss elements of your final paper due August 31, 2008. Please read instructions carefully. Be creative and have fun!

ASSIGNMENTS

SECTION PAPERS

“You will notice important points highlighted in the Assignment Overviews. Choose one chapter and describe in a 1-page paper why you think the chapter is important to consider in your business situation.”

NOTE: Please note Lesson 4, part 4 & 5 can be combined in one paper.

FINAL PAPER

The purpose of the final paper is to create a service plan for your organization through an integration of these six sections studied. The paper should be 2-3 pages in length and include strengths and weaknesses shown by your organization. Consider all the sections as you write to make a complete plan for your organization.

After you complete your plan, how have you distinguished your organization from others? What areas have been improved? Is it realistic? Can it be implemented? Again, your opinions are important, please include them.