Customer Service & The Role of Attitude in the Workplace

Presented by Drew Steding
• Pre-Med to Psychology
• Student Involvement & Jobs
• “It found me.”
A Bit About U-M

- Population: ~43,000
  - ~27K undergrads
  - ~15K grad/professional
- Student body
- Field emphases
  - 200 undergraduate majors
- 4 distinct campuses
University of Michigan: Central Campus
University of Michigan: North Campus
A Bit About My Job

• 2 locations, 1 central contact
  – Answering Questions
  – Giving Directions
  – Front desk services

• 32 student employees
  – 30 Information Assistants
  – 2 Information Coordinators

• Some statistics:
  – 540,919 total points of contact
  – 435,879 Web site users
  – 68,269 Guests were helped in person at CIC and NCIC
  – 10,924 phone calls were answered
  – 1,750 guest emails were answered
Setting Expectations

• My goals for you, after this session:
  – To recognize the impact of your attitude in your lives
    • As a supervisor and as a customer
  – Empower you to become more effective and efficient in tasks and customer service
  – Give you at least one tactic that you can use to help better your mood
  – To help you achieve any other goals, if different
So, what are YOUR goals today?

• If you don’t remember anything else today, let it be: you get what you put in.
Part 1: Under the Water

The Costs of Poor Customer Service
What does bad customer service look like?

- Clip 1

- What do you think of when you think of “poor customer service”?
  - How did it impact you?
  - For how long?

- Think: Have YOU provided less than favorable service?

- Why do you think people provide poor customer service?
So how do we get in such bad moods?

• 75% say they are unhappy with their jobs to some degree

• Why?
  – Personal stress
  – Recession
  – American Culture
  – Technology
  – Attitudes/Norms
    • “Work is work”
  – What else?
Negativity in the workplace...

- reduces teamwork
  - Results-focus
  - ...thus more self-protection
- reduces innovation
- affects our loyalty to others
- diminishes our productivity
- is more contagious
  - Positivity Ratio, Fredrickson
  - Rumination/attribution to self
  - ...thus more believable
- kills us! :(

kills us! :(
The Negativity Cycle

Overall Business/Administration

1. Supervisor
2. Student
3. Staff
4. Guest

Clip 2
Part 2: Getting Out of the Water: Changing Our Own Habits
1. Know thyself.

- We must know who we are
  - How do you make decisions?
  - How do you use your energy?
  - How scheduled are you?
  - What ticks you off?

- Strengths
  - Strengths & Perceived Strengths
  - Authenticity: “Caring for Customers” example
2. Realize the barriers of effective communication

- Being distracted
- Being overemotional
- Having an agenda & Rehearsing
- Wearing a mask
- Using personal frame of reference
- Body Language!
  - “When the eyes say one thing, and the tongue another, a practiced man relies on the language of the first”
3. Work to communicate more effectively

- Beware of interrupting
- Listen actively
- Respond to negative employees
- Be careful how you word things!
  - “You don’t know where the Union is?”
    - Response: Yes.
  - “We can’t do this.”
  - “You need to speak louder.”
- Remember that problems often illicit emotion.
- Anticipate objections and questions
4. Bring mindfulness to the workplace.

1. Make a commitment. Set expectations.
2. Start slowly.
3. Meditate.
4. Slow down your thoughts.
5. Recognize others.
7. Watch your language!
   1. Self-talk
   2. Work conversations
8. Self-reflect.
5. Stay focused.

- ABC Method
  1. Become **aware** the distraction
  2. **Breathe** and consider options
  3. **Choose**: Stop or go?

- Distraction-free meetings
- Make a reward system!
- Shift the focus
  - Take a quick walking break!
6. Practice positivity.

- Take care of yourself
  - Work-Life balance
- Remove outside stressors when possible.
- Be optimistic.
  - Optimists are more successful!
- Make your work area fun!
- Realize what you love about your job
Part 3: Positive Influence

How We Can Change Our Leadership & Influence the Attitudes in others
1. Realize your influence.

- Employees will emulate what they see you do.
- Don’t forget proper communication!
  - Be clear
- Be on time.
- Talk positively about your job.
- Avoid multi-tasking.
- Adapt to REAL events as they occur
2. Let everyone play on the same field.

- Think collectively
- Treat everyone equally
  - Don’t respond to everyone the same, though!
- Be transparent
- Involve employees when possible
  - Hiring/selection
  - Marketing
  - Staff events
  - Staff suggestions
3. Allow your employees to learn

- It’s all about taking the time.
- Let them share in the successes!
  - Their impact to the greater University
  - Transferable skills for their future
- Give feedback
- Problem-Solving skills
  - Proper Focus
  - See mistakes differently!
- Be flexible
  - But push employees accordingly
4. Acknowledge Your Staff & Colleagues

- Let them take ownership of their roles!
- Make it a point to get to know your colleagues and employees.
- Make work fun.
- Have office parties and get-togethers.
- Celebrate good work!
- Identify life events of your employees
- Play to everyone’s strengths
5. Stay in practice: Be a customer service model.

- Keep the Customer Informed.
- FISH Philosophy
  - Be there.
  - Play.
  - Make their day
  - Choose your attitude
- Don’t forget internal customer service!
How do we keep it going?!

- Understand your triggers
- Remind yourself!
- Set SMART goals
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Time-bound
- REMEMBER why you are here, and why they are there
Final Pearls of Wisdom

1. Attend to what appears, without judgment.
2. Avoid gossip.
3. Give credit where credit is due.
4. Remember the Golden Rule.
5. Do random acts of kindness.
6. Realize that positives and negatives aren’t what they appear to be.
7. Understand the 90/10 rule.
The Positivity Cycle of Energy

Diagram:

1. Supervisor
2. Staff
3. Guest
4. Administrator

The cycle moves clockwise from 1 to 2, then 2 to 3, 3 to 4, and 4 back to 1.
Questions & Discussion

- Institutional Change
- Staff Turnover
- Institutional Inertia
- Budget Reduction
- What if I’m just too damn tired?
- What if I just can’t seem to get my students engaged?
- What If I just don’t have the time to implement new practices?
Conclusion/Resources

• PowerPoint & Resource List available
  – Leave a business card or write your info on the sheet and I’ll email this to you

• I’m also available – feel free to contact me anytime
  – drewsted@umich.edu
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