



Tips for Successful Customer Service Training

There are basic principles to adult learning that apply to all learning initiatives. When developing or purchasing customer service training, you'll want to address each principle so that measurable learning takes place. Here are some tips for ensuring that your customer service learning initiative achieves quantifiable results for the organization, employees and customers.

Clearly indicate what is expected

How does your organization define good customer service? One of the problems that customer service people face is that their understanding of service may be very different from that of the organization. Develop and share tools such as customer service standards and measures to help set clear expectations.

Demonstrate what high quality service looks, sounds and feels like

The more clearly you can demonstrate what is to be learned, the more likely participants will achieve your objectives. Wherever possible let people see, hear and feel what it is they are to learn and eventually use.

Provide people with the awareness, knowledge & skills required to do the job

Although you'll want to cover some generic skills such as listening, questioning and problem-solving, be sure to make the training specific to the person's job. Allow participants to discuss and find solutions to their specific customer service challenges. Acknowledge the difficult nature of the job and recognize the high level of skills and knowledge required.

Give people time to practice while providing feedback and encouragement

People may resist practice and role playing, but they are still the best methods for perfecting the use of skills and information. Role plays can be conducted in small groups to reduce the embarrassment factor. Be sure to structure how feedback is provided so that it is constructive and positive.

Phase in the use of newly learned skills

No matter how good the training, few individuals can master many skills at once. Whenever possible, stage in the learners use of skills on the job. This could be done by partnering new service people with experienced people so that they have some back-up when serving customers. It could also be done by having newer customer service people handle simpler customer service issues at first, leaving the more complex issues to more experienced people.