LaGuardia Community College
Department of Human Resources

CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMUNICATION SKILLS
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
E-MAIL & TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES
This Workshop Provides Strategies to:

- Deliver quality service with a caring attitude to students, faculty and staff.
- Successful Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills and Valuing diversity.
- Essential telephone & e-mail etiquette.
**GROUND RULES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**

**P** *Participate fully & be responsible for your own learning.*

**R** *Respect* one another by listening fully, and resisting interruptions and side conversations.

**O** *Open* and honest communication: Share in a manner that fully represents your view.

**C** *Confidentiality*: Safeguard the self-disclosures and personal experience of others

**E** *Experiment* by trying new behaviors to enhance or improve your interaction with others.

**S** *Seek* to understand the views of others.

**S** *Sensitivity*: Care for the feelings of others. Attack issues - not people.
Getting to know one another better

- Find someone in the room that you don’t know too well. Exchange the following information:
  - Name & one “little known fact” about you
  - Number of years at LaGuardia CC
  - Share one positive or one negative customer service/interpersonal (conflict) experience that you had in your personal or professional life. How did you feel?
Why Companies Lose Customers?

- Customer Dies – 1%
- Customer Moves away – 3%
- Customer Influenced by friends – 5%
- Customer lured away by competition – 9%
- Customer dissatisfied with product – 14%

Why Companies Lose Customers? (Cont’d)

However, **68%** of the time that organizations lose customers, it is because of poor service - a rude or indifferent attitude.

Some numbers to think about:

- 96% of dissatisfied customers don't complain
- 63-91% of dissatisfied non-complainers will not return.
- Dissatisfied people will tell 9 to 10 others about their negative experience.
- Some will tell 20 or more.

Survey by Technical Assistance Research Programs (TARP Worldwide), Arlington VA
LaGuardia’s Two Main Customers

- STUDENTS
- FACULTY AND STAFF
What Do Our Customers Want?

Customers are looking to the college to offer them:

- High Academic Standards
- Professional services and adequate facilities
- Friendly, approachable staff, both academic and administrative
What Do Our Customers Dislike?

Customers find the following aspects of college life annoying and obstructive:

- Being given the run around by complex and confusing administrative processes
- Piece-meal, incomplete, unclear or conflicting advice or information
- Failure to deliver on promises.
Communication Skills

Half our problems originate because we don’t communicate. The other half it’s sad but true, may come about because we do.

- Piet Hein
Components of Communication

- Verbal - language & words
- Vocal - what you hear
- Visual - what you see
Verbal Communication (Content)

- Who are my listeners?
- What aspect of my topic is most important for my listeners?
- How should I organize my message to interest my listeners?
Vocal Communication (Tone)

- Speed of Voice: average speed of voice 125-150 words per minute depending upon the area of origin.
- Inflection: Emphasis placed on certain words when you are speaking.
- Tone of Voice: not what you say but how you say it. Tone reveals (often incorrectly) how you feel - bored, sarcastic, frustrated, insincere, etc.
Visual Communication (Body Language)

- Eye Contact
- Facial Expression
- Body Language
- Personal Requirements & Room Geography - dress, office space, etc
Components of Communication

- Verbal Content: 55%
- Verbal Tone: 38%
- Body Language: 7%
Security
Positive Communication

Use words or actions that show courtesy and respect to others.

- Genuine (real, without pretense)
- Specific (definite, precise)
- Timely (immediate feedback)
Barriers to Positive Communications

- Fear and Lack of confidence
- Embarrassment/inadequate knowledge
- Annoyance with customers
- Irritation with ourselves
- Being rushed/stressed
- Lack of practice
Create Rapport, Build Trust & Establish Credibility

- Examine your own conduct: body language and voice tone
- Build Rapport: ask questions & listen, be prompt and efficient, provide explanations
- Establish credibility: smile, lean forward in conversation, eye-contact, nod
Negative Communication: using words or actions that disrespect and demean others

- Zero: Absence of any communication
- Plastic: out of habit, insincere
- Hostile: aggressive, threatening
- Crooked: Positive communication followed by Negative remark
Students and Work
Negative Communication

✓ Rudeness
✓ Ignoring
✓ Lack of Helpfulness
✓ Making Assumptions
✓ Scowling
✓ Sighing
✓ Eye-Rolling
✓ Stereotyping
Conflict in the Workplace & Interpersonal Skills

“Communication works for those who work at it” – John Powell
Why Does Conflict Occur?

- Different Goals
- Individual Agendas & plans
- Different Viewpoints
- Cultural or Life Experience
- Need for Power
- Need to be center of attention
How do you react to Conflict?

- Avoider
- Peacemaker
- Crusader
- Fighter
- Parent
- Martyr
Diffusing & Resolving Conflict

- Do not judge the other person
- Remain neutral – let go of preconceived notions
- Focus on the message (facts), not personalities
- Deal with present behavior
- Use positive body language
- Use “I” Messages

- Choose words carefully
- Avoid questions designed to attack
- Utilize the power of silence and delayed response
- Don’t be afraid to say, “You might be right”
- Avoid interpreting other’s motives
- Do not YELL!
10 Vital Interpersonal Skills

1. Ability to Work with People
2. Possess Social Poise, Self-Assurance & Confidence
3. Consideration for Others; Tolerant & Patient
4. Exhibit Self-Control; Be tactful
5. Able to Make Decisions
10 Vital Interpersonal Skills (Continued)

6. Maintain High Standards of professionalism
7. Honest & Objective
8. Organize Time & Priorities
9. Be Persuasive & Create Enthusiasm
10. Have a High Concern for Communication
Assertive vs. Aggressive Communication

- Use “I” statements
- Keep responses short
- Slow down verbally
- Monitor your tone of voice
- Watch nonverbal messages
- Listen & maintain eye contact
- Remain focused and keep a check on your emotions
Expectations of Quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Golden Rule ...</th>
<th>Platinum Rule...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Treat others as you want to be treated.</td>
<td>○ Treat others the way they want to be treated.</td>
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Doing More Than The Minimum

- Doing more than the minimum promotes job satisfaction, pride, and advancement.

- Each of us has the ability and the responsibility to find ways to improve what we do and the way we do it.
Library
Complaints give us the opportunity to find out if something is wrong, and a chance to fix the problem.
Six Steps in Handling the Angry Customer:

- LISTEN carefully and with interest
- Put yourself in the customer’s place (empathize)
- Ask questions in a caring, concerned manner and listen carefully to answers
- Suggest one or more alternatives to answer their concerns
- Apologize without blaming even if you personally aren’t to blame
- Solve the problem or find someone who can solve it.
Four Tactics to Avoid

- Don’t directly challenge the person even if the individual is wrong
- Don’t let the conversation wander off the specific problem
- Don’t participate in fault finding. It doesn’t help to shift the blame
- Don’t let your personal feeling get in the way. Remain professional and courteous.
Supervisor’s Role in Customer Service

- Communicate & consistently reinforce the acceptable standards of behavior.
- Listen and observe.
- Provide regular feedback.
- Lead by Example.
Valuing Diversity

Differences among people or peoples reflected in a variety of forms, including but not limited to race, culture, perspective, talent, interest, ability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, language and socio-economic status.
What is Diversity?

- Race
- Gender
- Culture
- Age
- National Origin
- Physical Ability

- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Regional Origin
- Thinking Style
- Function
- Employee Status
• Recognize and appreciate that individuals are different

• Encourage sensitivity to and open discussion of different values, perspectives, and ways of doing things

• Explore how differences might be tapped as assets in the workplace

• Foster acceptance of individual differences and enhance work relations between people who are different
Telephone & E-Mail Etiquette
Telephone Techniques

- Clearly identify yourself, and the department and/or institution the caller has reached.
- Listening to the caller is absolutely vital. Listen without interrupting. Don’t make assumptions.
- When taking a message, clearly repeat information to show that you have accurate information. Also, note the date, time and caller’s name & number.
Telephone Techniques - Continued

- When transferring a call, give the caller the name and the extension of the party to whom the call is being transferred, just in case the parties get disconnected.
- Telephones must be answered promptly. It is recommended that it should be answered on the first or second ring.
How does my Voice Sound?

- Sleepy or bored?
- Harsh or abrupt?
- Angry or frustrated?
- Rushed or uncaring?
- Distant or uninterested?

Combat the negative by making a conscious effort to smile and project a confident, ready-to-help attitude.
E-Mail Communication Techniques

- Read the entire message and all attachments.
- Pay attention to all parts of the message (don’t focus on one issue when three need attention).
- Pay attention to the others copied on the mail. Copy your response as appropriate.
Email Communication Techniques (Continued)

- Be concise and to the point.
- Use proper spelling (use spell check), grammar, and punctuation.
- Do not write in CAPITALS.
- Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT.
- Do not discuss confidential information over email.
- Finally, READ the email before you press the SEND button.
R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

• Recognize the inherent worth of all human beings
• Eliminate derogatory words and phrases from your vocabulary
• Speak with people – not at them…or about them
• Practice empathy – walk in their shoes
• Earn the respect of your co-workers through your actions
• Consider feelings of others before you speak and act
• Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy
Some thoughts to leave you with:

“Customer Service is not a department, it’s an attitude!” Unknown

“To my customer: I may not have the answer, but I’ll find it. I may not have the time, but I’ll make it.” Unknown

“If we don’t take care of our customers, someone else will.” Unknown
Questions?

Thank you.