Can you teach customer service skills?
WHAT DO THE EXPERTS THINK?
Can you teach customer service skills?

40 responses

- 60% Most
- 27.5% Some
- 12.5% All
- Few
- None
SKILLS YOU CAN TEACH

- Etiquette
- Language Skills
- Problem Solving
- Knowledge
- Technical Skills
- Following a Process
- Active Listening
CAN YOU TEACH CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS?

SKILLS YOU CAN’T TEACH

- Empathy
- Patience
- Attitude
- Enthusiasm
- Willingness to Learn
- Compassion
- Commitment
LET'S IMPROVE

EMPLOYEE CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS
CAN YOU TEACH CUSTOMER SERVICE?

SKILLS SURVEY

“How easy is it to teach or improve these 14 skills?”

Scale:

- Very Easy – 3
- Somewhat Easy – 2
- Somewhat Difficult – 1
- Impossible – 0
CAN YOU TEACH CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS?

SKILLS INVENTORY – PART 1

- Knowledge – 2.45
- Ability to use positive language – 1.97
- Clear communication skills – 1.84
- Time management skills – 1.79
- Acting Skills – 1.61
- Attentiveness – 1.50
- Ability to handle surprises – 1.42
CAN YOU TEACH CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS?

SKILLS INVENTORY – PART 2

- Persuasion skills – 1.37
- A calming presence – 1.37
- Tenacity – 1.29
- Ability to read customers – 1.18
- Patience – 1.13
- Willingness to learn – 0.97
- Empathy – 0.82
CUSTOMER SERVICE

HIRE FOR . . .
CAN YOU TEACH CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS?

HIRE FOR THE SKILLS THAT ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO CHANGE

- Willingness to learn
- Empathy
- Patience
- Persuasion
- Tenacity
- A calming presence
- Ability to read customers
CUSTOMER SERVICE

POLICIES

▸ Provide clear expectations for customer service behavior
▸ Coach employees that need extra guidance and examples
▸ Lead by example – in public and behind closed doors
▸ Ensure employees know WHY customer service is important
TRAINING CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Bring in real life examples
- Be a facilitator – let the participants discover the answers
- Use games if you can maintain a playful, enthusiastic approach
- Climate and culture
  - Rewards for each game
  - Friendly competition
TRAINING CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE

- The Best of Times and the Worst of Times (20 minutes)
  - My best customer service experience = “What to Do”
  - My worst customer service experience = “What not to Do”
- Mission Possible (20-25 minutes)
  - groups of 3-5
  - work together to create a mission statement for their department
POSITIVE LANGUAGE

▸ Let Me Tell You What I Can Do (20 minutes)

▸ When you can’t fulfill the customer’s request:
  ▸ Explain the reason
  ▸ Show empathy
  ▸ Offer an alternative solution

▸ Create handout with real examples
CLEAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Tennis Shoe Alien
  - participants give explicit instructions
  - try for about 10 minutes

Follow up Questions

- What did you learn about giving instructions?
- How do you know if a customer is following instructions when you’re on the phone?
- How can you give better instructions to your customers?
TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Student employees are managing many things
- Basic time management tools
  - Calendar
  - To do list
  - Note taking / Information
- Key skills: prioritization, avoiding procrastination, scheduling, managing stress
TRAINING CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

ACTING SKILLS

- Five Pillars of Success
- Role-Play with Two Actors
  - Take One **without** smile, *greet the customer, open body language, eye contact, thank the customer*
  - Take Two **with** smile, *greet the customer, open body language, eye contact, thank the customer*
- Debrief with participants
ATTENTIVENESS

- Actively engage with customers with strong listening skills
- Self assessment of listening habit tendencies examples (Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely)
  - I pretend I’m paying attention when my mind is drifting off
  - I cut people off or finish their sentences because I know what they’re going to say
  - When someone is speaking to me, I look around the room to see what else is happening
ABILITY TO HANDLE SURPRISES

- Customer Service guidelines in place
- Unusual problem, not covered “in the manual”
  - search the manual
  - ask a co-worker
  - ask your supervisor
- Quick examples to drive the concept home
TEACHING BY EXAMPLE WOULD BE MY BEST SUGGESTION
IT IS EASIER TO HIRE THE RIGHT PERSON THAN TO TRY TO TRAIN SOMEONE WITH NO PEOPLE SKILLS
CUSTOMER SERVICE

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION