Customers...
- Come in all shapes and sizes
- Want what they want
- Expect you to know your job
- Expect you to help them
- Don’t always know the rules or the way we do things
- Deserve value

Value...
- It is important to the customer
- The customer is willing to pay for it.
- It is done correct the first time.
- And done correctly every time.
Customer Service on the Front Line
-Sara Tebes, Irving Public Library

Good Customer Service

- *Competence* – knows the job, processes, policy, people, etc.

- *Warmth* – has friendly, welcoming demeanor

- *Positive Attitude* – wants to be open and helpful

Good Customer Service

- *Patience* – presents a calm temperament, slow breathing, keeps cool, stays cool,

- *Listens* – actively listens, open stance, eye contact, affirms understanding by word, nod or summarizing

- *Options* – offers a choice or solutions

See the Value

- When it is consistently applied
- When it is correctly applied
- It keeps the customer coming back
On the front-line

- Not going to make everyone happy
- People come with their own baggage, background, perspective, & feelings

On the front-line

- Complaints aren't personal... even though it feels that way
- Losing your cool will make the situation worse

Handling complaints

- Apply good customer service in earnest
- Forgiveness - let go of past issues
- Let the customer explain themselves
  - Get the story first
  - What is the real issue?
  - Don’t problem-solve immediately
Customer Service on the Front Line
-Sara Tebes, Irving Public Library

Control...

- Perceptions
  - Present a demeanor of concern
  - “We take your issue seriously”
  - Listen without interrupting

- The Conversation
  - Focus on the current issue
  - Use positive tone & language

Control...

- The Facts
  - Understand the timeline
  - Summarize what you heard to customer
  - Assure them you do understand the complaint, their feelings, or the situation

Start towards a Solution

- How can we resolve this?
  - Sometimes they just want to be heard
  - Sometimes you ask “What would you like me to do?”
Don’t offer excuses…
- Apologize (I understand how you feel or would feel this way...)
- Give a knowledgeable explanation of the policy or get someone who can

Offer a Solution
- Offer a solution now within the scope of the policy, procedures, etc
- Offer a solution for the next time
- Offer to pass on the complaint, issue, or concern to the appropriate party

Solutions...
- Solutions should fit the problem without undue stress on others
- Solutions should be reasonable to understand, to handle, and to accept
- Solutions can come from the customer (If it has some merit then pass it on)
Solutions do not...

- Solutions do not just accommodate (that’s what exceptions do)
- Solutions do not jeopardize the policy or the overall customer service of the library

What to ask yourself

- What is the customer’s need?
- Is the customer’s request reasonable?
- Am I doing this because the customer asked nicely?
- Is being too demanding?

Think about it...

- Is it a slippery slope?
- Will it jeopardize the policy or overall customer service of the library?
- Is the solution or exception consistent and workable for others to also use?
- Will someone get into trouble for using it?
A Front-Line Solution
- Call the supervisor if/when
  - They ask
  - You offer and they say yes
  - They are abusive
  - The desk is too busy to attend to this customer
  - The situation is one you know you can’t resolve

Supervisors or Managers
- Can make the decision on whether to create a solution or make an exception
- Can give the front-line staff the options for acceptable solutions
- Listen to the front-line staff
- Plan for solutions

So Front Line Customer Service
- Involves the customer
- Involves the front-line staff
- Involves the library’s ILS system
- Involves the library policy
- Sometimes involves the supervisor
Good Customer Service

- Is a value for the customer
- Delivers the service or product
- It is done right
- It is consistent
- Can provides solutions
- Keeps the customer coming back

Examples of IPL Solutions

- Monthly Payment Plan for Customers
- POS Customer Survey Card
- Free Replacement Library Card Promotion
- 2-part youth card application so parent receives confirmation copy
- Online electronic storage of applications
- No late fees
- Sell flash drives & ear-buds to public

Any questions?
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