Effective Customer Service in Research Administration: A Bartender's Perspective

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Who Am I?
Why Am I Even Talking About This?

Who Am I?

- Research Administration Senior Manager
- Survey Research Center, University of Michigan
- Four full research programs
- Lifecycle research administrator
- Bartender!

Objectives for Today!

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- Identify what is customer service in these professions
- Discuss how skills are transferable between professions
- Tips on dealing with a multitude of customers
- Discuss barriers to good customer service
- Mitigation strategies sprinkled throughout

Remember – the customer is NOT always right!!!

What is Customer Service?

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- **Customer service** is the assistance and advice provided by a company through in person interactions, phone, online chat, mail, and e-mail to those who buy or use its products or services.
- Each industry requires different levels of customer service
- The idea of a well-performed service is that of increasing revenues.
- The perception of success of the customer service interactions is dependent on employees "who can adjust themselves to the personality of the customer".
- Customer service is often practiced in a way that reflects the strategies and values of a firm.

Who Are Your Customers?

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Who are your customers?
    - Everyone!
        - Faculty

        - Staff

        - Sponsors

        - Participants

   - Basically – anyone you interact with!

What is Customer Service?

How would you all describe good customer service????

What is **Good** Customer Service?

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:

  - Understanding customer needs & acting appropriately as needed

  - Active listening

  - Empathy

  - Finding creative solutions

  - Ultimate aim: to build trust and continued positive experiences.

 - Reminder: a customer's perception is our reality!
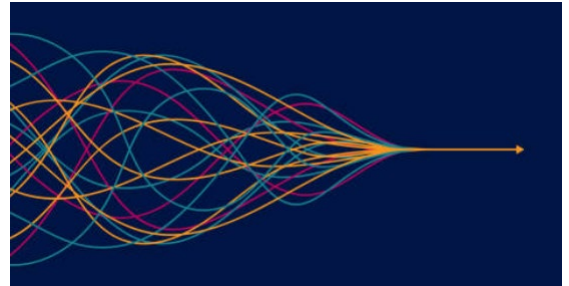
What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:

  - Understanding customer needs & acting appropriately as needed

    - Identifying what is the <u>need</u> first!

    - Paying attention to verbal / nonverbal body language

    - Ask all the questions you're able to

    - Put yourself in your customer's shoes

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:
  - Active listening
    - listen attentively
    - understand what they're saying
    - respond and reflect on what's being said (ask questions!)
    - retain the information for later
    - Speak little – use your actions as response
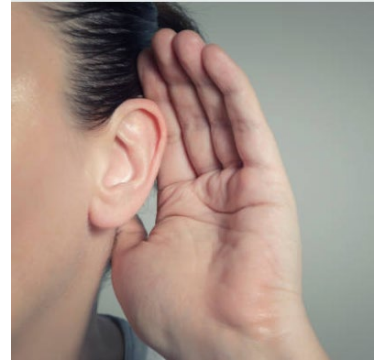
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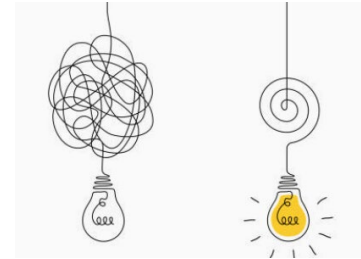

- Basics include:

  - Empathy

    - The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, involving both cognitive understanding of their perspective and emotional resonance with their experience

    - Everyone comes from a different vantage point

    - Remember – emotions can run high in these situations

    - Never respond with your own emotion other than calm

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:

  - Finding creative solutions

    - Don't simply offer canned responses; think outside the box to find innovative solutions that meet the customer's needs.

    - Take Ownership: Don't pass the buck or make excuses; take responsibility for resolving the issue and ensure a positive outcome.

    - Follow Through: Keep customers informed about the progress of their issue and follow up to ensure their satisfaction.

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:
    - Ultimate aim: to build trust and continued positive experiences

        - Be Respectful: Treat all customers with courtesy and respect, even when they are upset or frustrated.

        - Maintain a Positive Attitude: Even in challenging situations, maintain a positive and helpful demeanor.

        - Go the Extra Mile: Surprise customers with unexpected gestures of kindness or helpfulness to build loyalty and positive relationships.

        - Always follow through – do what you say, don't say what you'll do

What is GOOD Customer Service?

- Basics include:

  - Reminder: a customer's perception is our reality!

    - Good perceptions lead to repeat/positive business

    - Positive interactions leads to positive recommendations

    - Every interaction is designed to continue positive business moving forward

Barriers to Good Customer Service

Barriers to Good Customer Service

- Evolving customer expectations
- Ignoring feedback
- Inadequate insights from your customers
- Language and technological barriers
- Lack of personalization
- Low engagement from employees / teams
- No follow up
- Resistance to change
- Insufficient customer engagement
- Difficult customers
- Poor knowledge of product
- Unclear policies
- No freedom to provide solutions
- Lack of resources

Any Questions?

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Thank you so much!

References!

- Wikipedia for definitions of customer service
- Kate Zabriskie – customer perception is our reality details