LIBRARY CUSTOMER SERVICE
IN THE NEW NORMAL

Presented for LibraryLinkNJ
The New Jersey Library Cooperative

Dr. Steve Albrecht, SHRM-CP, ASIS CPP, ATAP CTM
www.DrSteveAlbrecht.com
Who’s in Charge of Customer Service Quality at Your Library?

Every full and part-time employee, our volunteers.

Every manager and supervisor.

Every Department head.

The Director and every Board member.

*Even if you don’t serve a customer, your job is to serve someone who does.*
The Spirit of Service

An attitude,
based on certain values and beliefs
about people, life, and work,
that leads a person to willingly serve others
and take pride in his or her work.
moment of truth any encounter where the customer comes in contact with some aspect of the organization and gets an impression of the quality of its service.
Good service is about good feelings. When you feel good about your job, the patrons feel good about their encounters with you.

It’s more than just smiling or being friendly; it’s an attitude that comes from wanting to help people.

Feelings are contagious. The way you feel about your work is the way your co-workers will feel about their jobs too.

Even if you do the same tasks over and over (and over), it may be new to our patrons. We only have one chance to make a first impression.

Word-of-mouth plays a large part in good customer service. One experience with you can make a big difference.
Our Approach

Pay Attention to Details. (It’s the little things that add up to the overall experience for our patrons.)

Be Present in Their Overall Experiences. (Stay focused on your work and make each encounter as positive as possible.)

Be Proactive and Approachable. (Your body language and tone says it all.)

When You See a Problem, It’s Yours Until It’s Solved. (One example: Walk patrons where they need to go, even if you’re not going that way.)
Beating Burnout

Service jobs can be challenging. If you have high human contact and low control over the work you do, it’s easy to get or look bored, go home tired, or even quit.

Sometimes it can help to see yourself as an actor or an actress in a play. Same performance for you; new performance for the patron.

So give them a good show.

More BREADS!

Breathing, Relaxation, Exercise, Attitude, Diet, Sleep
What “business” are we in?
Who are the patrons we serve?
Who Comes to Our Libraries?

People of all ages; their family members or relatives.
Information seekers, readers, browsers, students.
Vendors and contractors; town officials; attorneys; electeds.
People with an agenda; “justice seekers”; 1A video takers.
People who are angry or in physical or emotional pain.
Entitled people, who don’t care about our Code of Conduct or your requests to comply.
People facing temporary or chronic homelessness.
Mentally ill people.
Substance abusing people.
People with language barriers.
Two Different Worlds

The Organization’s World

The Customer’s World
Other Companies

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel:
“Wherever the guest goes, you go.”

The Nordstrom Employee Manual is actually just a card:
“Rule #1: Use your good judgment in all situations.
There will be no additional rules.”

The Southwest Airlines Way:
“Maintain a Warrior Spirit.
Have a Fun-Loving Attitude.
Lead from a Servant’s Heart.”
Three Roles For Employees

Your “Worker” Role

Your “Team Member” Role

Your “Ambassador” Role
Building the “Perfect” Customer Service Library Employee

Smart
Fast
Polite
Patient
Assertive
Well-informed
Good problem-solver.
Takes pride in the job and the business.

Good rule bender
Responsible
Accountable
Reliable
Real
Professional face.
Works in the moment and owns the issues.
Knows how to represent the business.
Three Roles For Supervisors

The “Boss” Role

The “Problem-Solver” Role

The “Coach” Role
Our Library Mission begins with:

**Activities** – What do we do?

**Benefits** – Who does it help?

**Customers** – What types of patrons do we serve?

We should be able to say what we do in one long sentence, e.g., “The City Clerk collects, stores, and protects the important historical documents for our citizens and our City.”
Customer Value Model

Library Patron

Safe, inviting facility.
Informed, welcoming staff.
Listen to my needs; provide help (or not).
Quality of provided information.
Patience with my lack of knowledge about library information systems.
Support for my technical needs.
Treated with dignity, empathy, respect.
“T.C.I.A.R.”

TRUE OR FALSE?
Managing Service “Recovery”

When the art of service “recovery” goes unmanaged, patrons will complain.

A complaint is a “gift,” so make it L.A.S.T.

Listen / Apologize / Solve / Thank
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Switchboard</th>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Bell Service</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
<th>Front Desk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reads room service menu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dials telephone</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for kitchen</td>
<td>Answers call; rings kitchen</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places order</td>
<td>Answers call; takes order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waits for delivery</td>
<td>Cooks food, prepares tray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives meal</td>
<td>Delivers tray to room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eats food</td>
<td>Posts charge to room bill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks out; gets bill</td>
<td>Present bill to customer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise**
Seven Sins of Customer Service

1. Apathy
2. The Brushoff
3. Disrespect
4. Condescension
5. Injustice
6. The Rulebook
7. The Runaround
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Attentiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Open Body Language and Tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fair and Equal Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verbal Judo: The L.E.A.P.S.™ Model

**Listen actively:** Introduce yourself; get his or her name if possible.

**Empathize:** “I can see you’re upset . . .”

**Ask questions:** “What can I do . . .?”

**Paraphrase:** “If I hear you, you said . . .”

**Seek solutions:** “Why don’t we . . .?” or “What if you and I go over and . . .?”
Phrases That May Work

“You can’t do that if you want to stay here.”

“Our insurance won’t allow that.”

“Let’s talk about what I can do for you.”

“I know you want some information about what’s happening.”

“I’m here to help you.”

“I want to give you an update or tell you about the waiting time.”

“I’m sorry. I’m not trying to make you mad.”

“You could be right.”

“Please help me do my job for your safety.”

“I know you’re not trying to scare the other people here.”
Phrases That Usually Don’t Work

“You need to calm down.”

“That’s not our policy.”

“What you need to understand is . . .”

“I can’t help you. I don’t know who can.”

“I’m going on my break. You’ll have to call or come back later.”

“You didn’t read the instructions or directions.”
Phrases That Usually Don’t Work

“You need to come here, go over there, or wait over there.”

“That’s just our policy. It’s against our policy.”

“You wouldn’t understand . . . ”

“It’s none of your business why . . . ”

“What do you want me to do about it?”

“I’m not going to tell you again or explain it again.”

“Why can’t you be reasonable?”
Introduce / Explain / Ask

**Introduce** yourself. Try to get the person’s name.

**Explain:**

“I noticed that . . . “
“The reason I’m here is . . .”
“I’m sure you already know this, but . . .”

**Ask:** “I need to ask you to . . .”
Face-to-Face or Over-the-Counter

Assess people. Read the body language signs of frustration versus cooperation.

Think about past encounters.

Use space and distance and proxemic barriers.

Practice venting and validation.

Use physical movement and the Assertive Whisper.
Telephone Skills

Over the phone, body language is missing, so tone is all we have.
Neutral, friendly, polite.
Get permission to put them on hold or to multi-task.
Get a callback number.
Under-promise and over-perform.
Set boundaries for their bad behavior.
The Code of Quality Service

1. Greet each patron immediately or when passing by.
2. Give each patron you contact your complete attention.
3. Make the first 30 seconds count.
4. Do your part to be real, not phony or bored.
5. Show your energy with sincere friendliness.
6. Be the patron’s problem-solver.
7. Use your common sense.
8. Bend the rules when the situation calls for it.
9. Make the last 30 seconds count.
10. Take good care of yourself.