Developing a Customer Service Training Programme

When developing a Customer Service Training Programme there are a number of simple training approaches you can take. Here are some useful tips covering the main considerations you need to make.

For specific training activities and exercises please see customer service training ideas.

Here are nine main principles of a successful customer service training programme:

• **Analyse your current successes and challenges in delivering customer service:**
  Review your current levels of customer satisfaction from surveys, mystery shopper exercises and customer complaints. In addition, capture the volume and nature of each to ensure you focus on the critical aspects first and can measure the outcome of the training.

• **Focus on customer service attitudes, behaviours and skills within the training:**
  Use exercises and activities in which staff can get practically involved. As a result, staff will be able to highlight issues that prevent great customer service and make suggested improvements. Consequently, this will help to embed a positive mindset shift.

Need help? Try our customer service training.

• **Review how your customer service standards are captured and communicated:**
  We recommend a review of your organisation’s customer service standards with a view to embedding them during the training itself, as well as at team briefings etc.

However, if you have a small team you may not have any customer service standards. In this case, you may wish to consider using some time before hand or some of the training time to capture the staff's view on what the standard should be.

As a result, this will really help enhance staff commitment to delivering excellent customer service.
• **Involve and empower team leaders and managers:**
  Ask team leaders and managers to review your plans for customer service training. Provide an overview of the training session, so that they reinforce the learning with follow up coaching and support.

  In addition, ask the managers to provide you with feedback on the changes they have observed following the training and share information on the overall progress made.

  Importantly, ensure team leaders and managers are well equipped at problem solving and are able to overcome most barriers to resolving customer service issues.

  For example, you could get a senior manager to introduce the first training session to explain why this is so important. Managers that are more willing may even support you with practical demonstrations and sharing of knowledge.

• **Involve the staff in the ongoing development of the training:**
  Survey the staff first to ensure you focus on their needs and incorporate their ideas. Then ensure you capture and feedback on their ideas and suggestions for how to improve customer service.

  In addition, after the training, ask staff how they would like to keep the momentum going afterwards. For example, customer service forums could be set up, as well as using features within daily briefings and team meetings.

• **Reward excellent customer service:**
  Reward good service through your normal methods of performance reviews, as well as considering a ‘Customer Service Excellence’ Reward Scheme.

  For example, high scoring employees could win a customer service excellence award, say on a monthly basis. Successful schemes usually involve nominations from staff themselves, as well as managers and team leaders monitoring customer feedback.

• **Measure the outcome of the training programme:**
  Return to your initial results from the surveys, mystery shoppers and complaint records after a set period of time, say on a quarterly basis. As a result, you will be able to measure and communicate the improvements, as well as the focus for the next quarter.

  Also, consider some complaint training for customer-facing staff.
• **Celebrate the success of the training:**
  Involve all the staff and thank them for their contributions and support. You can achieve this in numerous ways, but one important factor is that the "thank you" comes from the top of the organisation.

  Ideally, the senior company representative should do this face to face, or by video link in larger multi-site organisations where geographical limitations exist.

• **In build learning into future customer service training:**
  Capture the key successes and lessons learnt through the customer service training programme. In addition, ensure that other people in your company can easily access and utilise this valuable information.

**Related Topics**
You may also find our tips helpful on:

- Customer Service Training Ideas
- Dealing with Difficult Behaviour
- Handling Customer Complaints
- Tips on Facilitating Groups

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