

## CUSTOMER SERVICE 202

Business Enterprise Program - Upward Mobility Training

August 27, 2015

### **TRAINING EXPECTATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS:**

1. Discuss methods to make business more inviting from a service standpoint. Excellent service is goal number 1.
2. Develop greater skill in dealing with customers that are unreasonable.
3. Learn different ways to deal with returns and complaints.
4. Learn how to better deal with difficult people.

### **WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?**

As a group we brainstormed for discussion what we already know about customer service:

- Refunds – the customer is always right
- We have a limited opportunity to meet their expectations
- Trust (2-way)
- Desire to be helpful and have a positive attitude
- Consistency
- Plan to give good service from the start – it is everyone's job
- Listen to customers feedback
- Communication 360 degrees (good and bad)
- Do not argue with the customer
- Be reliable and responsive

As a group we brainstormed the different types of customers we have to ensure we consider the needs of all we have an opportunity to serve:

- Workers at our location most all days
- Visitors at our location – can be seasonal, regular visitors, or one time visit
- Our employees
- The grantor
- Competitors
- Other tenants at our location
- Neighbors of our location
- Facility/Maintenance staff with Grantor
- Housekeeping staff
- Security staff
- Customers with special needs

We have all received customer service at one time or another. We have all experienced a variety of customer service experiences from exceptional to poor. But what is customer service? How do we define it and what makes it so important?

In its simplest terms customer service can be defined as work done by one person or group that benefits another. It's the act of service for the benefit of the customer.

What services do they need from you? It is important to consider what your customers need and how well you do at providing it.

What do your customers really care about? Each different group of customers has a general expectation. It is important to know what those expectations are through feedback and inquiry.

What are the repercussions to your customers if their problems, issues or needs are not resolved? Plain and simple...we lose them as customers.

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO C.A.R.E.?**

Caring about other people and meeting their needs in a personable and effective way takes commitment. To help you remember the four keys to providing caring service we use the acronym C.A.R.E.

The C stands for Connected. Your role is to be connected to your customers, be friendly, build rapport, and move beyond difficult behavior.

The A stands for Attentive. Your role is to give your full attention, ask questions with an open mind, and seek clues to their real wants and needs.

The R stands for Responsible. Your role is to be accountable for your words and actions, to not take things personally, and to find a solution.

The E stands for Experience. Your role is to provide the best customer experience possible, leave the customer with the best impression of you, and your program. Your attitude impacts your customer's experience. Create guiding principles of customer service to live by and share them with your staff.

### **BE CONNECTED**

Everyone deserves your time and assistance. We have all experienced poor customer service haven't we? What did the other person do to make us feel that? Perhaps being impatient, giving rote instructions, heavy sighs, or prolonged wait time?

We put out signals to let others know whether or not we really CARE about them. In fact, it's almost impossible to really fool someone into thinking that we care about them when we do not. But when we truly connect with them....they know it.

Be courteous. One way to establish a caring connection is to treat everyone with courtesy and respect. For example, when you come into contact with a customer is the first thing you say, "How can I help you?" Everyone deserves your courtesy and respect.

Build rapport. Building rapport will allow you to connect with your customers and help to establish trust. Your customers want to know you care about their patronage and are willing to help. Building rapport can help, when problems arise, to diffuse frustrations so you can move the customer service interaction to a problem solving approach and resolve the issue at hand.

## **HOW TO BE CONNECTED**

It is a funny thing about people. Within a very few seconds they know if you are really connecting with them. They know if you are going to do the best you can to meet their needs. That is why it is important to be connected from the very beginning.

For the moment, make their needs more important than anything else. There may be other people waiting or you may be having problems fulfilling everyone's needs. However, you can only focus your full attention on one person at a time. The person who needs your attention now does not need to hear about anything except how you intend to help them.

Treat everyone like you would treat visitors in your home. When visitors come by, you want them to feel welcome. Let people know with your tone of voice and with your body language that they are welcome and that you really want to assist them.

Decide to be friendly before you say anything. You are the one who is in control of the way you look and sound. Others respond to your tone of voice and body language whether it is positive or negative. Decide in advance to take a positive approach and attitude to the situation.

Customers are not just a number. Even though you may receive the same questions day in and day out, that is not the experience of our customers. This may be the first time they have needed assistance from you. Make sure you connect with each customer and treat them as an individual with specific needs.

### **Notes from the class:**

1. Being casually connected is acceptable and productive dependent upon the situation. We do not need to stop our work simply because a customer enters the immediate area. To work while looking in their direction and greeting them is acceptable until the point where they state their need for your assistance.
2. Body language is an important indicator to most of our customers. While they may know the Operator cannot see them, the customer's brain automatically seeks eye contact as an indicator of connection. To not receive an attempt at face-to-face contact causes unintentional decisions to be made automatically by the brain. Studies have shown this auto-processing to take place with regularity in drawing specific conclusions. For example, a person with their arms folded in front of them is a person closed to the conversation or ideas. A person touching their face while talking is deemed to be lying or embellishing

the truth. A person with their head down sends a signal of rejection of what is being said to them. For more information on non-verbal signals visit: [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body\\_Language.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body_Language.htm)

## **BE ATTENTIVE**

Your customers want or need something specific from you. They may or may not know how to approach you. You must be attentive not only to what your customers say but what they do not say. This takes your full attention.

Give your full attention to your customer. Make the conscious choice to listen and shut out any distractions. Pay attention to tone of voice. A great deal can be communicated through facial expressions and body language. If you are unable to pick up on these details, once you are certain the customer is gone, in order to develop your attentiveness skills, ask your helper or employee if they picked up on anything additional.

Seek clues about their real needs or wants. Ask questions with an open mind. Be careful to avoid assuming what the answer will be. Questions should encourage more discussion until you fully understand the situation. Read between the lines. Sometimes you need to be a detective to decipher what your customer needs.

Check for understanding. To ensure that you have all the facts right, paraphrase what was said back to the speaker with the proper tone. Clarify what your customer needs and what options they have in the decision-making process.

Respond only after you are very clear about the other person's needs. Interrupting will waste your time and cause frustration for everyone. If you fail to respond, it negates everything you have done up to this point.

## **BE RESPONSIBLE.**

Being responsible means taking accountability for your words and actions. Being responsive and responsible go hand-in-hand. If you do not take ownership of a situation, you may fail to respond to it appropriately.

Being responsible means taking full responsibility for making sure you deliver and meet your customers' expectations. If you make a promise to your customer, make sure you keep it. Even when you cannot deliver what your customer wants, you can still deliver an exceptional customer service experience.

Take ownership. One reason it can be difficult to help dissatisfied customers is that they often confront you with problems that you did not cause. It is reasonable to feel that whoever created the problem should fix the problem, right? But since it is your job to CARE, you have to think of yourself as being the only person responsible for making sure the customer's needs are fulfilled. Taking ownership means doing your very best to solve the customer's problem whether it is your problem or not. The essence of customer service is what you do with a problem when it lands in your lap.

Do not take things personally. When people are dissatisfied it may sound like they are mad at you, but they are not. They are mad about the situation. Let them vent and listen to them talk out the problem. This helps to lower emotions. Apologize for the situation using a blameless apology. Some people do not like to apologize because they feel that it casts blame. Instead, apologize for the situation. For example: "I am sorry this did not work out for you." Or "I am sorry for the inconvenience."

Be clear about what you are planning to do and check for understanding and agreement. Say thank you. There is always a reason to thank someone. “Thank you for letting me help you with this, I learned something too.”

Do something extra when possible. If you look hard enough, there is usually a little something extra you can do that shows you care.

### **EXPERIENCE.**

No matter who your customers may be or what they may need from you, it is up to you to provide the best customer experience possible. Leave the customer with the best possible impression of you and the Business Enterprise Program. Customers will share their experiences with other and whether they are good or bad experiences, there will be impact on your business.

Your attitude impacts your customer’s experience. It is apparent in your tone of voice and level of attention as to whether your attitude is positive or negative. We may all have an off day from time to time. However, your customer deserves your best. It is up to you to maintain a positive and professional attitude.

Creating guiding principles of customer service. What are the standards of customer service that you have previously established? What are the principles you try to maintain during every customer service interaction? By creating a personal list of guiding principles for customer service, you can ensure consistency for every customer, every time.

## **WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME (W.I.I.F.M.)?**

That is a reasonable question. Why should you care about the experience you create for your customers? There are aspects of every job that are not very appealing. Such as:

- Tough customers to deal with
- Repetitive elements that may cause it to be less interesting than you would like
- Annoying employees, co-workers, vendors, or customers
- Organizational changes

With all the challenges we all face each day, why should you put out the extra effort to make sure that each and every person you interact with has a positive experience?

The TRUE answer to that question resides within you. Research has shown that people with positive attitudes have fewer conflicts with customers. When we have fewer conflicts our work becomes more manageable and enjoyable. Given the nature of our work and the service we provide, practicing exceptional customer service is even more important. We are in the public eye and our attitudes can influence more than just our own mood.

Always remember, you cannot control the actions and attitudes of others but, even though it is not always easy you have control over your own. Facing a bad situation with a good attitude is an easier journey. Choosing a bad attitude will slow you down, hold you back and derail your success. Attitude affects everything you do, everyone around you, reflects on you and translates into action.

## **HOW TO CREATE THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE**

You and only you are in charge of the experience you create for your customer. How do you ensure the best customer service experience on a consistent basis for each and every customer you serve?

Show respect. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect, even if they are not showing you the same courtesy.

Show concern. Everyone deserves to have their issues and concerns resolved in the most appropriate manner.

Be a positive reflection of the Business Enterprise Program. Customers don't necessarily view us as individuals; they view us as representatives of the BE Program. Sometimes they lump us all together so make sure you leave your customers with a positive impression, not a negative one.

Choose your attitude. Attitude is a choice. Often we cannot control what happens in life. Ultimately though, we can control how we respond to any situation. We choose our attitude. The attitude you choose on a daily basis says a lot about who you are as an individual. What do you want your attitude to say about you?

Reframe your attitude when needed. Sometimes, we have a bad day. When that happens the only person who can reframe your attitude is you. Do not allow yourself to get swept away by your own or other's negative emotions such as despair, anxiety, or frustration. These only serve to create stress and impact your customer service interaction in a negative way.

Provide consistent customer service. Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior. Do you consistently provide excellent customer service? Consistently meeting the needs of each and every customer is the essence of customer service.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOVERY**

Customer service recovery means figuring out what to say and how to say it before a difficult customer service interaction. Knowing what to say is just as important as knowing what not to say to a customer.

Customers can become frustrated when expressing their problem that concern. When that happens we need to make sure we chose the right words at the right time and send them the signals that show we care.

### **SIGNALS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOVERY**

It is important that we send the right signals at the right time to our customers. Our behavior in any situation can either help or hinder the interaction. No matter how upset our customers may be, we need to maintain being polite and professional.

To signal that you care, you can listen and apologize. The impact is that the customer will feel they are being heard. To signal that you understand, you can be attentive, patient, and match verbal and non-verbal language. The impact is that the customer will know you understand how they feel. To signal you can be trusted to take care of the matter, use permission phrases like, "Would you be willing" or "would it be alright if." This gives control back to the customer and builds trust.

Remember your signals should remain consistent for every customer and every situation. Make sure your words match your signals. When your words and signals do not match, your customer will believe your signals. For example, telling a customer you care and will call them back but you fail to call them back. That lack of follow through does not match the words but the lacking is what they will remember. If there is no quick fix to a customer's problem, they still expect you to try something.

Wrong words. Never speak ill of customers, if you speak ill of one you speak ill of them all. Never hang out your dirty laundry to customers. Saying the wrong things could always be overheard as you never know who is just around the corner.

## **KEEPING IT PROFESSIONAL**

What does it mean to be professional? Professionalism means maintaining our composure at all times no matter how our customers behave. It is not our role to change their poor attitude or rude behavior. But it is our opportunity to assist and solve problems. Sometimes they lie to us whether it is a lie of omission or an out and out lie. No matter how they choose to behave, we need to remain polite and professional.

Be polite. Often times our customers may not show us their best behavior. When that happens, we need to do our very best to be polite and professional. If a customer crosses the line it is okay to say, "I consider that personal."

Keep emotions out of it. In order to provide excellent customer service, you must be able to maintain self-control. No matter how upset, frustrated or angry your customer may be it is up to you to maintain emotional self-control and move the interaction toward a problem-solving approach. If you match their level of intensity you are simply adding fuel to the fire. Do not take the bait. Keep your emotions out of it.

Do not say no. Sometimes customers will not let you help them. Have you ever had someone say, "I want to talk to your supervisor!" If you cannot say yes to a customer do your very best to give them options but do not say no. It allows you to still look professional if you can find someone else to assist them.

## **THE PUBLIC IS WATCHING.**

How often have you seen a story on the news about someone abusing, misusing, or in general not acting in gratitude for government grants, funding, or programs? As participants of a government supported program, people can often end up in the news when doing something wrong but seldom in the news for doing something right. In this age of modern technology, anyone can be recorded or videotaped at any time with or without their knowledge. When you are interacting with a very frustrated or angry customer, they may pull out their Smartphone and tape the interaction. An onlooker could do the same, be the assistant to your granter, or be a reporter in the building on another matter.

Please make sure you are aware of not only your behavior but your surroundings at all times. An incident between you and an angry customer can easily become a much bigger problem for you, your staff, and the program as a whole.

## **DEALING WITH FRUSTRATED CUSTOMERS.**

As part of our work, we have the occasion to deal with frustrated, upset or even irate customers. It may not be the easiest part of our work, but it is an important one none the less. Your confidence and ability to deal with frustrated customers directly impacts that customer's experience with the Business Enterprise Program and with us as individual representatives.

Our customers may become frustrated for many reasons. Another way of looking at their frustration is to understand where it comes from. It stems from the fact that they care about the outcome of the situation. Human beings rarely get frustrated over topics, issues, or concerns they do not care about. If a customer's frustration is evident in their behavior you still have an opportunity to reach them, to assist in solving

their problem. It is when a customer is “done” or disengages from the interaction that the situation can escalate to an uncomfortable or unsalvageable level.

## **DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS**

There are different levels of communication. We communicate every day with a variety of people from friends, family, and colleagues to complete strangers. Communication is essential in building successful and productive relationships, in expressing your ideas, and in getting your point across. Why is it so hard then to communicate effectively?

## **COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION**

1. Sender
2. Receiver
3. Message
4. Filters
5. Background Noise
6. Feedback

We will examine the elements of communication and how they can impact the quality and effectiveness of the process. The point of communication is to be effective. Understanding what influences the communication process will assist you with increasing your effectiveness.

## **FILTERS.**

Filters can influence the creation, reception and interpretation of your message. Filters are present in everyone’s life and serve to influence our view of ourselves, the world and even the effectiveness of the communication process. Often we are not conscious of our filters and

the impact they bring. When we are aware of our filters, we can move beyond our internal biases to gain a better understanding of the differences between people.

### **INTERNAL DIALOGUE.**

One filter that influences the communication process is our internal dialogue. Self-talk includes the conversations we have with ourselves on a daily basis. It is how you describe yourself, others, and even the outcomes we expect when communicating.

What you tell yourself about situations and people frequently determines how you respond or react to them. Your description of others greatly influences your reaction to them. This is usually based on your evaluation of their behavior and thoughts, and an assumption of their motivation.

### **ASSUMPTIONS.**

People find comfort in patterns. We have an experience, assume similarities with the next experience, and attribute cause and motivation to it. Although helpful, it is not always useful and can influence how we think, feel, and react. Assumptions arise when we give motivation to other people's behavior without clarifying what their action are.

### **NOISE.**

Noise in communication is any distraction that interferes with the transmission of the message. By understanding how distractions can adversely impact the effectiveness of communication, we can work to eliminate them from the process. The following are the various types of noise and their definitions.

Frame of reference = differences between the values, expectations, and experiences of the sender and receiver.

Source credibility = for whatever reason, the receiver does not deem the sender as credible.

Status = the receiver feels threatened by the sender or the sender is isolated from needed feedback.

Value judgments = sender or receiver makes arbitrary value judgments about each other or the message itself.

Selective listening = receiver hears only what he/she wants to hear.

Filtering = I tell you what I think you want to hear.

Time pressures = there is not enough time to develop the message, select the appropriate media, deliver the message and check for understanding.

Semantics = sender uses words that have a different meaning to the receiver.

Jargon = using language that is too technical to be understood by the receiver.

Communication overload = too much information to process.

## **FEEDBACK.**

Feedback is an essential element of communication. It helps us to ensure understanding of the message that was sent and received. Effective communication does not occur in a vacuum. It is a two way process that involves other people. Asking for feedback helps us to build rapport, confirm understanding and create a climate where everyone involved feels heard, understood, and respected.

The components for generating feedback include active listening, paraphrasing, and understanding non-verbal communication.

**Active Listening.** Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort the message we are trying to interpret. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. In active listening, the listener tries to understand what the speaker wants to communicate rather than what the listener wants to believe. In addition, the listener attempts to get the total message – which is more than the sum of words being said. This includes the emotional context of the message.

One of the most common misconceptions about listening is that we must agree with what we hear. In fact, this is not true. We need to accept what we hear, not necessarily agree with it. When listening to a message we disagree with, often times we start thinking about our rebuttal and end up missing the message.

In addition, it is the listener's responsibility to receive the entire message. Active listeners do what is necessary to understand the speaker's message – ask questions, paraphrase, restate for clarity, etc.

### **PARAPHRASING.**

Paraphrasing or reflecting statements summarize the content and the feelings of what a speaker has said. The statements should not move the conversation along but serve to confirm understanding.

### **IDENTIFY YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME.**

If conversations get heated, our goals can stray from a productive outcome. That is why it is important to plan what you want to say ahead of time. If you do not have the chance to plan ahead, you must learn to step back and ask yourself, "what do I really want here?" In the heat of the moment, goals can change quickly from, "I am trying to reach a mutual understanding for both of us," to "I am trying to save

face, because I am embarrassed,” or “I want to prove I am right and you are wrong.”

Stepping back and asking what you want can take practice. You must ask yourself what you are really arguing about, and what your motivation is for the argument.

For example, if you start out debating vacation days with your employee and the conversation is not proceeding, step back and ask yourself, “what am I arguing about? Is it specific dates or something more? What is my motivation to where I am now, which is pushing for a very specific set of dates?”

**TO REACH YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME, USE THE R.E.L.A.X. APPROACH.**

The R stands for Respect – the other person’s thoughts and feelings.

The E stands for Empathize – by putting yourself in the other person’s shoes.

The L stands for Listen – to the other person’s words.

The A stands for Acknowledge – respectfully share your point of view.

The X represents Expect – for you should always expect a positive outcome.

Do not take anything personally!

## **HOW DO I BEGIN? - OPENING THE CONVERSATION**

A common question is “how do I begin the conversation?” Here are a few conversation openers to help you get started.

1. I have something I would like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.
2. I would like to talk about (blank) with you, but first I would like to get your point of view.
3. I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?
4. I need your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? If they say, “Sure, let me get back to you” make sure to follow up with them.
5. I think we have different perceptions about (blank). I would like to hear your thinking on this.
6. I would like to talk about (blank). I think we may have different ideas on how to (blank).
7. I would like to work on our reaching a better understanding about (blank). I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.

### **Notes from class of things to keep in mind when having difficult conversations/interactions:**

- Listen, reiterate what has been said, never argue
- Try to “pilot” the interaction to a good place
- Address the issues
- Have a plan

- Try to make things work out but be okay with not being able to please everyone
- Let people vent but do not let them verbally abuse you
- Keep in mind that some people are just looking for issues
- Be timely
- Be aware of our tone – should be less than other person's
- Have the right attitude and find a point to agree with the person. "I hear you." "I feel you."
- Be responsive – provide options
- Avoid being quiet too long
- Feel, Felt, Found – I hear how you feel, I have felt the same way, this is what I have found
- Ensure staff know the process for dealing with difficult customers and when to escalate to supervisor/operator

**The following scenarios were submitted by participants and discussed as a group to apply the C.A.R.E. and R.E.L.A.X. methods.**

### **SCENARIO #1**

Customers become angry over price increases. They communicate that anger in different ways.

Are price increases communicated ahead of time? Group indicates to do this usually causes prolonged complaining from customers but is essential to send a letter to the Grantor to inform them of the increase and reason.

What is the appropriate lead time on that communication? Group indicates 2 weeks.

Will people still have a hard time accepting it? Yes

What can we do about it? C.A.R.E. = Be very nice, listen, agree, briefly explain need for increase without it having anything to do about profit margin.

## **SCENARIO #2**

Customers become disgruntled when the machine does not dispense a product or change.

What process do you have for receiving this information? Many in the group had different ways of processing this information. The key is that it is expeditious.

If there is a “middle man,” do we know how they communicate? This question caused some in our group to think about this as they did not know the answer. Sometimes the attitude of the “middle man” can become the perception of you.

Does it work? Does it need revisited? Always be willing to re-evaluate processes and delegation, even if it seems to be working. All things broken at one point in time were working.

C.A.R.E. = Ask how you can help, apologize, address issue, ask if they are satisfied with your remedy.

## **SCENARIO #3**

When operators are cleaning or filling their machines, they often have carts with product out in the open or a nearby storage/supply closet that is open. One operator shared that people tend to help themselves to items or condiments in the cart or closet. She finds it very upsetting and has to say something to them and then the customer seems inconvenienced or to have an attitude.

It is best to always speak to these individuals implementing doubt. That means to speak in positive terms doubting they meant to take unwelcomed liberties, attempting to steal from you, or simply be malicious. If you implement doubt believing they simply are uninformed or need help, then the right words tend to come from your mouth. Many believe that some people feel they are helping you by not interrupting you for their need. Informing your wishes without giving rise to feelings of embarrassment can establish your expectation, change the behavior, and maintain the relationship.

C.A.R.E. = Hello? May I help you?, establish expectation of respect/space, give them information such as catsup packets are ten cents each, give them an option such as instead of a warm soda from the cart would you like a cold one from the machine, inform them of their total owed, thank them for their business

#### **SCENARIO #4**

A customer comes to you with a bag of chips they purchased last week. It is a new brand you are trying that contains hot spices. The bag is open and nearly empty but the customer indicates they did not like the product and want their money back. Since this is a new product and specialized, you had ordered a limited supply at a higher cost.

C.A.R.E. = Listen to their feedback, thank them for letting you know, offer them first a bag of a different snack (preferably one cheaper), if unsuccessful then offer their money back, let them know you sometimes try new product and appreciate them trying new things.

## **SCENARIO #5**

The cost of items from one of your suppliers has gone up. The price increase is significant and cannot be absorbed in the current price structure. The price increase has resulted in numerous customer complaints. How do you respond to them, and what information do you provide to your staff?

C.A.R.E. = Feel, felt, found – I feel just as bad about it as you do, I felt bad about the recent price increase by the supplier, I found there is nothing they can do to avoid the increase and all other suppliers have the same pricing.

Make sure your staff are prepared with what to say to complaints you know of and can prepare for addressing. Make certain they deliver customer service that is personable and not rehearsed. It is hard to be sincere when the complaints are repetitive but it is crucial to maintaining good customer service.

## **SCENARIO #6**

Most frequently there are complaints in the form of comparisons to the previous people providing food service. It has been necessary at my new location for me to do some things that aren't popular such as portion control and price increases. Also, I have streamlined the menu to remove items that were so unprofitable that a reasonable price adjustment would not have been enough. Of course most people have no familiarity with my costs, and so they have complained. What is your response to the customer who states "This is highway robbery ... you're charging me \$1.50 for a muffin but the mix costs me only 89 cents at the grocery store!"

Just as those responsible for good customer service can get things wrong, customers can sometimes get being a good customer wrong.

We all know that if people making comments like these would stop and think before they speak, they would say nothing at all. But some never take that important pause. Your best outcome will be one that provides them an opportunity for that pause and reconsideration.

C.A.R.E. = I hear you, \$1.50 does seem like a lot for a fresh, warm muffin but the cost of eggs, milk, getting the materials to this location, and the baker's wages all add up, offer a less expensive option or to couple a well-priced coffee with it to even it out. Never let the discussion be about your profit margin or potential for going out of business.

## **SCENARIO #7**

Every customer has their favorite items ... grits, chocolate doughnuts, a fresh BLT. They expect you to carry their favorite every day and give you a hard time when it's not on hand.

C.A.R.E. = Try and get their first name and use it often, if they are looking for their favorite item chances are they are a frequent customer, apologize for not having what they are looking to buy, explain rotation of product to ensure freshness and variety, inform them what day you might be offering that item again, offer a similar alternative. Try and build on the interaction so the next time you see them, it will be more positive.

## **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE IN THE ROOM:**

- Anger is a secondary emotion. Through active listening, we can find what is triggering it.
- “People don’t work for money, they work for satisfaction.” – Sherry Abele This was shared with us by Lenny Johnson during a conversation about being a good leader for your employees.
- It was indicated that it was nice to know others who do what they do also do a great job, work hard, and still have the need to improve customer relations.

## **BEST PRACTICES:**

- Do not take things personally
- Use the C.A.R.E. and R.E.L.A.X model
- Listen to customers and pay better attention
- Plan to provide good customer service from the start
- Share this training with employees and ensure they know where we stand on the topic
- Assume customer’s good intent
- Watch that tone does not go above that of the customer
- Feel – Felt – Found