Why is Good Customer Service Important?

- It is the right thing to do.
- Students have other choices.
- Students have siblings, friends, etc.
- Could affect current/future alumni giving.
- Every person is a potential supporter of Samford.
- Customer feels better about you and Samford.
- You feel better about yourself and Samford.
- Your boss feels better about you.

Components of Service

- Attentiveness
- Friendliness
- Competence
- Reliability
- Customers are not interruptions to our work; they are the reason we have work.

Traits of Good Service

- Developing rapport
- Accepting responsibility and ownership
- Completing the transaction
- Handling angry customers effectively
Why Customers Get Angry
- Most customer problems fall into these areas:
  - Didn’t get what was promised.
  - Got something and it wasn’t right.
  - Service was slow or sloppy.
  - Were treated rudely or with indifference.

Managing the Angry Customer
- Apologize – even if you did not do it
- Sympathize
- Accept responsibility
- Prepare to help

Roles to Use with Customers
- Friend
- Detective
- Teacher

Role of Friend
- Acts as host and makes caller feel comfortable and important.
- Does not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Share names.
- Reassure the customer.
Role of Detective

› Solves problems
› Is persistent
› Use when the customer has a problem
› Obtain specific facts
› Clear up misunderstandings

Role of Teacher

› Gently educates but is never condescending.
› Use when the customer is unsure or misguided in what they need.
› Paraphrase and restate to confirm understanding.
› Suggest a course of action.

Active Listening is Critical

› Eliminate distractions
› Suspend judgment
› Don’t interrupt
› Tolerate silence
› Take notes
› Ask closed-ended questions to obtain specific facts and information.
› Avoid questions that begin with “why” or “who” which can sound accusatory or questions that put the customer on the spot.
› Are the benefits to the customer clear?

Saying “No” Positively

Don’t say:
› “I don’t know.”
› “No.”
› “That’s not my job.”
› “You need to talk to Purchasing.”
› “Calm down.”

Use instead:
› “I’ll find out.”
› “Here’s what we can do.”
› “______ can help you.”
› “Fran in Purchasing can help you.”
› “I can tell you’re upset.”
Saying "No" Positively

Don't Say
- "Call back tomorrow."
- "It's not ready."
- "You should have called sooner."
- "That's not our fault."

Use instead:
- "I'll call you back tomorrow."
- "It will be ready on _______."
- "I understand why you called."
- "Let's see what we can do."

Don't say:
- "That's against our policy."
- "The only thing we can do is ..."
- "You're wrong."

Use instead:
- "Here's the way we handle that."
- "The best option for handling this is ...."
- "Let me give you the information you need."

Customer Service Via Email

- Respond in a timely manner.
- Be mindful of your tone.
- Don't reply in anger.
- Don't use email to criticize others.
- Don't overuse "reply to all".
- Email is not necessarily private.
- Use your spell-checker.

Don't "copy up" as a means of coercion.
Don't use colored/textured backgrounds that make your message difficult to read.
Don't write in all caps.
Use a signature with your contact information.
Re-read your email before you send it.
Staying motivated to deliver excellent customer service

Avoid/relieve stress
› Take a few deep breaths.
› Take a brief walk.
› Eat healthy snacks.
Maintain a positive attitude
› Use positive self-talk.
› Remember to have a sense of humor.
› How does the customer feel about their experience with you? (How would I want to be treated if I was in his/her shoes?)
› Remember your successes.

Staying motivated to deliver excellent customer service

Show competence and integrity as well as knowledge
› Know your job and how things work.
› Be honest and straight-forward.
Develop a buddy system
› Allows only limited venting.
› Ask for coaching and encouragement to stay motivated.
Remember we are all on the same team!!

Attributes for Being Positive

› Empathy – not apathy – to have the capacity for understanding, being aware of and being sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, experiences of your customers.

Attributes for Being Positive

› Enthusiasm – to have a observable high level of energy or interest to a project or situation.
Attributes for Being Positive

- Ownership – to possess the commitment to solve problems or steer the problem to someone who can.

- Responsibility – to live up to previously agreed upon commitments. Being considerate and responsible to co-workers.

Attributes for Being Positive

- Adaptability – to have the flexibility to effectively deal with different types of customers and different situations.

- Balance – to have the capacity to successfully satisfy the customer while taking into account the resources and needs of your department and Samford University.
Attributes for Being Positive

- Resiliency - to have the ability to bounce back from adversity, to recover quickly and not let things snowball.

Essential Telephone Skills

Answering a Business Call

*Use the three-part greeting.*
- Begin with a pleasant buffer. Example: “Thank you for calling...”
- Follow with the name of the company or group. Example: “...Mollner Industries...”
- End with your name. Example: “…this is Kine.”
- Substitute your department or group for organization name. Example: “Thank you for holding. Parts department, this is Jeremy.”

Putting a Caller on Hold

*Effective replacement phrases for “Hang on a second.”*
- Let callers know why you need to put them on hold.
- Ask, “Are you able to hold?” Wait for a response.
- When callers are not able to hold, handle their needs by offering options.
Thanking the Caller for Holding

*Effectively reconnect with callers after placing them on hold.*
- Reduce frustration of being placed on hold.
- Ease the conversation back on a positive path.
- Put Samford University head and shoulders above average by acknowledging the hold.

Monogramming the call

*Use your caller’s name to build rapport.*
- If you know your caller’s name, use it!
- Spell and pronounce each caller’s name correctly; ask if you need help.
- Reintroduce yourself to the caller and build a relationship.

Avoiding Excuses

*Excuses annoy callers.*
- Callers want solutions, not excuses.
- Let the caller know how you CAN help, not how you CAN’T help.
- Take responsibility for the call and express desire to assist.

Giving Spoken Feedback Signals

*Let your callers know you are listening.*
- Give spoken feedback.
- Mix responses to avoid sounding mechanical or insincere.
- Mirror back or rephrase the caller’s words to confirm understanding.
Being Prepared

*Take notes!*
- Keep a pen or pencil and a supply of writing paper near the telephone at all times.
- Take telephone messages word-for-word if possible; read message back to caller.
- Be sure message includes caller's name, message, date, time and your name or initials.

Controlling the conversation

*Redirect callers that wander.*
- If a caller gets off the subject, take control of the conversation.
- Use the "Back-on-Track" approach. Ask a question related to the purpose of the call.
- Use a subtle buffer to soften your approach to getting the call back-on-track.

Avoiding Mouth Noises

*Mouth noises annoy and alienate callers.*
- The telephone mouthpiece or headset is a microphone that amplifies sound to the caller.
- While on a call, don't eat, drink, hum or chew gum.
- Don't distract or annoy callers with unpleasant mouth noises.

Leaving a Positive Last Impression

*Leave your customers feeling great about Samford University.*
- A positive last impression counts every bit as much as a good first impression.
- Make every caller feel important to you and Samford.
- End your conversation on a positive note. Let callers know you are glad they called and are looking forward to hearing from them again.
Practice your customer service skills and,
Thank you for attending!