

# PART 2

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## PART 2

### CUSTOMER SERVICE AND ESSENTIAL PERSONAL SKILLS

#### HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROFILE

by Leslie Connell,  
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I began my career in the hospitality industry cleaning rooms in a small resort ski town in the Canadian Rockies. I hadn't intended to make this my lifelong direction; I just wanted to stay awhile longer in a beautiful location while on a "break" from my educational pursuits. Little did I know that I would begin down the road to a career I would grow to love.

Unfortunately, in those days, customer service was not taken too seriously. Small, busy resort towns can sometimes have an attitude about their attractiveness to visitors. There was the thought that, if customers were unhappy, there would be someone in line behind them, ready to fill that space.

I took a break from the industry for a few years and spent some time walking in the shoes of those visitors I used to serve. By the time I had come back to hotels, it was with a whole new perspective. I joined Marriott in 1984, a

company that already knew the importance of customer relationships and great service. I spent 17 years in management positions with Marriott before I got the job of a lifetime—selling the easiest product of all—the wonderful town of Flagstaff, Arizona.

In all my years of hiring the right associates to take care of our customers, I learned some inevitable truths. The hospitality industry is not for everyone. Attitude is everything. Hire great associates who take superb care of your guests, and your job, as the manager, will be easy.

I followed all of the programs and protocol set out by Marriott when making hiring decisions, but I always looked at a couple of things above all else when choosing that right person for the job. Does he or she have the right "people person" qualities in place to be able to interact well with guests and other employees? Does he or she have that "spirit to serve"? Does he or she exhibit the ability to work



## LESLIE CONNELL

well in a team environment? As far as I was concerned, everything else was trainable.

As a manager, I felt that great customer service could not be stressed enough. I might forgive almost any error if it happened while trying to make a guest happy. I empowered my staff to make immediate decisions to fix a situation, instead of having to wait for management authority. Overall, we had very happy guests. From time to time, we encountered someone who was almost impossible to please, but we kept trying. It's important to provide quality training to staff, so that they can perform to a level where mistakes are few, but I think it's more important to provide the type of training that will enable employees to fix something that goes wrong, because Murphy's law guarantees that it will at some point.

Customer expectations are high and ever on the rise. In order to compete in today's marketplace, it is imperative

that a company pays attention to how it treats its customers. Customers remember the business that provides consistent service, and return business is almost guaranteed. Gone forever are the days when someone will automatically appear, to take the place of an unhappy customer. Companies are getting wiser to this fact.

Now is a great time for people who are reassessing their goals in life to take a look at the hospitality industry as a possible career change. This is a career that requires flexibility, patience, humility, and a good sense of humor. I know that some of these attributes I possessed when I began down this long road, and some were acquired. Some were acquired the hard way.

Accidental or not, I couldn't have picked a better career path. It's been rewarding and, most of all, fun. I recommend it.



*Attitude is the reflection of a person, and our  
world mirrors our attitude.*

EARL NIGHTINGALE

## OBJECTIVES

**AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER,  
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:**

1. Describe a customer-oriented attitude.
2. Associate self-talk with the concept of positive thinking.
3. Distinguish between outer-level and inner-level customer service.
4. Relate the core elements of the adversity quotient with service attitudes.
5. Describe the customer service benefits of the teamwork approach in organizations.
6. Detail several suggestions to follow when serving customers with disabilities and customers from different cultures.

Customer expectations have a power in and of themselves. Learning to define, meet, and exceed those expectations is key to customer satisfaction. As all the management and quality consultants will tell you, “The customer is king,” because it is the customer who remains the final judge of what quality is and what it is not. It is the customer who sets the standard for excellent service.

All customers—internal and external—place different values on different aspects of service attitude and performance. Therefore, it is important to find out exactly which areas are most important to the customer you are currently serving. Customer expectations must be realis-

tic and attainable. Being able to define, meet, and exceed those expectations on a *regular* basis is the key to personal service performance, business growth, and customer satisfaction.

Part 2 focuses on the numerous essential personal skills that customer service representatives must demonstrate on the job. The four chapters in this section discuss customer conflicts and complaints, as well as how to recover from and win back the customer who is angry. An overview of skills you will need in managing the customer service role, including problem-solving, time-management, and stress-management skills are covered.

Chapter 3 begins Part 2 with perhaps the most important characteristic that a customer service representative brings to the job—attitude and personal approach when dealing with customers.

## Servicing with a Customer-Oriented Attitude

Think about the last visit you made to a restaurant and what you remember about it. Is your strongest memory of the food or of the service you received? For most people, it is the service, even though we consciously believe we are going to a restaurant to get a good meal.

Management guru Peter Drucker put it best when he said, “The purpose of business is to create a customer.” The logic follows that business is not about making sales, or even making profits. Those come naturally when you create customers—and keep them. Employees who give exceptional customer service have a positive, can-do attitude. They treat customers as important to their success and in an honorable fashion.

### ETHICS/CHOICES

**3.1** Carolyn, a CSR you work with, is having a particularly difficult day. You have overheard her on two occasions sounding short with customers on the phone. Further, you are aware that your company is randomly monitoring customers’ calls. Would you call Carolyn aside to talk with her about your concerns?

## The Power of Positive Thinking

It may sound simplistic, but the first step toward creating an appropriate customer-oriented attitude is to begin thinking positive thoughts about yourself and others. The second step is to reflect those thoughts in positive self-talk. **Self-talk** happens inside us, whether we are aware of it or not. We all talk to ourselves, and this self-talk can have a tremendous effect on our attitude. Positive self-talk can help each of us build a positive, winning attitude. On the other hand, negative self-talk can do just the opposite. For example, we become our own worst enemies by telling ourselves things such as “I’ll never be any good at this” or “I look terrible today.” We feel better if we replace those thoughts with the

following statements: “I’m sure I can do this with just a little practice” and “I look and feel great today.”

A positive attitude is not necessarily something you are born with. That’s good news, because it means that, even if your attitude is negative from time to time, you can change and create a positive customer attitude that is helpful and dedicated to being outstanding. Today’s customers perceive good service as added value. In other words, you need to add that something extra or special to the product or service.

As noted speaker and author Anthony Robbins said, “Our beliefs about what we are and what we can be precisely determine what we will be.” In other words, people are not motivated by external sources. Motivation can come only from inside the person. By putting aside preconceived biases and judgments, customer service representatives can better understand what makes their customers tick. Customers can sense positive energy, and the result is that they, too, come away feeling positive.

## The Customer’s Attitude and You

In the real world, CSRs serve customers who display a variety of attitudes. For example, there are customers who are

1. *Comfortable.* Customers who believe their needs and expectations will be met
2. *Indecisive.* Customers who cannot make up their minds or may not even know what they want
3. *Insistent.* Customers who make demands and require you to take immediate action
4. *Irate.* Customers who are angry and need to blow off steam before you can begin to work with them

Your attitude toward your customer is not the only thing that can affect the outcome of that customer contact. If some other aspect of your life is bothering you, it can affect the way you interact with your client. Whether your negative thoughts are based in something that happened to you earlier that day or in your negative expectations regarding a particular customer, replace them with positive ones, such as “I’m eager to help” or “Problem solving is something I’m good at.” Sometimes, on “off days,” we say things we later regret. Guideline 3.1 describes eight statements you should never say to customers.

Following are some survival tips to help you, as a CSR, keep your attitude up all day:

### GUIDELINE 3.1 Eight Statements You Should Never Say to Customers

Statement	Reason
1. “We don’t offer that.”	It’s fine to say “no”; however, how you say “no” is all-important. For example, when you have to turn away a customer, recommend where the product or service can be found.
2. “All sales are final.”	Your business should have a reasonable return policy and warranty plan. This sends a clear message to customers that you believe in what you are selling.
3. “I don’t know who does that.”	Business is lost, and this type of response frustrates customers. Employees must be familiar with who does what at a business or at least have immediate access to people who do have this knowledge.
4. “Sorry, that’s our policy.”	Customers faced with this statement will be annoyed at the lack of creativity a company shows in resolving their problem. Be flexible and helpful with customers who deserve a break.
5. “Tell us what you think.”	Unless you are prepared to react to all varieties of feedback, be careful with this statement. A method or survey instrument to assess customer satisfaction needs to be designed by companies to handle complaints as well as compliments.
6. “Call us about our special offer.”	Make sure everyone who answers the company phones knows about the special if you encourage customers to call.
7. “It will be ready tomorrow.”	Unless you are sure it will be ready as promised, don’t make this commitment. It is smarter to underpromise and overdeliver.
8. “I don’t know.”	Don’t use that phrase unless it is followed by the phrase “but I will find out for you.” Admitting you don’t have the answer is fine and can actually improve your credibility, if you make an effort to get the answer for the customer.

- *Engage in positive self-talk.* Practice healthy thinking. Do not clutter your mind with negatives.
- *Get a calming object.* Use a photo, cartoon, small stuffed animal, or positive notes in your work area that remind you “this, too, shall pass.”
- *Focus on successes rather than negatives.* Track the things that go right.

- *Use your break time effectively.* Do something to keep yourself going, something that relaxes you and clears your mind. For example, listen to music, take a short walk, or read. Do not use your free time for complaining to others.
- *Develop a buddy system at work.* Learn from each other and share the load.
- *Take care of yourself.* When the details of work or a particular customer situation are getting you down, step back and look at the big picture. Be kind to yourself. Know that you have choices. Exercise, volunteer, spend time with friends and family, and do other things that add value to your life.
- *Take your sense of humor to work.* Take your work seriously, but don’t take yourself seriously. Learn to laugh at yourself.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE TIP

**3.1** *Negative self-talk affects your attitude and interferes with your ability to develop an emotional connection with your customer.*

## Delivering Comprehensive Service

Serving customers well is not a case of “*us versus them*.” Put another way, don’t look at excellent service as “we lose—they win.” When common goals with your customer are established, you are both working toward something you agree is worthy. When you reach those goals, you are both satisfied. Moreover, if you don’t reach them, the customer feels that at least you tried and gave an honest effort.

When a customer complains, you need to take corrective action as soon as possible. If the customer complains directly to you, avoid being defensive or judgmental. Do not attempt to explain why the problem occurred. The customer is not particularly interested in reasons for poor service or who is to blame. Customers want to know they are being heard and that their comments are valued. Most of all, they want the problem fixed. Remember that, whenever a customer perceives that he or she is not being served well, that is the customer’s reality.

## Delivery of Services

Often, customer service representatives have to deal with customers who perceive services they receive through a filter, or screen. Such a frame of reference depends on several factors:

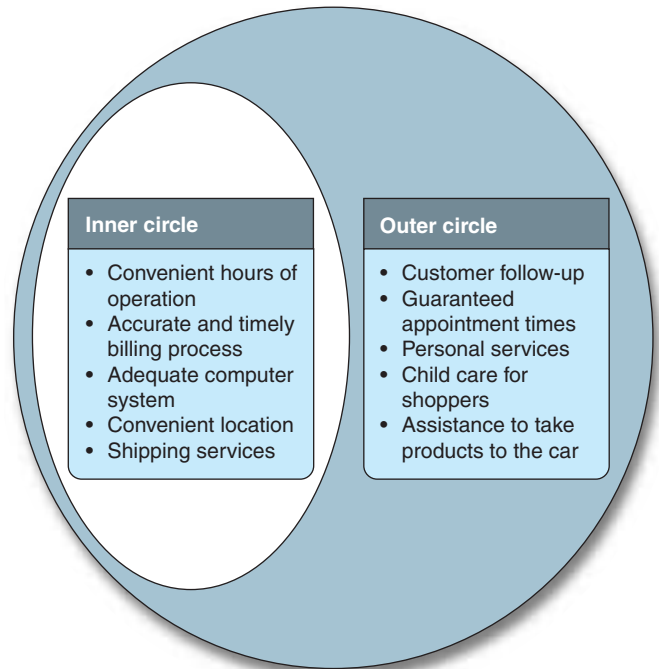
- How the customer feels that day
- Experiences the customer has had that day
- Experiences the customer has had with the CSR or the company
- Experiences the customer’s friends or family members have had with employees in the company
- The setting, environment, and circumstances of the current interaction

All things being equal, there is little difference between an organization and its competition. How service is delivered, therefore, is critical. One small action can make all the difference to a customer on a particular day. In the case of customer service, we can look at delivery of services similar to those in Figure 3.1. The concept of delivery of services can be represented by two circles—one within the other. The inner circle is made up of the basic services and products an organization and its competition provide. Customers *expect* the services and products shown in the inner circle: convenient hours of operation, accurate and timely billing process, adequate computer system, convenient location, and shipping services. In contrast, the outer circle allows a company to showcase its organization, to set itself apart from the competition by providing elements that exceed customers’ expectations: customer follow-up, guaranteed appointment times, personal services, child care for shoppers, and assistance to take products to the car.

How important is outer-circle service? It is extremely important. Your inner circle may be perfect because you do everything the customer expects, but what you do might not be enough to guarantee that the customer will come back on a regular basis. To summarize, then, without strong outer-circle service, you may not be offering the customer anything *special enough* to set you apart from the competition.

## CSRs and the Adversity Quotient

Paul Stoltz, author of a book entitled *Adversity Quotient @ Work*, states that companies should hire customer service representatives who have a high adversity quotient (AQ).



**FIGURE 3.1**

When delivering services to customers, the inner and outer circles of service characterize an organization.

An **adversity quotient** is a precise, measurable, unconscious pattern of how people respond to adversity. According to Stoltz, companies need to hire customer service representatives who not only are nice but also are resilient and have a high AQ. Unless CSRs learn how to maintain control and be energized by tough problems, adversity will take its toll on them and negatively affect the services they provide to customers. The core elements of an AQ, according to Stoltz, are control, ownership, reach, and endurance:

- **Control.** CSRs who have a high AQ perceive that they have influence over adverse customer service situations. For example, if the company has a product recall, CSRs remain calm, project a positive attitude, and reassure customers that the problem will be remedied. On the other hand, low-AQ CSRs become stressed and overwhelmed by adversity.
- **Ownership.** CSRs with a high AQ hold themselves accountable for solving customers’ problems. Conversely, low-AQ CSRs are likely to say, “It’s not my fault.”
- **Reach.** High-AQ CSRs refuse to allow negative situations reach into other areas of their work lives. For instance, if a customer threatens to defect to a competitor, they focus on earning back the customer’s

loyalty, remaining upbeat, no matter what, whereas low-AQ CSRs view the situation as hopeless and allow their feelings to have an impact on other aspects of their job.

- *Endurance.* High-AQ CSRs can see beyond difficulties and retain their optimism. This gives them the endurance to hang on during adverse encounters with customers. In contrast, low-AQ CSRs reason, “Why try to endure this? It’s only going to end in disaster!”<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of skills and personal characteristics that star service representatives have in common. In today’s competitive marketplace, you need to do all you can to differentiate yourself in terms of providing excellent customer service. Assume the role of the CSR you want to become and answer each question in Guideline 3.2, to determine how well you might stand out, compared with other service representatives.

## Customer Service Rules and Guidelines

When you work for any organization, there are rules and guidelines that must be followed. To separate our understanding of these rules, we’ll refer to them as red and blue rules. Red rules are very prescriptive, because it is essential they be done exactly as specified. One example of a red rule deals with legal issues that say you have a legal obligation to follow particular procedures exactly as outlined. Another red rule might involve safety issues federally mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). For example, requiring that something be done in a certain manner in order to keep the workplace safe is a red rule. In other words, every employee in the organization must follow red rules.

However, there also are blue rules, rules that are optional and can be bent or modified, based on the circumstances. Statements such as “We don’t work after 5:00 P.M.” and “Late fees cannot be waived” are examples of blue rules. They play into the old saying “There is an exception to every [blue] rule.”

It may be the most reasonable and prudent action to bend the rule because it just makes sense and is for the greater good of the situation and the customers involved. The important thing about organizational rules is that you

<sup>1</sup>“Forget the Smile Training—Consider Boot Camp!” *Managing Customer Service* (April 2001): 8.

### GUIDELINE 3.2 QUIZ

#### “Do You Stand Out from the Competition?”

Yes	No	Question
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Do you spend 60 to 70 percent of your time listening while a customer talks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Do you smile more often than most other people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Are you better than others at recognizing and responding to customer questions and problems?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Are you highly effective at identifying and prioritizing customer needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Do you tend to recommend additional products or services that meet a customer’s specific needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Do you explain procedures in clear, concise terms?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Are you highly enthusiastic about attending customer service training seminars and classes?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Do you listen to motivational tapes and read inspirational books in your leisure time?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Do you regard yourself as generally upbeat and positive?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Do you enjoy the work you do?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total

*Note: If you answered 9 or 10 questions “yes,” you already have many habits of highly successful CSRs. Eight is an average score. Seven or less indicates that there are still ways you can improve your performance.*

have to define clearly both the red and blue rules and give individual employees as much discretion to change blue rules on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation. In other words, relative to interpreting blue rules, CSRs can be empowered by their organization to use their best judgment.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE TIP

**3.2** *When you are empathetic, you are sensitive to your customer’s feelings and thoughts.*

## Building a Teamwork Approach to Customer Service

What do you think of when someone mentions the word *teamwork*? Sports teams most often come to mind, but other situations involve teamwork as well. For example, consider the movie industry. Every time producers decide to make a movie, they have to put together a new team,



Customers feel better taken care of when service providers work as a team.

which includes actors, sound and light crews, makeup artists, clothes designers, and directors, among others. All the members of the team are needed to create a finished product, the movie; however, in order to accomplish that goal with positive results, all the members must work together as a team.

In like fashion, taking a team approach to customer service means working together as a group, with common expectations and goals. What does teamwork show customers? A good team approach shows that the company is organized and that everyone is moving toward a common goal of satisfying the customer.

Because of shared ownership, no team member will let the failure of one member cause the entire team to fail. Team members are accountable to each other; again, customers know that the final objective of the team is their satisfaction.

## Teamwork Communication

Communication is one of the most important considerations for teams to thrive. A team can be effective only if its members communicate well with each other. Everyone needs to know what is going on.

Whenever a team is put together, however, there are always issues, such as different personalities, management styles, and company hierarchies, to deal with. Many times, it is more difficult to exchange honest, open feedback with someone you work with than with your customers. This is sometimes due to the fact that the message you have to share with a fellow worker is not a positive one.

To maintain good working relationships, therefore, it is important that any negative feedback or criticisms you need to offer a coworker be focused on the specific task in question, not on his or her personality. Also, to be constructive, any criticism you offer should be accompanied by a positive suggestion on how to improve the task. By the same token, if a teammate is doing something well, be sure to say so. Again, focus your comments on the task. An effective customer service environment fosters forthright feedback and values honesty.

## ETHICS/CHOICES

**3.2** Your company encourages employees to work in teams. Brent is a fellow CSR with whom you have worked before. On numerous occasions, you have noticed that he really has “an attitude.” To you, it appears that he is always angry and seemingly puts others down without thinking that what he is saying may be upsetting and hurtful to others. Most of your coworkers simply ignore Brent and just try to have as little conversation with him as possible. What would be your approach with Brent?

## Benefits of Teamwork

When customer service is built with teamwork as its foundation, many benefits result. One of the most important benefits is that teamwork helps break down walls that can sometimes exist between sections or departments within organizations. Teamwork can also provide new ideas and a new slant on a customer problem. Finally, teamwork can create a more effective method to use in delegating work and any follow-up actions that must be taken.

Because no one is an expert in everything, people need to gather knowledge from others. People who work together tend to learn things faster and retain information longer than do individuals who work alone. Teamwork creates a **synergy**, which means that the combined effect of the efforts of many individuals is greater than the sum of their individual efforts. With synergy, problem solving becomes more effective, and better decisions tend to be made. Guideline 3.3 provides some strategies that team members can adopt to provide exceptional customer service.

### GUIDELINE 3.3 Teamwork Strategies That Promote Customer Service

1. *Support your teammates with information.* Share what you know freely with your coworkers. Use huddles—brief, informal meetings—instead of formal meetings when time is limited.
2. *Discuss new policies.* Discuss any new policies with your team and jointly create a way to explain changes to your customers in a positive way. Sometimes, using a script can ensure that everyone is consistently following the same plan.
3. *Identify areas for improvement.* Let the ideas flow without judgment in a brainstorming session. Even the craziest ideas sometimes turn out to be the ideas that work the best.
4. *Show pride in yourself and your coworkers.* Celebrate others' successes. Let the customer know you are proud.

## Dealing with Unique Customer Situations

Customer service interactions can be complex under the best of conditions. Add issues of language, race, gender, religion, age, or disability into the mix and, often, otherwise competent employees can be found acting in ways ranging from mildly inappropriate to inexcusably rude.

The customer demographics for most organizations are changing in such a way as to increase the diversity and uniqueness of the populations that are served. This factor makes it imperative that CSRs be aware of how customers perceive their service. Further, how you perceive the needs of your customers may depend on their (and your own) personal and cultural perspectives.

### Customers of Different Cultures

As companies expand across the globe, challenges in customer service grow. In order to avoid cultural collisions with customers—when emotions, habits, or judgments taint service efforts—a CSR needs to be aware of how culture plays a role in the service encounter. A suggestion is for employees to identify their cultural differences and be conscious about not stereotyping any customer. Stereotyping customers leads to misunderstandings and prejudgments that hinder service encounters.

Customers with accents generally know they have an accent, but the responsibility for understanding what is being said still rests with the customer service representative. When serving customers from a different culture, apologize to them when you don't understand them. Be sure to speak to them slowly and clearly. If necessary, ask them to repeat what they have said. This gives you another chance to develop an “ear” for the accent. It is as important for a listener to understand through a heavy accent as it is for the other person to make strides toward improving his or her English skills.

Because some cultures consider feedback or criticism damaging to one's reputation, CSRs might paraphrase to restate what was said to ensure a smooth communication flow. Customer service representatives must be sensitive to the ethnic, religious, and moral values of other cultures. Sensitive companies that provide a good cross-cultural employee training program find it to be very helpful. The content of this training program might include an explanation of the differences between cultures, as well as formal manners and etiquette to follow when serving international customers.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE TIP

**3.3** *If a word or a phrase isn't common knowledge, don't use it with a customer. Always speak distinctly, or you risk failing to connect with the customer.*

### Customers with Disabilities

Discrimination against customers with disabilities is often unintentional. It may stem from a general lack of awareness that many of us have about disabilities. Consequently, it is important for companies to plan ahead to meet the requirements of their customers with disabilities. Wherever necessary and reasonable, service providers should adjust the way they provide their services, so that people who are physically challenged can use them in the best way.

In all cases, it is important to ensure that the dignity of persons with disabilities is respected when services are provided. It is perfectly all right to consult them about how they might be served. It is important that service

providers and their organization not assume that the only way to make services more accessible to people with disabilities is to alter the premises physically, such as by installing a permanent ramp or widening doorways. Often, minor measures that are embedded in common sense work wonderfully. One example is to practice patience and to allow more time to deal with customers with disabilities. Listening carefully and responding appropriately helps CSRs meet the requirements and expectations of people with disabilities.

In conclusion, when serving any customer,

- Evaluate how the customer wants to be served.
- Adjust your approach to match the customer's needs.
- Greet all customers and make them feel comfortable.
- Respect personal differences.
- Always thank customers for their business.

## Concluding Message for CSRs

Companies make painful compromises by hiring people with a less than stable work record and a less than acceptable customer service attitude. Employers want service providers who have a history of showing up at work and who are energetic, knowledgeable, kind, and efficient with customers.

Customer service representatives can provide service more consistently if three important guidelines are followed: View all customers positively, establish an emotional connection with customers by giving them your undivided attention, and listen actively to all customer concerns.

## Summary

- The customer is the one who sets the standard for service excellence.
- Employees who give exceptional customer service have a positive, can-do attitude.
- Positive self-talk helps each of us build a positive, winning attitude, whereas negative self-talk does just the opposite.
- There are certain statements that should never be used with customers.
- When a customer complains, corrective action needs to be taken as soon as possible.

- Examples of outer-circle elements of customer service include the extras that many companies do not give, such as customer follow-up and guaranteed appointment times.
- The inner-circle elements are made up of the basic services and products an organization and its competition provide the consumer.
- The adversity quotient is the precise, measurable, unconscious pattern of how people respond to adversity.
- In serving customers, there are legal and safety-oriented company rules that cannot be altered; however, other rules that do not have a legal or safety basis can be bent or modified, based on particular customer circumstances.
- A good team approach shows that the company is organized and that everyone is moving toward the common goal of doing whatever it takes to satisfy the customer.
- CSRs deal with unique service situations, including working with customers who present challenges related to issues of language, race, gender, religion, age, and disability.

## QUESTIONS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. How would you describe the best customer-oriented attitude you've encountered relative to services you've received over the past month?
2. In what ways can self-talk affect how people behave and think?
3. Describe a business you've encountered in your city where you feel both its outer-level and its inner-level elements of customer service are par excellence.
4. Do you agree that the way people handle adversity in their lives affects their service and work attitudes? Explain.
5. What are two benefits to a CSR of contributing to team efforts at work?
6. If you were a CSR in the travel industry, what would you keep in mind when booking travel for customers of different cultures and customers with disabilities?

 **On-line Research Activities**

**Project 3.1: Positive Attitudes at Work**

Assume you are doing a report on *the power of a positive work attitude*. Use the Internet to research information and use the search engine of your choice. As a result of your search, keyboard three items (and their URLs) of current information you might use in your report.

**Project 3.2: “Application of the Adversity Quotient In . . .”**

**Situation**

In the lunchroom one day at On-Time Technology Products, someone had left the book *Adversity Quotient @ Work* on one of the tables. Several CSRs picked it up and started talking about the usefulness of AQ when applying these concepts in the world of business. You said that you felt AQ could apply to any aspect of our lives to include how we work, play, learn, and are members of families and society, in general. Doug, on the other hand, said he felt AQ applied only to the business world, and Ruth said that, if educators could help students achieve higher AQs, then school environments would be less violent.

*On the Internet, locate the application of dealing with adversity at several web sites. Using file PRJ3-2 on the student CD, key responses in the following table format that will provide information on ways that a high AQ can positively influence each area.*

Life Situation	Benefit of Applying High AQs
1. In business, in general	
2. In call centers for CSRs	
3. In the home/family	
4. In schools (K–12)	

 **Communication Skills at Work**

**Project 3.3: “Action Plan for Improving Your Attitude”**

**Situation**

Supervisor Mary Graeff has asked each CSR to develop an action plan to improve on employees’ attitudes when working with customers. Give some thought to each of the situations in column 1 and respond in column 2 with an activity that would work for you.

*Retrieve file PRJ3-3 and complete the following form.*

What Can You Do To . . .	Response
1. Convey interest in your customers?	
2. Keep your attitude positive?	
3. Remain energized and enthusiastic on the job?	
4. Learn more about the organization you work for?	
5. Take initiative when helping a customer?	



## Decision Making at Work

### Project 3.4: How to Motivate the Unenthusiastic Teammate

During a weekly team meeting at On-Time Technology Products, you notice that one of your teammates is quieter than usual and acts as if he does not care to be involved in the team's brainstorming session.

*Respond to each of the following statements with an example of what you might say to a team member who suffers from lack of motivation.*

1. Acknowledge your teammate's value.

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2. Get to the source of the problem.

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3. Stress the importance of team harmony.

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## Case Study

### 3.1 “Deal with It!”

On the first day of a 4-day holiday weekend, Samantha was having a problem with her phone and needed to use her neighbor Tim’s phone. When she finished talking to the customer service representative at the phone company, she was quite shocked by the service she had received. She told Tim that the CSR told her that she would just “have to *deal with* the inconvenience until Tuesday morning.” Samantha ranted and raved to Tim for a good 20 minutes.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Does Samantha have a legitimate reason to be upset with the phone company?

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2. If this happened to you, what steps would you suggest to the phone company to improve its customer service?

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## Case Study

### 3.2 “If There’s a Rule, I’ll Follow It”

Doug, a CSR for On-Time Technology Products, recently experienced a very frustrating civil brush with the law concerning boundary lines between his and his neighbor’s property. As a consequence of this negative legal experience, everyone at work recognizes that Doug is a bit straitlaced when it comes to following rules. However, the situation is starting to become disturbing, because his narrow attitude is carrying over to how he is dealing with customers while on the job.

Answer the following questions:

1. Do situations in a person’s personal life spill over and affect attitudes on the job? Explain.

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2. If you were Mary Graeff, Doug’s supervisor, how would you explain to him the best way to interpret which rules he is required to follow to the letter and which ones allow him some flexibility?

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3. If Ms. Graeff were to ask you what steps you would take to help Doug overcome this attitude and get back on track with customers, what would you recommend that she do (i.e., would you just talk to him, reprimand him, send him for training, . . .)?

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