

Marketing

Delivering Great Customer Service

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Delivering GREAT Customer Service

Class Length

1 hour and 15 minutes

Change Summary

October 31, 2014

Origination

1. Lesson Plan Goals

Focusing on excellent service to AYSO customers – parents, volunteers and community members, to give participants the tools and ideas to successfully attract both new volunteers and players and to retain these customers in our AYSO program.

2. Class Length

1 hour and 15 minutes

3. Instructor Requirements

Management Instructor and/or Guest Marketing Expert

4. Learning Objectives

Customer service for parents is the first step to recruiting volunteers. Next, you must motivate your volunteers to return next year.

5. Prerequisites

None

6. Materials

None

7. Equipment

LCD Projector
Flip chart and markers

8. Special Instructor Notes

None

9. Body (Lesson Procedure)**Slide # 1****Introduction**

Introduce yourself as workshop leader, your topic and your co-instructors.

Slide #2 Goals

In this workshop, we will go over 10 tips for better (and easier) customer service. These tips will help you create an AYSO experience that will leave your customers -- parents and volunteers -- feeling positive about their Region experience and wanting to continue their participation in AYSO.

These 10 Tips will help the Region create a process whose goal is to exceed the customer's expectation. The spirit of the Customer Service process is to provide value added service to each customer at every opportunity.

Slide #3 Goals

The other main goal is to give everyone an understanding of just how important a customer service mindset is to everything we do in AYSO.

Slide #4 Customer Service Quote

"Customer Service is not a department, it's an attitude."

Slide #5 What are some of your customer service experiences? Good or bad?

Instructor note: Ask for participation here. Write down the answers on a flip chart. The attendees should focus on their own general customer service experiences – not AYSO Specific. If prompts are needed – “Booking Travel” “Airlines” “Cell Phone Service and Plans” and “Restaurants” are good bets to get the ball rolling.

We'll come back these answers at the end of this lesson

(hit clicker)

Slide #6

Region customers are parents, our fellow volunteers, players and community members. If you have sponsors, them too!

Slide #7 AYSO Customer Service Experiences

Revisit items on easel chart from slide 5, and ask the audience to discuss/offer some thoughts on what parallels there might be in their AYSO volunteer jobs, thinking about parents, players, community, and other volunteers as being on the other end of customer service.

Slide #8 Purpose of Customer Service

The only purpose of customer service is to change feelings. Not the facts, but the way your customer feels. The customer who seeks your help is usually seeking validation, support and a path to a feeling the way he felt before he felt let down.

Slide # 9 Why it matters

Regardless of your organization, product or service, happy customers make your own experience so much better. In AYSO, happy parents equal a better experience for you as well as your players and volunteers!

Slide #10 How do you measure Customer Service?

The best measurement of customer support is whether, after the interaction, the customer would recommend you to a friend. The feelings are all that matter, and changing feelings takes humanity and connection, not cash. Has the timely handling and resolution of the inquiry resulted in building an enduring relationship between the Customer and AYSO?

Slide #11 On to the 10 Tips

Now we've gone over the definition of customer service and customers and how to measure customer service—here are 10 tips to give the best customer service possible.

Slide #12 Tip #1 Have Information Available

Lack of relevant or timely information – or not being able to find what they are looking for, is a major complaint of parents.

Your website is the face of your Region. Put as much information as you can on your Region's website, including contact information, refund information and registration information. Most communication between AYSO customers and Regions are informational, so if the information and timelines are readily available on the Region's website – you can cut down on the complaint calls and emails you get.

Most Important and an indication of Professionalism and Courtesy: On the Regional website include the person(s) who is responsible for the particular inquiry and MOST IMPORTANT ***specify a reasonable expected response time guideline***, i.e. 24 hrs., 2 days, etc.. It is critical that someone get back to the customer within the specified guideline. This simple process will go a long way to positively have a SATISFIED customer.

Also, sit down with your Board members and write up a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and post the questions and answers onto your website.

Don't forget to update the information regularly! Research has shown that outdated websites are a large frustration to customers.

Slide #13 Tip #2 Listen! Listen! Listen!

Be a good listener. Many times a customer just wants to be heard. Take the time to identify the customer's needs by asking questions and concentrating on what the customer is really saying. Listen to their words, tone, body language and most importantly, how they feel. Be an active listener. Don't interrupt the person as they tell their story or try to dissuade them from their feelings. It just doesn't work very well.

Slide #14 Tip #3 Designate Appropriate Customer Service Agents in Your Region

Customer service is truly every volunteer's job, but you can tilt the playing field in favor of good experiences by making sure the right people are handling the right kinds of questions, issues, or problems.

Regions have a wide range of different issues that pop up that require customer service. Whether it's questions about refunds, scholarships or team issues, make it clear to your parents who takes care of what within your Region. Make sure the designated volunteers are identified on the website and what the volunteer can help with. You want to expedite resolution of any customer service issue that may arise.

For example, if Sally handles all registration questions and Tracy handles refund issues—make sure that is on the website, so a parent that has a registration or refund question knows exactly who to contact. You may very well need to list more than their volunteer title – if you just list AYSO lingo such as CVPA, RCA, etc...you're really not helping designate the appropriate person. So, put in lay language what it is your various volunteers do and can best help address.

Importantly – you need your Board and Regional leaders to understand THEIR customer service role as it pertains to dealing with AYSOs customers. If parents have a terrific experience with Sally, but not with Tracy, what do you think they will remember and talk about?

Slide #15 Tip #4 Explain Why

Think back to when you were a kid—was there anything more frustrating than your parents answering a question with, “Because I said so”? It was frustrating back then. It still is frustrating. AYSO policies can be confusing and sometimes feel cumbersome. They are not in place just to annoy people. There are important reasons WHY for every policy or procedure. AYSO and your AYSO Region have learned over a long period of time and a lot of experience. Explain to your parents why the policies are in place.

Help them understand why we do what we do and explain individual AYSO policies and procedures.

One reason that DOES NOT tend to make a happy customer is “we’re all just volunteers.” It tends to diminish the value of being a volunteer and is almost never a reason that will diffuse a situation.

Slide #16 Tip #5 Treat Customers as Individuals And Anticipate their needs

Treat each customer as an individual. AYSO customers are buying an experience and most of the time their needs are more emotional than physical. Always use their names and get to know them. Getting to know your customer will make it better to anticipate their needs.

Slide #17 Tip #5 Treat Customers as Individuals and anticipate their needs CONTINUED

One very important point to remember is that when dealing with customer service issues that arise that while it might be the third or fourth time you’ve had to deal with something—it’s your customer’s first time. So, treat each issue as if it’s the first time you are dealing with it. Your own body language is crucial. Rolling your eyes, sighing or otherwise expressing your frustration over the many times you’ve previously dealt with this problem or addressed this question, will not make your customer feel heard or understood.

Slide #18 Tip #5 Treat Customers as Individuals and anticipate their needs

What are the top 5 issues that you are always addressing? (Write down their answers).

Hit clicker:

What are some ways we can address these issues before a problem arises?

Instructor note: Write down answers on flip chart.

The easiest way to address issues before they become a problem is to anticipate your customers' needs. If registration is coming around the corner—make sure you communicate the dates, times, etc. on the website, on an auto-reply email message. On your voicemail message and your Region's emails as part of the signature line (and make sure you update the information regularly).

Putting together a FAQ sheet addressing your top 5 common queries may go a long way to cutting down on parent frustration and calls and emails to you and your Board.

Slide #19 Tip #6 Apologizing is OK

When something goes wrong, apologize. It's easy and customers like it. Mistakes will happen, it's just the nature of the beast, so when a mistake does happen (sincerely) apologize. Deal with the problem immediately and let your customer know what you've done remedy the situation and steps you've taken so it won't happen again.

Apologizing will go a long way with your customers!

Slide #20 Tip #7 Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

All these tips revolve around one simple but powerful concept—communication. The number one complaint of AYSO parents is that they just don't have enough information, so make sure they can't make that complaint about your Region. Communicate your policies, deadlines and timelines. And, communicate them through a variety of tools.

Now wouldn't it be easier to send out an email with all the information for refunds in the beginning of the season, instead of getting angry phone calls, emails, etc. from parents who haven't received their refunds yet.

Refund policies are one of the stickiest situations, so communicate your Region's policy clearly and widely...and early in the registration process. Create a process and stick to it carefully.

Remember, once a customer has a bad experience and has negative feelings toward AYSO – it's hard to win them back. And what's the old marketing adage about customers...

A happy customer tells three friends and an unhappy customer tells a dozen!

Slide #21 Tip #8 Respond

As simple as this sounds, make sure you response to all emails, calls, complaints and even compliments. Return emails with emails and calls with calls.

When returning emails, remember tip #5 and treat each email individually and customize emails with a name and restating the individual problem.

Slide #22 Tip #9 Watch Your Tone

Email has become the preferred way of communication. But, email has one downfall – you can't determine tone from an email. So, remember when responding to an email tone is not translated. Your quick "no" or "yep" won't communicate to as well as a full sentence explaining your answer. Take the few extra moments to provide a full thought. And use all your self-control not to be curt or sarcastic in an email...no matter how deserved it seems to be. You cannot take it back and it is rarely worth the moment of satisfaction it may give you.

Slide #23 Tip #10 Volunteers are Customers Too!

It's easy to forget that volunteers are customers too! Volunteers need a regular dose of appreciation. Thank them and find ways to let them know how important they are.

Does your Region do anything special to thank your volunteers?

Instructor Note: Ask for audience participation. Get the group to share how they show appreciation for their volunteers. There are always good tips in the audience.

Slide #24 Recap the 10 Tips

Tip #1 Have Information Available

Tip #2 Listen! Listen! Listen!

Tip #3 Designate a Special Person

Tip# 4 Explain Why

Tip #5 Treat Customers as Individuals and anticipate their needs

Tip #6 Apologizing is OK

Tip #7 Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Tip #8 Respond

Tip #9 Watch Your Tone

Tip #10 Volunteers are Customers Too!

Slide #25 Customer Service Experiences

Let's go back to the back to the list we wrote down about customer service experience. Taking a look at the bad experience – if the customer service rep you were dealing with followed any of these tips – would your experience have been different?

Instructor note: Ask for participation here.

How about with the good experiences? Did the customer service rep employ any of these tips?

Slide #26 Customer Service Experiences

So now that we've recapped the nature of customer service and how these 10 Tips can help create a good experience, let's review ...What are our customer service opportunities in AYSO?

Instructor note: Ask group to offer answer(s)

(hit clicker for answer): every interaction is a customer service opportunity!

Slide #27 Measuring Effective Customer Service

Now that we've added all these tips into our dealings with AYSO customers, we can learn to measure how effective our customer service is by asking ourselves the following questions:

- Have we communicated all the information?
- Have we turned a "lemon" situation into a "lemonade" result?
- Have we resolved the situation in a timely manner?
- Have we helped build an enduring relationship between the customer and AYSO?

Slide #28 Have Fun (bonus tip)

Humor makes our perspective more positive and help us deal with challenges in a more constructive way. Always remember, even in our toughest moments, the reason we do what we do is to have FUN and help others – namely kids -- have fun.

Laughter connects us with others.

Laughter detracts focus from anger, guilt or stress.

Laughter, is contagious and it reduces stress levels.

Keep everything in perspective and laugh regularly.

IT JUST MIGHT CATCH ON!

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