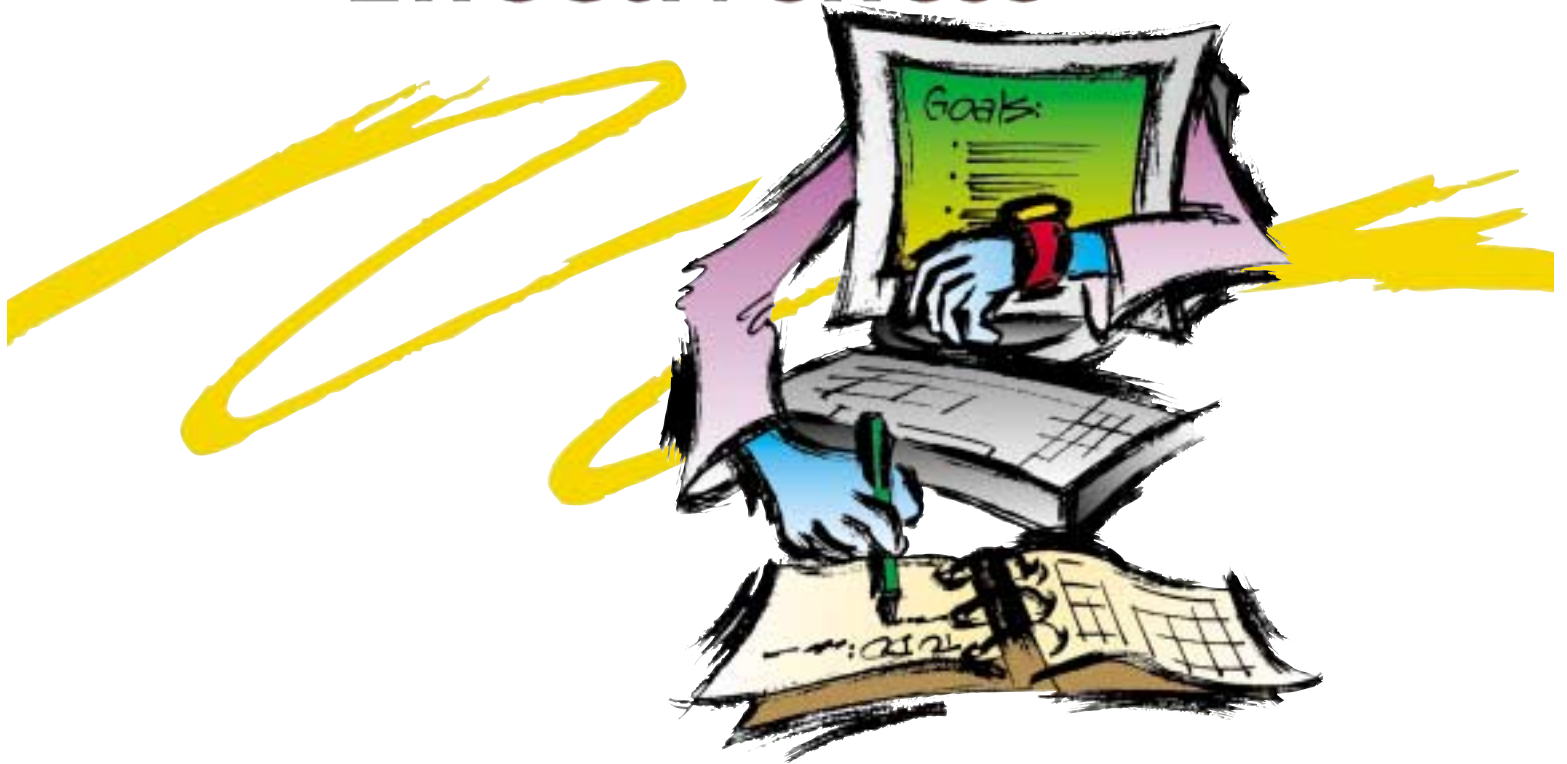


# COMMUNICATION 2000<sup>2E</sup>

## Personal Effectiveness



Agency for Instructional Technology

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The updated *Communication 2000* is a multimedia communication skills series that prepares learners to meet the communication challenges of tomorrow's workplace. Twelve modules provide comprehensive coverage of workplace communication skills, along with numerous opportunities for critical thinking, project-based activities, and technology applications.

*Personal Effectiveness* investigates the communication and self-management skills necessary for effectiveness on the job. Discover the image, attitude, and organizational qualities that are essential to success and advancement in today's changing workplace.

The following page illustrations identify key features of this guide.

## WORKSHOPS

**Goals** start each workshop with clear learning objectives.

**On the Job** presents a workplace scenario in a "story" format with questions for analysis and discussion.

**Workshop Introduction** presents a short story or illustrative passage that demonstrates the general themes and issues of the workshop.

**Tools of the Trade** supplies the main workshop concepts in straightforward, easy-to-read checklists.

**Key Ideas** introduce and define important terms and concepts developed in the workshop.

**Checkpoint questions** provide opportunities for review and discussion.

**Goals** (from Workshop 1: Customer Care):

- Understand the importance of effective customer service.
- Explore the components of good customer service.
- Discover how good communication skills improve customer service.

**On the Job: If Life Gives You Lemons, Make Lemonade**

At an outdoor café in Naples, Florida, Carlos greets a pair of exhausted shoppers. His broad grin and bright smiling eyes welcome them warmly. "It sure is hot today," Carlos says. "Can I get you a nice, cool lemonade while you look over the menu? We use only the freshest Florida lemons in every glass. I think you'll really enjoy it."

Carlos has made a great first impression. His cheerful greeting diverted the customers' attention from the afternoon's heat and humidity, offering some comfort and relief.

At the diners examine their menus, Carlos is back in a minute with two frosty glasses, each topped with a fresh lemon slice and a bright red cherry. "Take your time checking out our delicious entrees, but save room for dessert," he says. "The pasta dishes are especially good, and our double-chocolate cheesecake is absolutely fantastic. I'll be right over there if you need me to explain any of today's specials."

The restaurant manager, standing near the front desk, notices how Carlos treats the customers. She appreciates his friendly manner and knowledge of the menu items. She knows that there are many other restaurants in town that serve good food, and customer service is a key reason why many diners return to her restaurant time after time. Servers such as Carlos have helped the café become one of the most successful restaurants in this trendy resort community.

How did Carlos exhibit the following quality factors of customer service?

- Responsiveness: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reliability: \_\_\_\_\_
- Assurance: \_\_\_\_\_
- Empathy: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Ideas**

- customer service—work performed by an employee for the benefit of customers or clients
- quality—degree of excellence; superior in kind

**Tools of the Trade: Never Underestimate the Importance of a First Impression**

Customer service begins in the first moments of interaction between you and your client. It's your responsibility to make every minute count.

- First impressions are lasting impressions.
- One of the first things customers notice is how workers dress, act, talk, and respond to questions.
- Good employees are those who demonstrate good customer service—the first time and every time.

**Good Customer Service Necessities**

No one can provide customer service alone. Customer service is a business-wide endeavor that requires:

- A company policy that puts customers first
- Training for the staff
- Positive manager and employee attitudes

**Five Quality Factors that Determine Good Customer Service**

Good customer service does not happen by accident. It takes the efforts of every worker to serve customers in a way that will make them want to come back again and again.

- Responsiveness.** Acknowledge every customer. If you can't be of immediate assistance, say so. Try to anticipate a client's needs, offer to help, and respond courteously to questions. If you don't know an answer, find someone who does.
- Reliability.** Follow through on what the company promises. Deliver goods and services on time and in good condition.
- Assurance.** Build a feeling of trust and confidence in customers. Call or e-mail customers to make sure they are satisfied.
- Empathy.** Try to understand the customer's side of the story. Be polite and considerate of people's feelings. Accommodate special needs, such as physical disabilities, and hearing or vision impairments.
- Appearance.** Make the environment inviting to the customer. Dress appropriately, and keep your work area neat.

**Video Spotlight**  
**INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS**  
 Segment 1

Shopping is usually fun—unless you have to deal with sales associates who don't know their merchandise or who can't help you find the item you're looking for. The video you are about to watch follows customers through good and bad customer service experiences. As you watch the video, try to identify all of the components of quality customer service you observe in action.

**Video Spotlight** provides motivational video models of contemporary workplace communication issues. Opportunities for discussion and problem solving are included.

*Literature Connection*  
**Tolstoy's Dante**  
 by Stokh Turkel

The following passage from *Snow*, Tolstoy's Working is one of several excerpts from interviews the author dictated from workers in various industries.

I have to be a waitress. How else can I learn about people? How else does the one who comes to me? I can't go to every- one. So they have to come to me. Every- day, I serve them. If they've had a bad with coffee I give them a little philoso- phy. They have cocktails, I give them political science. I'll say things that they think about pollution. If it's automobiles, I say what I think about them. If I pour water I'll say, "Would you like your quota of necessary today?" If I serve cream, I say, "Here is your substitute. I think you're drinking plastic." I just can't keep quiet. I have an opinion on every single subject there is. In the beginning it was thought- political and my bosses don't like it. I speak out loud. But if I get heated, then I don't give a damn. I speak like an Italian five names. I like my name. I hate to be called Miss. Even when I serve a lady, I say, "I'll be right with you, ma'am."

over and over. So I come out different for my own enjoyment. I will say, "What's exciting at the bar that I can't offer?" I'll say, "Do you want coffee?" "Maybe or." "The coffee sounds exciting." "Just rephrase it enough to make it interesting for me. That would make them feel interest. It becomes theatrical and they like Miss Hari and it intoxicates me."

People imagine a waitress couldn't possi- bly think or have any kind of aspiratio- other than to serve food. When some- body says to me, "You're great, how come you're just a waitress?" "Just a waitress," I'll say, "Why don't you think you deserve to be served by a waitress?"

That he's worthy of lowly at a want to cit- Tip? I feel holding on the vein if you're not of

**Literature Connection** presents short stories, poetry, and related applications that reflect the workshop themes.

## REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Why is a first impression so important to a business?
2. Give an example of each of the five quality factors of good customer service.
3. What do you think is meant by the saying, "The customer is always right"?

**Review Questions** offer assessment questions that challenge the reader to recall and think critically about key concepts.

**PROJECTS**

1. Visit three or four similar shops in your community or in a nearby mall (e.g., shoe stores, sporting goods shops, jewelers). Observe the appearance of the store and the attitudes of its workers. Explain the appearance upon your first impressions. Write a short narrative.
2. For a week, observe the actions of sales associates in stores, sales buildings (e.g., post office, driver's license bureau, or library) in your observations in a journal, dividing the journal into sections titled "Good Service" and "Poor Service." Record all of your experiences, suggestions, and observations. Have your journal been made letter.
3. Obtain the toll-free phone numbers for several companies. Phone their customer service departments. Ask for their rates, fees, incentives, and service effectiveness. Write a report.

**Projects** provide a variety of in-depth, rigorous activities that challenge learners to apply key communication skills in realistic workplace situations.

**Practice Activities** offer several individual or group in-class activities that are driven by workshop themes.

**PRACTICE**

1. With a partner, design two role-playing situations that demonstrate an example of (1) good customer service, and (2) poor customer service for:
  - Returning a defective appliance
  - Asking a sales associate for help finding a specific pair of shoes
  - Ordering a meal at a fast food restaurant
  - Waiting in line at a concert
2. Use an Internet search engine (Google, Yahoo, Excite, etc.) to find suggestions for good telephone etiquette. After reading the information on several Web sites, suggest some ways to serve customers by phone. Be sure to include ideas for dealing with customers both when initiating and when receiving a client's phone call.
3. Check the Web sites of several prominent companies in your community. Review them based on customer service features they have (e.g., toll-free numbers, 24-hour service, etc.). Suggest ways in which they can be better.

**Graphical icons** indicate useful links to additional CD-ROM activities and Web research.

**FIELD STUDY**

This guide has provided an overview of the many kinds of communication you'll encounter and employ when dealing with customers. In this Field Study you'll utilize what you've learned to analyze a company and its local factors and evaluate how well that company communicates with its clients.

Choose a large, international corporation whose products or services are sold in or near your community. For example, you might choose a corporation such as Chevrolet because it has a manufacturing plant in your town, or Nike because its products are sold in stores nearby.

Phone, e-mail, interview, or write to 12-15 people in several different departments of the corporate office, as well as sales outlets. Ask them questions about policy, products, and pricing.

Study the company's Web site, and be sure to talk face-to-face with employees in local sales outlets. As you review the company's oral communication and complete the checklist on the following pages, noting specific examples after each one.

Compile the data you collect and develop a presentation to your class. You may wish to include a video or audio recording, if they desire. Be sure to make your presentation clear and powerful.

**Field Study** provides a comprehensive, summative project that requires learners to apply communication skills, explore workplace issues, solve problems, and document information. Helpful worksheets are provided.

**SUMMARY**

- Making a good impression is the first step toward good customer service.
- Quality customer service is the responsibility of every employee.
- Serving customers involves attitude, appearance, and action.
- The five quality factors of good customer service are: responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and appearance.

**Summary checklist** provides a brief recap of the key points from the workshop.

# SPECIAL FEATURES

**Did You Know?** highlights interesting facts, findings, and trends in workplace communication.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Good Customer Service Is Good Business

- ❖ 65% of a company's business comes from repeat customers.
- ❖ Customers refer friends, who then become customers.
- ❖ Unhappy customers tell 8–16 people about their bad experiences.
- ❖ Through Internet chat rooms, an unhappy customer can now tell thousands of people!
- ❖ 91% of dissatisfied customers won't shop at the same store again.
- ❖ A company can increase profits from 25% to 100% by simply reducing the number of unhappy customers.
- ❖ Customer loyalty can lead to increased sales.
- ❖ If a problem is handled quickly and to a customer's complete satisfaction, 80% will do business with the company again.

*Remember, people will judge you by your actions, not your intentions. You may have a heart of gold—but so does a hard-boiled egg.*

—Anonymous

**Quotations** add relevance, humor, and motivational messages.



## On the Net

The following Web sites profile professionals who improve their businesses through effective customer service.

- [www.customerserviceawards.com](http://www.customerserviceawards.com)
- [www.icsa.com/public/activities/](http://www.icsa.com/public/activities/)

**World View** provides international and multicultural examples of key workshop concepts.

**On the Net** links communication skills to Web research and online learning through suggested Web sites and activities.



Simple conventions or practices that are natural to you may be offensive to people in other countries. The following list describes just a few.

<b>Morocco</b>	Holding a glass in your left hand
<b>Germany</b>	Being even a few minutes late for an appointment
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	Wearing shorts, even for casual dress
<b>Japan</b>	Singling an employee out for a compliment

**Not Quite/Got It Right** presents contrasting good and poor examples of communication skills.

### Not Quite

As a customer service representative for a popular sporting goods supplier, at least half of Luke's day is spent negotiating with clients on the phone.

One day, while he was eating lunch at his desk, Luke let the phone ring several times, but he never answered. The caller would go away. He finally picked up the phone and addressed the caller, who wanted to learn more about his company's products. Interested only in his lunch, Luke told the man that he would get back to him soon.

Two weeks passed. Luke never returned that call, but he did find out who it was—one of the biggest sporting goods retailers. When their call was never returned, they chose a competing supplier instead.

### Got It Right

As a secretary in a large construction firm, Akiko spends almost her entire day answering calls from clients, salespeople, and inspectors. It is not uncommon for her to have three or four calls coming in at one time.

When that happens, Akiko has to prioritize the most important calls. She may put three people on hold at once, but always asks for their permission first, and never leaves them on hold longer than 40 seconds. If she is not able to talk with them, she will politely take their names and numbers and call them back as soon as possible. Akiko lets no call go unanswered, which her firm's contacts greatly appreciate.

**Ethics & Etiquette** requires readers to think critically about an ethical dilemma or difficult situation.

## Ethics Etiquette

What do you do when a customer cannot afford your product but you know a competitor who sells it at a cheaper price? Should you tell the customer, discount your product, or simply say nothing?

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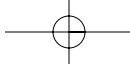


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