



## *Do Your Homework Before Training*

If you've decided that your organization could do a better job of developing the skills of customer service people, then the first thing you'll want to do is to assess their environment. Don't even think about designing or purchasing customer service training until you do your homework in this area. Many high quality service delivery training programs fall flat because participants **can't or won't** use the skills learned.

### Can't do

Customer service providers can't use skills when there are obstacles in the way of their success. Assess the position of the people being trained to ensure that:

- **Reps have access to the information they need to do the job**  
Customers want correct answers quickly, so make sure your customer service people can provide them.
- **Recurring problems get solved at the highest levels once and for all**  
There's nothing more discouraging than having to address customer problems that the company is not willing to address.
- **The department is staffed so that work is completed in a reasonable timeframe**  
Speed is one of a customer's top needs and service people need to be able to get things done quickly without long waits by customers.

These may seem like **non-training issues**, but where customer service is concerned they are show stoppers.

### Won't do

Customer service providers won't use skills when there's no incentive to do so. This doesn't refer to financial incentives, although they are nice. This refers to the way customer service reps are viewed and treated within the organization. Assess your organization's ability to:

- **Publicly recognize the work of customer service people**  
Too often they are the unsung heroes in an organization just waiting to get promoted out of there.
- **Provide feedback on what they have achieved and the impact it has on the organization**  
When you add it up, it's very motivational to see how customer service has helped the organization succeed.
- **Listen to their suggestions and opinions**  
These people are the closest to customers, so they can provide valuable insight into what customers want and how the organization can provide it. Listen up.