

# [Module 5 Customer Centricity]

## Lecture 3 – Assertive Communication

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**Undergraduate Certificate in Notarial Law  
Fundamentals for Office Assistants**

# Objectives

To adopt an assertive, mutually benefit attitude when communicating with customers.

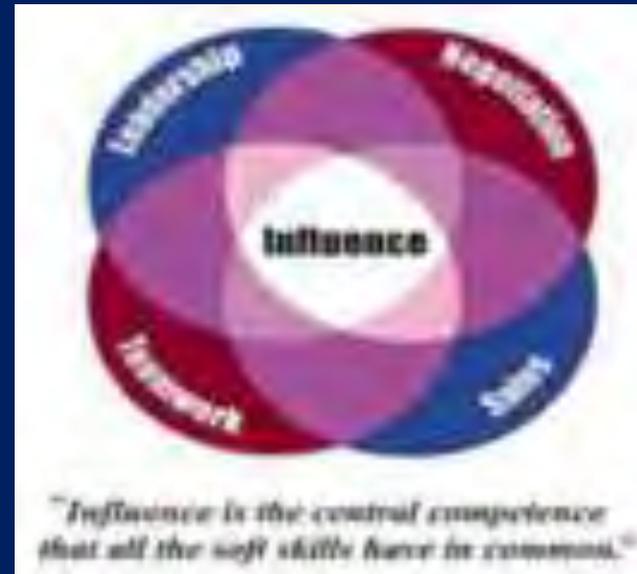
To avoid submissive or aggressive behaviours.

To achieve customer excellence through providing quality service.



# Organisational Life Today!

Powered by  
people skills and  
communication  
processes



# Assertiveness

...can help us communicate more effectively with colleagues and customers.

...can help us achieve both personal and team goals.





ASSERTIVE

**IS THE CAPACITY TO EXPRESS  
OUR IDEAS, OPINIONS OR  
FEELINGS OPENLY AND  
DIRECTLY WITHOUT PUTTING  
DOWN OURSELVES OR OTHERS.**

What are typical personal characteristics of:

Non-Assertive

and

Assertive persons?



## Non Assertive

Complacency, self doubt, low involvement, low self esteem, indirect, closed body language

## Assertive

Accountable, ability to say 'No', Decisiveness, goal oriented, positive, confident, adaptable, values oriented



# Zero Sum Game

From Adversarial Thinking... Win - Lose



To Mutual Benefit ... WIN - WIN



# WHY DEVELOP ASSERTIVE SKILLS?

- TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN VALUES, BELIEFS AND OPINIONS
- TO JUDGE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR, THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS
- TO TELL OTHERS WHAT YOUR WANTS AND NEEDS ARE
- TO CHANGE YOUR MIND
- TO DISAGREE WITHOUT BEING DISAGREEABLE



**TO SAY 'NO' WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY**

**TO SAY WHAT YOU WANT DIRECTLY, SPECIFICALLY AND IMMEDIATELY**

**TO AVOID BEING PERCEIVED AS AGGRESSIVE**

**TO STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS, MAKE COMPLAINTS, REFUSE REQUESTS AND EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINIONS**

**TO EXPRESS POSITIVE FEELINGS, APPRECIATION AND COMPLIMENTS**

**TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE, MAKE REQUESTS, ASK FOR HELP AND INITIATE CONVERSATIONS**



# AGGRESSIVE

I BELIEVE I CAN WIN

I AM SUPERIOR

YOU ARE NO GOOD



# PASSIVE

I FEEL I WILL LOSE

I AM INFERIOR

I AM NO GOOD



# ASSERTIVE

**WE CAN FIND A WAY**

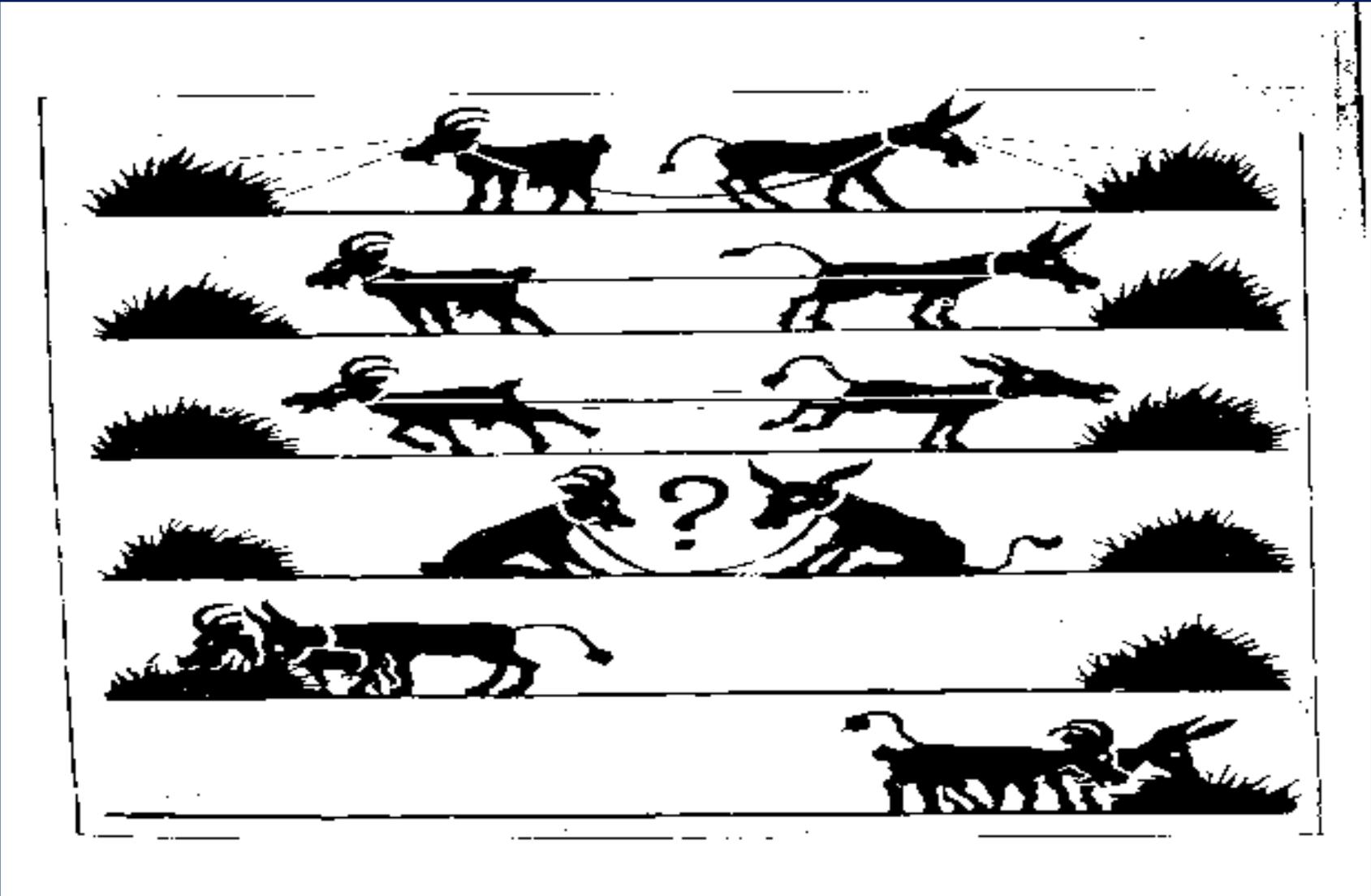
**TOGETHER**

**WE ARE BOTH FINE**

**NO ONE NEED LOSE**







# BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

## AGGRESSIVE

### *POINT OF VIEW*

**OTHERS DO NOT MATTER WHEN I STAND UP FOR MY RIGHTS.**

**I AM THE ONE WHO COUNTS.**

### *MESSAGES*

**THIS IS WHAT I AM THINKING. IF YOU DON'T AGREE, YOU ARE STUPID.**

**MY NEEDS AND WANTS ARE BIGGER THAN YOURS.**

## PASSIVE

### *POINT OF VIEW*

**MY THOUGHTS, IDEAS, AND FEELINGS ARE NOT SO IMPORTANT THAT OTHERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEM.**

**I CAN HIDE AND IGNORE THEM.**

### *MESSAGES*

**I AM NOT IMPORTANT  
YOU ARE MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN I AM.**

**I AM READY FOR YOU TO  
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME.**

## ASSERTIVE

### *POINT OF VIEW*

**I AM WORTH STANDING UP FOR MY PERSONAL RIGHTS. I HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPRESS MY MIND, SAYING WHAT I THINK AND FEEL -**

**AS LONG AS I ACCEPT THAT OTHERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO THE SAME.**

### *MESSAGES*

**I HAVE RESPECT FOR YOU AND EXPECT IT TO BE MUTUAL.**

**IN ANY SITUATION, THERE ARE MY THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND PERCEPTIONS.**



## AGGRESSIVE

### *CRISIS*

ARGUES. ATTACKS.

### *RESPONSE*

DEFENSIVE

HUMILIATION

EGO CRUSHED

### *OBJECTIVE*

I WILL OVERPOWER  
OTHERS TO WIN.

I WILL HUMILIATE  
THEM IF  
NECESSARY SO  
THEY ARE LESS  
ABLE TO STAND UP  
FOR THEMSELVES.

## PASSIVE

### *CRISIS*

GIVES IN TO OTHERS  
EASILY. RUNS AWAY.

### *RESPONSE*

FRUSTRATION,

ANGER, IRRITATION,

DISRESPECT

### *OBJECTIVE*

TO AVOID CONFLICT

TO KEEP A LOW  
PROFILE

TO APPEASE

## ASSERTIVE

### *CRISIS*

ONLY TAKES ACTION AFTER  
EVALUATION

### *RESPONSE*

MUTUAL RESPECT

### *OBJECTIVE*

TO MAKE SURE I  
UNDERSTAND OTHERS  
AND THEY  
UNDERSTAND ME;

THAT HONESTY AND  
INTEGRITY REIGN ON  
BOTH SIDES; THAT I  
CAN NEGOTIATE  
WIN / WIN SOLUTIONS



How you treat customers...

***behaviour breeds behaviour***



# Key Elements of Assertiveness

- **Self-confidence**
- **Clarity in communication**
- **Respect for self and others**
- **Balancing empathy and assertiveness**



# Techniques to Develop Assertiveness

- Using "I" statements
- Maintaining eye contact
- Managing body language and tone



# The Role of Assertiveness in Customer Care

- How assertiveness improves customer interactions
- Building trust and rapport with customers
- Resolving conflicts effectively



## *Customer interaction that went badly...?*

***“IF YOU ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE POSITIVE  
WHEN THINGS GO WRONG, YOU’LL  
ALWAYS FIND IT!”***

*Brian Tracy*



**CHANGE**

***“IF ONLY”***

**TO**

***“NEXT TIME”***



# POSITIVE THINGS HAPPEN TO POSITIVE PEOPLE



# *Negative Attitudes*

I CAN'T POSSIBLY TRY IT, BECAUSE...

... IT MIGHT NOT WORK

... I'VE ALWAYS DONE SOMETHING ELSE

... SOME OTHER PEOPLE DON'T DO IT

... IT FEELS VERY STRANGE

... I HAVE TO PUT THAT FIRE OUT

... YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

... IT'S "THEIR" FAULT, NOT MINE.

... IT'LL JUST MAKE THINGS HARDER FOR ME.



## **Assertiveness in customer service management**

isn't about being aggressive;

it's about being confident and clear in your communication while remaining respectful and empathetic towards customers.

This balance ensures that you uphold the company's standards and satisfy customer needs effectively.



# Assertiveness Self Assessment

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/tests/personality/assertiveness-test>



# *Tips for Saying “No”*

*Saying “No” can be difficult if you are usually more passive.*

*When saying “No”, remember to use assertive body language (e.g. standing straight, eye contact, speaking loudly enough that the other person can hear).*





**Why do we sometimes act aggressively?**



# *Why act aggressively?*

Quite often because we are cornered...

- So avoid acting/talking immediately
- Remove the emotion from the situation
- Think through your reply/action
- Then act rationally

*Fail to plan...plan to fail*

*Plan your response, don't act hastily*



**ATTITUDE**

**IS A LITTLE THING**

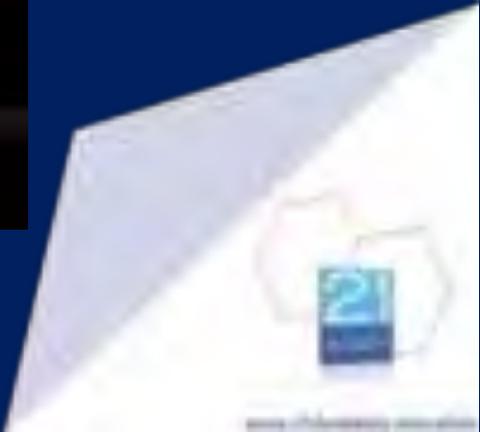
**THAT MAKES A**

**BIG**

**DIFFERENCE**



# ATTITUDE



*"A Pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;  
an Optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."*

*~Winston Churchill*

"



***“I WONDERED WHY SOMEBODY DIDN’T DO SOMETHING, THEN I REALISED THAT I WAS SOMEBODY.”***

**Anonymous**

***“EACH OF US IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE ELSE.”***

**Fyodor Dostoyersky**



# INFLUENCING OTHERS

***“ I WILL ACT AS IF WHAT I DO MAKES A  
DIFFERENCE.”***

***William James***



***“DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
WITH WHAT YOU HAVE,  
WHERE YOU ARE.”***

***Theodore Roosevelt***



**IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?  
IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?**



**ASSERTIVENESS**

**IS**

**ABOUT**

**BEING**

**PROACTIVE**

**NOT**

**REACTIVE**



# SELF - IMAGE

## SETTING GOALS

*FIRST BASIC RULE:*

**YOU ARE  
WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE**

*SECOND BASIC RULE:*

**YOU CAN DO WHAT  
YOU THINK YOU CAN DO**



**“YOU BECOME SUCCESSFUL  
THE MOMENT YOU START  
MOVING TOWARD A  
WORTHWHILE GOAL.”**



# Common Challenges and Solutions

- Handling difficult customers
- Overcoming fear and anxiety
- Strategies to stay assertive under pressure

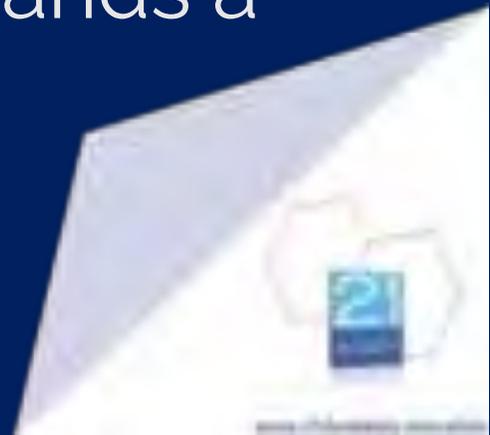


- **Case Study: Resolving a Billing Issue**

- Scenario:

A customer contacts the customer service team regarding an incorrect charge on their bill.

The customer is understandably upset and demands a refund.



## Assertive Approach:

- The customer service representative listens to the customer's concerns without interrupting, acknowledges the mistake, and calmly explains the steps that will be taken to resolve the issue.
- They confidently state, "I understand this is frustrating for you. I will investigate this matter immediately and ensure that the incorrect charge is refunded within the next 24 hours."
- The representative maintains a professional and respectful tone while providing clear information about the resolution process.
- This approach helps to defuse the customer's anger and builds trust in the company's ability to handle issues effectively.



**Here's how you can assertively  
maintain professionalism as a customer service officer.**



# 1. Stay Calm

- **When faced with challenging situations, it's essential to stay calm and composed. Your ability to remain unflustered under pressure reflects your professionalism and can often defuse tense interactions.**
- **Take deep breaths, listen actively, and speak in a steady, even tone.**
- **By maintaining your composure, you not only set a positive example for your team but also reassure customers that their concerns are being handled by someone competent and in control.**



## 2. Listen Actively

- **Active listening is a cornerstone of effective communication and is especially important in customer service management.**
- **Pay close attention to what the customer is saying, acknowledge their feelings, and confirm your understanding by paraphrasing their points.**
- **This shows respect for the customer's perspective and helps to clarify the issue, making it easier to find a resolution that satisfies all parties involved.**



# 3 Set Boundaries

- **Assertiveness also involves setting clear boundaries. Be transparent about what you can and cannot do within company policies.**
- **If a customer's request is unreasonable or cannot be fulfilled, explain the reasons calmly and offer alternative solutions.**
- **This approach demonstrates respect for both the customer and the company's operational limits while still striving to accommodate the customer's needs as much as possible.**



## 4. Communicate Clearly

- **Clear communication is vital in preventing misunderstandings and ensuring that customers feel heard and understood.**
- **Use simple language, avoid jargon, and make sure your instructions or explanations are easy to follow.**
- **Being concise and direct reduces confusion and shows that you value the customer's time while providing them with the information they need.**



# 5. Resolve Issues

- Finally, focus on resolving issues efficiently and effectively.
- Take ownership of problems, apologize when appropriate, and work towards a solution that leaves the customer feeling satisfied.
- By doing so, you not only solve the immediate problem but also build trust and loyalty, which are key to long-term customer relationships.



# A TRANSITION...

*FROM...*

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

*TO*

**ADDED VALUE**



**“Always deliver more in perceived value, than you take in actual cash value.”**

***JEFF BLACKMAN***



# ASSERTIVENESS IS VALUABLE

- ENERGY IS RELEASED AND THE PERSON FEELS STRONGER
- GOOD IDEAS GET THE HEARING THEY DESERVE
- RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVE
- DIFFICULTIES ARE RESOLVED RATHER THAN LEFT FESTERING
- IMPROVES COMMUNICATION ABILITIES e.g. Listening, Empathy

**PEOPLE NOTICE ASSERTIVENESS**



**Mastering the Art of Assertiveness: Winning Over Angry  
Customers with Confidence**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lBslaL51cY>



# Communicating your Personal Brand

*Assertively!*



# What is Personal Branding



# What is Personal Branding

*“Branding demands commitment; commitment to continual re-invention; striking chords with people to stir their emotions; and commitment to imagination. It is easy to be cynical about such things, much harder to be successful.”*

*- Sir Richard Branson*



# Authenticity



# Authenticity

*“Authenticity is the alignment of head, mouth, heart, and feet — thinking, saying, feeling, and doing the same thing consistently. This builds trust, and followers love leaders they can trust.”*

- Lance Secretan



# Authenticity (continued)



## QUALITIES OF AUTHENTIC BRANDING

- Purpose
- Solid Values
- Self Discipline
- Passion



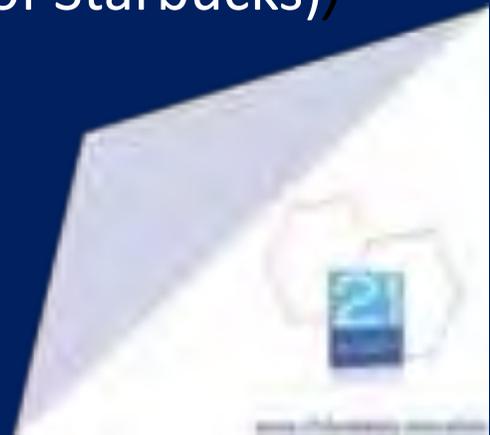
# Authenticity (continued)

*Passion*



*"You have to be authentic, you have to be true, and you have to believe in your heart that this is going to work."*

- Howard Schultz (Founder of Starbucks)



# Consistency



# Consistency

There are no short -cuts to achieving a personal brand.

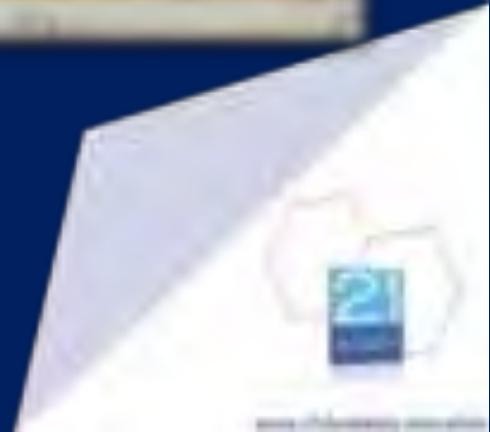
Those that 'appear' overnight are actually the products of many years of persistence.



# Consistency

## QUALITIES OF A CONSISTENT BRAND

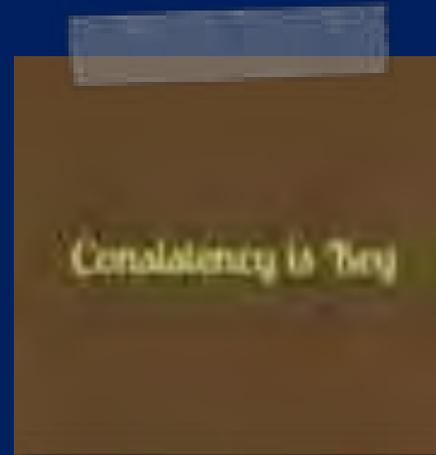
- Trustworthiness
- Defined Expectations
- Establish Rules



# Consistency (continued)

Consistency is key when it comes to branding.

Consistency builds trust between the brand and the followers.



# Consistency (continued)

A consistent image can help avoid confusion.



# Consistency

Trustworthiness



*“Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relationships.”*

– Stephen R. Covey



# Consistency (continued)

*“Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying basic fundamentals.”*

- E. James Rohn



# Enthusiasm



# Enthusiasm

## QUALITIES OF AN ENTHUSIASTIC INDIVIDUAL

- Focused
- Promote a positive environment
- Passion



# Enthusiasm (continued)

*“Enthusiasm releases the drive to carry you over obstacles and adds significance to all you do.”*

–  
Norman Vincent Peale



# Visibility



# Visibility

*“Lead from the back and let others believe they are in front”.*

Mandela



# Visibility (continued)

## QUALITIES OF VISIBILE LEADERS

- Aligning purpose & vision
- Being Present
- Honesty



# Visibility (continued)

*“Visibility is not just about being present physically”.*



# Visibility (continued)

*“Great things in business are never done by one person. They’re done by a team of people”.*

*- Steve Jobs*



# Confidence



# Confidence

## QUALITIES OF A CONFIDENT INDIVIDUAL

- Believe in yourself
- Assertive
- Optimist
- Love oneself
- Responsible
- Complements others



# Confidence (continued)



# Confidence (continued)

**Arrogance Vs. Confidence**

<b>LOUD</b> - Always bragging about abilities	<b>QUIET</b> - Trusts time to make them obvious
<b>WEAK</b> - Breaks apart as soon as no one is looking	<b>STRONG</b> - Exhibits stability under pressure.
<b>PROUD</b> - Believes they are better than others.	<b>HUMBLE</b> - Believes everyone has something to offer.
<b>SHALLOW</b> - Thinks what is <b>SEEN</b> on the surface is all that matters.	<b>DEEP</b> - Knows that a strong foundation deep within, is most important.



# Confidence (continued)



Confidence is NOT  
*"They will like me"*

Confidence IS  
*"I'll be ok if they Don't"*

- Christine Grimmie



# Quality Service



*“We can no longer afford to merely satisfy the customers. To win today, you have to delight and astound your customers with products and services that exceed their expectations”.*

*Tom Peters*



*“Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the client or customer gets out of it.”*

Peter Drucker

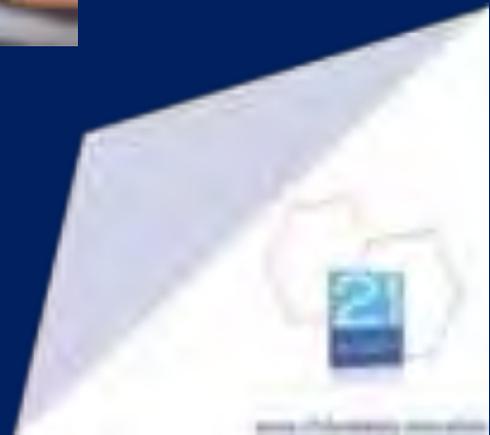


# ACHIEVING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE



# QUALITY SERVICE

IS THE SERVICE  
WHICH SATISFIES A  
CUSTOMER'S  
NEEDS BEYOND  
HIS OR HER  
EXPECTATIONS.



not only  
**meets**

but  
**exceeds**



The difference between  
ordinary and extraordinary –  
is that little *extra*.



## The Challenge

- *Service standards keep rising. As competitors render better and better service, customers become more demanding. Their expectations grow.*

William H. Davido



Two primary dimensions make up quality customer service: the *PROCEDURAL* dimension and the *PERSONAL* dimension.

*Each is critical to the delivery of QUALITY service.*

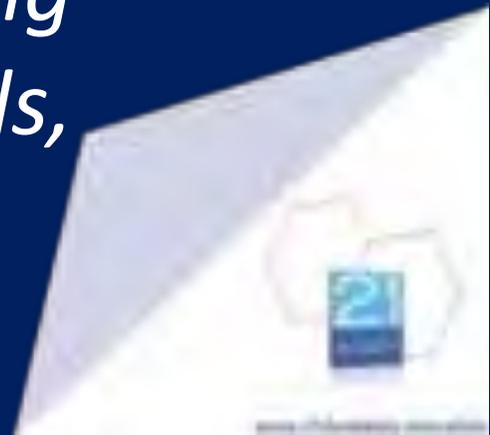


The PROCEDURAL side:

*systems and procedures to deliver products and/or services.*

The PERSONAL side:

*how service personnel, using attitudes, behaviours and verbal skills, interact with customers.*



# SERVQUAL DIMENSIONS GAP

Quality is defined as the GAP between

*what a customer expects*

*and*

*what a customer perceives*



# Quality Improvement Process



GOAL:

*What are we trying to accomplish?*

IDEAS FOR CHANGE:

*What changes can we make that will result in improvement?*

MEASURE:

*How will we know if a change is an improvement?*



Quality is never an accident; It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilled execution.

*It represents the wise choice of many alternatives.*





Competition can copy  
everything but people.



# QUALITY

THE ENDLESS PURSUIT OF  
EXCELLENCE

GOOD ENOUGH

*IS NEVER*

GOOD ENOUGH



MANY COMPANIES OFFER THE SAME OR  
RELATED PRODUCTS/SERVICES

HENCE IT IS OUR

‘QUALITY OF SERVICE’

WHICH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE !



# Deliver Great Value

- Take advantage of every encounter

..... by radiating energy and enthusiasm, smiling and treating every passing trade as a valued customer.



# QUALITY

## IS A FRAME OF MIND

AN ATTITUDE THAT NEEDS  
COMMITMENT TO DEVELOP

# BUT

A VITAL INGREDIENT FOR SUCCESS IN  
CUSTOMER SERVICE



“Quality is not an act, it is a habit”

Aristotle





“Quality means doing it right also  
when no one is looking.”

Henry Ford



PEOPLE VALUE QUALITY SERVICE  
AND THEY WILL REWARD YOU TIME  
AND TIME AGAIN IF YOU CAN  
PROVIDE IT TO THEM.

IT'S NOT DIFFICULT, IT  
JUST TAKES CARING AND  
EFFORT.



Quality does have a price...

but the bitterness of poor  
quality remains long after  
the sweetness of low price  
is forgotten.



# QUALITY

*The race for quality has no finish line...*



THE MOST VALUABLE SELLING TOOL

IS:

YOURSELF !



With service excellence, there are  
no losers.

Customers win

Employees win

The Organisation wins

Delivering first-class service is a  
successful strategy for everyone



# Delivering service excellence

*Everyone wins from service excellence – your customers, your organisation and you*

*Aim high – make excellent service your goal, not just good service*

*Don't just meet customer expectations – exceed them*

*Set and maintain standards that are based on customer requests rather than organisational needs*

*Be prepared to make the first move – be pro-active rather than reactive*

*Make sure you create a favourable first impression*



# Mission

*Be committed to service excellence ...  
through assisting customers find the  
best solutions to their needs.*



# What are you going to do?

- Someone, somewhere has to be the best at this job  
– why not you?
- Decide to be outstanding
- Don't be ordinary !



*Quality, is job one.*

Ford Company



# Exercise:

- Give 3 examples from your workplace of how to exceed (not only meet) customer expectations.



# I Was Seduced By Exceptional Customer Service | John Boccuzzi, Jr. | TEDxBryantU

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gh1TXfQSwUQ&t=95s>





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