The following are five free customer service training games that we have used with clients during our customer service courses for more than a decade.

We frequently receive requests for training ideas from organizations wishing to develop their own etiquette programs. In the interest of improving behavior, we are sharing these activities for use by others.

- You are welcome to incorporate them into your customer service courses.
- You may also link to them.
- However, we request that you not publish them in a printed guide, online guide, or otherwise without our permission.

Each of the activities listed requires a basic knowledge of customer service. While we are happy to answer questions about the mechanics of the games and activities, we kindly request that you do your own research on questions related to content.

For more information about onsite customer service workshops and seminars for your group, please contact us at info@businesstrainingworks.com or 301-934-3250.

Kind regards,

Kate Zabriskie
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Standards, Please!

**Purpose:**

To illustrate the importance of consistency and following service standards.

**Goal:**

To instill an appreciation for having rules and an understanding of why they are important to follow.

**Materials Needed:**

None

**Directions:**

Line everyone up on one side of the room. Explain that the goal is to reach the other side of the room. To do so, participants must meet certain criteria that you call out. For example, “Take three steps forward if you are wearing red.” Give about three instructions such as that one. Then, on the fourth round, select some of the people from the back and move them to the front. Select some from the front and move them back several steps. Continue to play the game in this way until someone reaches the other side.

**Debrief:**

Ask participants if they took the game seriously? Most will probably tell you no, and that they did not because the rules were unfair and unpredictable. Ask participants if they enjoyed the game. Most again will probably tell you no. From there, transition into a discussion about service standards. Working in small teams, have the group create a list of the benefits of having service standards in place.

You should expect to see answers such as “standards help employees and customers know what to expect, and they give something by which behavior can be measured.” Or, “Standards help organizations to be fair and consistent.”

**Time:**

15 Minutes
Let Me Tell You What I Can Do

Purpose:
To illustrate the importance of telling people what you can do and not what you can't.

Goal:
To help participants think creatively about how they can avoid saying no.

Materials Needed:
None

Directions:
Have the participants stand in a circle. Tell each of them that they will ask another member of the class for something that he or she cannot say yes to. That person must then come up with an appropriate response. When that round is complete, the responder then makes a request of someone else.

For example, I want filet mignon for lunch. The person receiving that information must then respond with alternatives. The cafeteria has a variety of options. While I've never found filet mignon on the menu, they do have a wonderful beef salad.

The more outlandish the requests, the more creative the responses must be. Usually there will be one or two people who cause an outburst of laughter from the group.

Debrief:
From this exercise participants should discover that they can find ways to offer alternatives to any request no matter how ridiculous. Nobody likes to hear about what they can't have. Customers feel more valued if you provide suggestions and alternatives.

When the exercise is complete, you can continue the learning point by having the members of the group list the types of requests to which they typically say no. From there, have the group brainstorm alternatives to offer in the future.

Time:
20 Minutes
Explain Yourself

**Purpose:**

To show participants the value of explaining to customers what you are doing before you take action.

**Goal:**

To increase participant awareness of fear of the unknown.

**Materials Needed:**

Ruler, scarf, gloves, and earmuffs.

**Directions:**

Ask for two volunteers. Explain that you will not hurt anyone, but you will be placing items of clothing on each of them. You will take each through a similar exercise. When interacting with the first, you will be polite but provide no explanation for your actions.

Thank the first participant for volunteering. Then bend down and remove his or her shoes and measure both feet. When done, place the gloves on the person’s hands. Next add a scarf and the earmuffs. When done, remove the items you have added. Now ask the participant how he or she felt during the exercise.

Once you have gathered that feedback, move on to the second volunteer.

This time, however, explain that you are taking measurements for winter gear and that you want to be sure that you get a proper fit. Ask the volunteer to remove his or her shoe. Tell this person what you will measure before you measure, and so forth. Keep talking throughout the activity.

When done, ask the volunteer and the class to comment on the difference between the two approaches.

Note: You can easily alter this exercise to work in different environments. Instead of dressing the volunteers, you could ask them a series of questions. For example, what colors do you like? Or where would you like to travel? With the first volunteer you simply ask the questions. With the second, you would provide reasons. For instance, “We are planning on painting your office area. What colors do you like?” Or, “We are considering you for a three-month out-of-town assignment. Where might you like to go?”

**Debrief:**

What the participants should discover through this exercise is that explanations are important. Customers react better and cooperate when they are informed and understand the reasons behind your
questions or actions. For example, if you are running this exercise with a group of repair technicians you might use the example of repairing a customer’s dishwasher. *Mrs. Jones, so that I am able to troubleshoot accurately to figure out why the dishwasher isn’t cleaning the way it used to I need to ask you some questions. When did it start acting up? Are you able to hear anything different? And so forth.*

**Time:**

15 Minutes
Information Connection

Purpose:

To illustrate the difficulty of communicating information when there is noise in the process.

Goal:

To encourage customer service representatives to ask questions to confirm information.

Materials Needed: Pen and paper for each participant.

Directions:

This game is similar to the old telephone message game. Have the group stand in a circle. Start with a message written down on a card. Show the card to the person to your left (person one). He or she must then whisper that message into the ear of the person to his or her left. After doing so, person one should write down what was said. The process continues until the message makes its way around the room. When the last person writes down what was said, compare that text to your original message. Chances are the message was altered in some way.

Sample Message: I need bananas, seafood, glue, a clock, netting, a laptop, fishing line, and a helmet in my suitcase for my trip to Central Asia. I also need a new passport photo from the mall and ten dollars.

Debrief:

This game allows you to make several points. First, it is important to verify information.

Second, it is hard to keep track of a lot of details in your head, which is why it is a good idea to take advantage of any tools provided in the workplace to improve accuracy. It would have been much easier to keep the message straight if the original card were passed to each person to read.

Third, the more familiar we are with a subject, the easier it is to keep information straight. The items on the list do not have an obvious connection.

Once you have made your points, have the group describe how they currently confirm information they hear from their customers. What could they do better? Where do they most often see communication breakdowns?

Time:

15 Minutes
The Easy Way

Purpose:
To illustrate that environment is important in customer service. All else being equal, people will choose to be in a place where they are comfortable.

Goal:
To increase awareness of creating and maintaining a customer-friendly environment.

Materials Needed: Masking Tape, Watch with a Second Hand

Directions:
Divide the training room into four quadrants using masking tape.

Have the participant count off one, two, three, four, one, two, three, etc.

Put each group into the quadrant that corresponds to their respective number.

Assign the following actions to each group: (1) Talking nonstop without listening. (2) Repeatedly touching or trying to touch your toes. (3) Repeating the alphabet. (4) Having normal conversation.

Explain that you will ask each group to engage in the actions described. Then, after 30 seconds have passed, people may choose a different quadrant. After 30 more seconds you will announce another switch. Play the game for five minutes calling time for a switch every 30 seconds. The only rule is that participants must be in each box once. After spending time in each box, they may choose to continue moving or just select a box to stay in.

Debrief:
You should discover that by the end of the game, most people are in the fourth box. The learning point here is all else being equal, customers will choose to be in the environment that is easiest and most pleasant for them. What can the group do for customers to improve the environments in which they provide service? Are there practices currently in place that customers find irritating?

Time:
20 Minutes