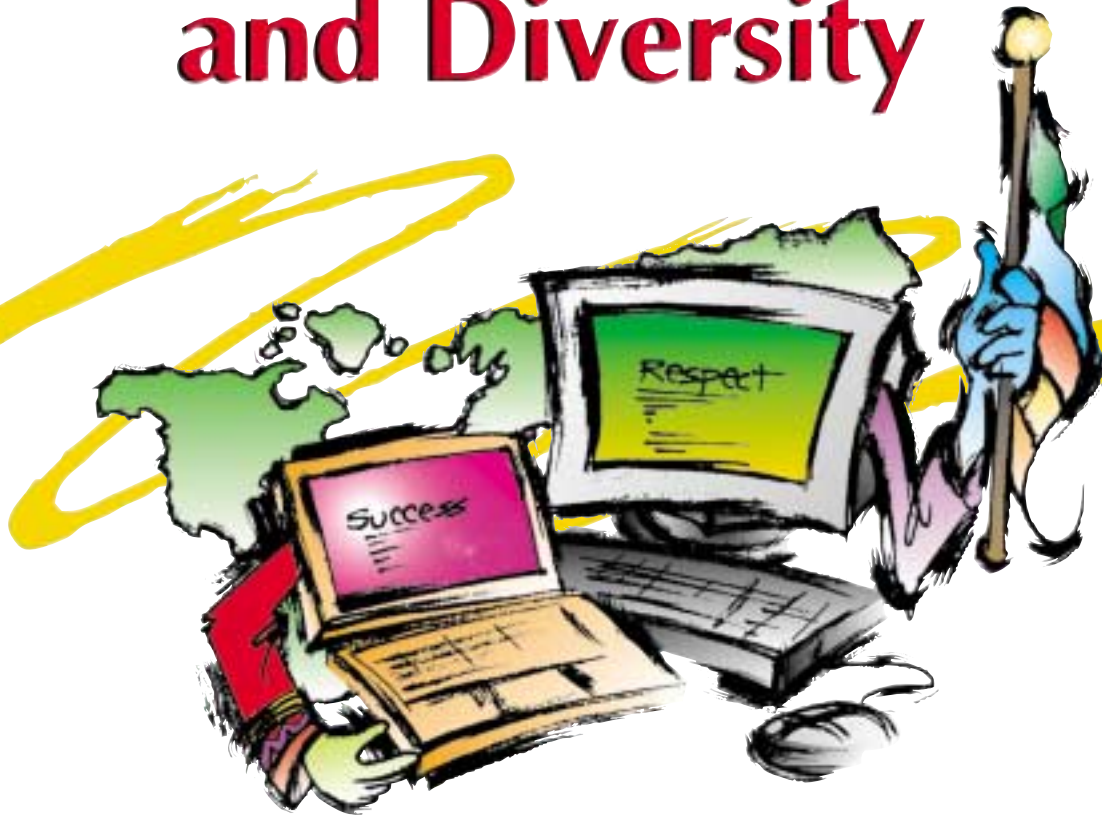


COMMUNICATION  
2000<sup>2E</sup>

# Communication and Diversity



Agency for Instructional Technology

SOUTH-WESTERN  
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**Communication 2000, 2E: Communication and Diversity**  
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Printed in the United States of America  
1 2 3 4 5 6 06 05 04 03 02 01

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ISBN: 0-538-43352-3

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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.

*Communication and Diversity* emphasizes the importance of communicating effectively with coworkers of different sexes, ages, cultures, and physical abilities. Explore the demographic changes in today's workforce, and learn techniques for overcoming stereotypes and eliminating communication barriers.

The following page illustrations identify key features of this guide.

## WORKSHOPS

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

**WORKSHOP 1 CUSTOMER CARE**

**GOALS**

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

**IT'S NOT A BUSINESS WITHOUT CUSTOMERS**

The way you look, act, and talk when you meet customers can have a lasting effect on what they think about you. Essential to individual and company success, good customer service determines whether you make a sale today, whether you develop good long-term relationships with clients, and even whether you get promoted. This workshop focuses on the importance of customer service to the success of any business.

**Would You Want to Show Here?**

A new bookstore opens in Mira's town, and she shops in one Saturday afternoon to get a copy of the latest thrillers. There are hundreds of books on the racks. When she can't find the one she's looking for, she waits over to the cashier to get some information. While she waits at the counter, one cashier is sitting on the phone. The other is putting price tags on sale merchandise. Neither worker acknowledges her.

Mira waits a couple of minutes. She clears her throat and taps her fingers on the counter, trying to get their attention. Still, they ignore her. Finally, popping her gum and looking annoyed, one of them says, "You need something, Ma'am?"

**Do you think...**

**ON THE JOB**

**If Life Gives You Lemons, Make Lemonade**

At an outdoor cafe in Naples, Florida, Carlos greets a pair of exhausted shoppers. His broad grin and light-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.

As 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. "I 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 cafe become one of the most successful restaurants in this trendy resort community.

**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

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

Responsiveness: \_\_\_\_\_

Reliability: \_\_\_\_\_

Assurance: \_\_\_\_\_

Empathy: \_\_\_\_\_

**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, follow through on what the company promises.
- Reliability.** 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.

**Key Ideas**

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

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

**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.**

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

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

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



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

**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?

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

## Not Quite

One day, as Luke was eating lunch at his desk, Luke let the phone ring several times, but 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.

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# CONTENTS

**Workshop 1: Diversity at Work**.....2  
*The importance of understanding and cooperating in a diverse workforce*  
Video Spotlight: Introduction to Diversity in the Workplace.....5

**Workshop 2: The Changing U.S. Workforce** .....10  
*Trends and demographic changes in the U.S. workforce*

**Workshop 3: Diversity as a Resource** .....18  
*How diversity can lead to business success*  
Video Spotlight: Uwajimaya Asian Grocery: The Value of Diversity .....21

**Workshop 4: Culture, Language, and Communication** .....26  
*Methods for overcoming cultural communication barriers*



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**Workshop 5: Overcoming Stereotypes**.....36  
*Strategies for overcoming misconceptions and improving communication*  
Video Spotlight: Avon: Overcoming Stereotypes .....39  
Literature Connection: “The Dinner Party,” by Mona Gardner .....40

<b>Workshop 6: Cultural Differences and Conflict</b> .....	46
<i>Understanding cultural differences and sources of conflict</i>	
<b>Workshop 7: Accepting Differences</b> .....	54
<i>Communicating with sensitivity and empathy</i>	
Literature Connection: "Talk to Me," by Steve Fiffer .....	60
	
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<b>Workshop 8: Diversity and the Law</b> .....	64
<i>Illegal discrimination and harassment in the workplace</i>	
Video Spotlight: Joe Hogsett, Attorney at Law: Discrimination in the Workplace .....	68
<b>Workshop 9: Communicating Globally</b> .....	72
<i>Communication skills for success in international business</i>	
<b>Workshop 10: Understanding Global Diversity</b> .....	78
<i>Understanding unique cultural practices in global business communication</i>	
Video Spotlight: Global Diversity: Customs and Etiquette .....	80
<b>Field Study</b> .....	84
<b>Glossary</b> .....	87