



TriMetrix®HD Customer Focus

Customer Focus

A commitment to customer satisfaction.

Why is this skill important?

Customer Focus is the lifeblood of any business. There are several things you can do to bring in many new customers, but unless you can get some of those customers to come back, your business won't be profitable for long.

Good Customer Focus is all about bringing customers back. If you send customers away happy, they will be happy to pass on positive feedback about your business to others, who may then try the product or service you offer for themselves. These customers may all become repeat customers.

If you are a good salesperson, you can sell anything to anyone once. Your approach to Customer Focus will determine whether or not you'll ever be able to sell that person anything else. The core of good Customer Focus is forming a relationship with customers.

How do you go about forming such a relationship? By remembering the one true secret of good Customer Focus and acting accordingly; "You will be judged by what you do, not what you say."

What are skills associated with Customer Focus?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Customer Focus:

- Consistently places a high value on customers and all issues related to customers.
- Objectively listens to, understands and represents customer feedback.
- Anticipates customer needs and develops appropriate solutions.
- Meets all promises and commitments made to customers.

How do you develop your own skills in Customer Focus?

- Don't make promises unless you will keep them. Reliability is one of the keys to any good relationship, and good Customer Focus is no exception. Think before you make any promises. Nothing annoys customers more than a broken promise.
- Be open and responsive to other people. Show that you are paying attention to them by looking them squarely in the eyes and using facial expressions and gestures to show you hear and understand what is being said.
- Demonstrate your interest in what other people have to say by asking thoughtful questions.
- Let your customer talk and show him that you are listening by making the appropriate responses, such as suggesting how to solve a problem.
- Recognize verbal and non-verbal cues others are giving you. Sometimes gestures and manners tell more than words.
- Deal with complaints. No one likes to hear complaints, and many of us have developed a reflex shrug, saying "You can't please all the people all the time." Maybe not, but if you give the complaint your attention, you may be able to please this one person this one time and position your business to reap the benefits of good Customer Focus.
- Be helpful, even if there's no immediate profit in it.
- Train your staff to always be helpful, courteous and knowledgeable. Regularly talk to them about good Customer Focus and what it is and isn't. Most importantly, give every member of your staff enough information and power to make those small, customer-pleasing decisions.
- Take the extra step, whatever it may be. If you want to provide good Customer Focus, go the extra mile. The customers may not mention it, but they do notice when you make an extra effort and will likely tell other people.
- Throw in something extra. Whether it's a coupon for a future discount or free product, additional information on how to use the product, or a genuine smile, people love to get more than they thought they were getting. Don't think that a gesture has to be large to be effective.

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Activities

Activity 1: Body Language

Understanding body language is a big part of learning to understand other people and it gives you the ability to serve them better. Make a list of five emotions or mental states that are commonly expressed in the workplace. Then, list at least three examples of body language that accompany each emotion.

EXAMPLE:

Emotion/State of Mind: Boredom

Body Language:

1. Slumped in chair
2. Doodling
3. Difficulty paying attention

Emotion/State of Mind #1: _____

Body Language: _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Emotion/State of Mind #2: _____

Body Language: _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Emotion/State of Mind #3: _____

Body Language: _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Emotion/State of Mind #4: _____

Body Language: _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Emotion/State of Mind #5: _____

Body Language: _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Activity 2: Listening and Observing

Make a point of watching three to five formal presentations that you can see on television or in person. A few examples include: the next Presidential address, a briefing on C-SPAN, a local mayoral address, a lecture at the local university, etc.

Watch at least 15 minutes of each speech or lecture. Pay close attention to what the speaker is saying and how he/she is saying it.

- What are the main points?
- Why do you think the speaker is expressing them?
- How is the speaker expressing them?
- Does the speaker seem happy? Angry? Enthusiastic? Why?
- How would you demonstrate the same points? Would you do it differently? Why?

Activity 3: Deal with a Complaint

Think of two recent situations in which you had to deal with a difficult situation in which someone was complaining. This can be personal or professional.

Situation 1:

Situation 2:

For each situation, answer the following questions:

- Was the situation difficult from the beginning, or did it grow difficult during the course of the discussion? Why or why not?
- What was your own reaction to the tension?
- What was the other person's reaction?
- What were you really trying to tell the other person? What were your main points?
- What was the other person trying to tell you? What were his/her main points? Can you say? Why or why not?
- What could you have done to understand the other person's opinions or feelings better?
- What could he or she have done to understand your opinions or feelings better?
- What can you do to avoid such situations in the future? How can you handle them better?

