**CUSTOMER SERVICE – FILL-IN-THE BLANK: SESSION 4**

**Customer Service: Skills for Success – 7th Edition**

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**Chapter Five: Listening to the Customer**

To be a better customer service professional, it is necessary to improve your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ skills.

Listening effectively is the primary means that many customer service professionals use to determine the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of their customers. Many times, these needs are communicated through inferences, indirect comments, or nonverbal signals rather than directly to you.

In a classic study on listening conducted by Dr. Ralth G. Nichols, who is sometimes called the “Father of the Field of Listening,” data revealed that the average white-collar worker in the U.S. typically has only about a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% efficiency rate when listening.

True listening is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ learned process, as opposed to hearing, which is the physical process of gathering sound waves through the ear canal.

Phases of active listening: (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Hearing is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ physiological process of receiving sound waves and transmitting them to the brain for analysis and action.

Once your ears pick up sound waves, your brain goes to work focusing on, or attending to, what you heard. In the process, it sorts out every \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being received.

Once you have decided to which message or customer you will listen, your brain begins a process of comprehending or assigning meaning to what you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Selecting an appropriate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is crucial to the success of your customer interactions. The words you select, the way you deliver them, the timing and location, and the nonverbal signals you send all have meaning, and all affect the way others perceive and interpret your message.

In analyzing your customer’s message(s), ask yourself the following questions:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Successful listening is essential to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ excellence.

The following are characteristics of effective listeners: (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

By putting yourself in the customer’s place and trying to relate to the customer’s needs, wants, and concerns, you can often \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the risk of poor service.

The ability to listen as customers verbalize their needs, and to ensure that you understand them, is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in properly servicing the customer.

Keep in mind that it is your job to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the customer, and not everyone communicates in the same manner.

By focusing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the customer, you can interpret their message and satisfy their needs.

Attentiveness can be displayed through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cues.

Active listening involves complete attention, a readiness and willingness to take action and an open mind to evaluate customers and determine their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

In dealings with customers, avoid subjective \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If you have a preconceived idea about customers, their concerns or questions, the environment, or anything related to the customers, you could mishandle the situation.

Listen openly and avoid making \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Poor customer service may result from a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the listening process.

Personal Obstacles include: (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Your opinions or beliefs about a specific person, group, situation, or issue can sometimes cloud your ability to listen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to a message.

Often personal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are a result of things learned earlier in life and not even recognized on a conscious level.

Psychological \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, such as being angry or upset, or simply not wanting to deal with a particular person or situation, may negatively affect your listening.

Another internal factor that can contribute to or detract from effectiveness listening is your state of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

All people have a natural 24-hour biological pattern by which they function. The psychological cycle is associated with the earth’s rotation. It affects metabolic and sleep patterns in humans as day replaces night. This “clock” often establishes the body’s peak \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ periods. Some people perform better in the morning, whereas others peak later in the day or evening.

In recent years, many people have become \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from work and listening activities by personal factors, such as finances, relationships, family problems, schooling, or stress that override their efforts to do a good job each day.

When you have personal or other matters on your mind, it sometimes becomes difficult to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the needs and expectations of the customer and your job tasks.

This can frustrate both you and your customers.

Many people suffer from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ caused by physiological (physical) problems or extended exposure to loud noises (personal and workplace).

People communicate on different levels, depending on their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the area of communication.

Two other factors can also create barriers and inhibit effective listening when dealing with your customers. These are (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (biases) that you have about others or a situation.

Your brain is capable of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ messages delivered at rates of as much as four to six times faster (thought speed) than speed at which average adult speaks.

To prevent or reduce such distraction, you must consciously \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on your customer’s message, look for key points they make, ask pertinent questions, and respond appropriately.

Because of experiences or encounters with others, you may be tempted to make faulty assumptions about your customer’s message(s). Do not do so. Each customer and each situation is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and you should regard them as such.

You cannot remove all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to effective listening, but you should still try to reduce them when dealing with customers.

Some typical examples of external obstacles that often create problems include the following:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Information \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ refers to having too many messages coming together and causing confusion, frustration, or an inability to act.

It is not possible for you to give your full attention to two speakers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Ringing telephones can be annoying, but you should not stop helping one customer to get into a discussion with or try to serve another customer over the phone. This creates a dilemma, for you cannot \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ customers or others who depend on you to serve their needs.

Noisy printers, computers, photocopying machines, electric staplers, vacuum cleaners, humming overhead lights, and other devices can also be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. When servicing customers, eliminate or minimize the use of these types of items.

If you want to use a speakerphone, inform the customer and ask if they mind. Also, make sure that you can be heard and that there are no distracting background noises that might interfere with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the other end.

Desks, counters, furniture, or other items separating you from your customer can stifle communication. Depending on your job function, you might be able to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ barriers. If possible, do so.

If you have an option, be conscious of how you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your office or workspace.

You can improve your listening skills several different ways. One important way is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ more than you talk.

There are numerous techniques for becoming a more effective listener. You can use the following as a basis for self-improvement: (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (8) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (9) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (10) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

You cannot talk and actively listen at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ time.

When the customer starts talking, the first thing you should do is stop talking and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ carefully.

Some people have language barriers, behavioral styles, are elderly or disabled, and they require more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; and need time to analyze and respond to messages received. Others may be simply trying to formulate just the right answer before responding.

Before you can listen effectively to someone, you must be ready to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ what they have to say.

Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of good communication when the customer is speaking.

By eliminating distractions, sending positive verbal and nonverbal responses, and actively focusing on delivered messages, you can help a customer relax and have a more meaningful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Put yourself in the customer’s place by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, especially when the customer is complaining about what they perceive to be poor service or inferior products. This is sometimes referred to as “walking a mile in their shoes.”

Instead of focusing on one or two details, listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ message before analyzing it and responding.

Avoid the biases discussed earlier. Remember that you do not have to like everyone you encounter, but you do have to respect and treat customers fairly and impartially if you want to maintain a positive business \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the nonverbal messages you’re are sending. Even when you are verbally agreeing or saying “yes,” you may unconsciously send negative nonverbal messages.

When sending a message, you should make sure that your verbal cues (words) and nonverbal cues (gestures, expressions) are in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, you become part of the problem and cannot be part of the solution.

Most people do not have a photographic memory and cannot remember all details about a discussion or situation. If information is complicated, or if names, dates, numbers, or numerous details are involved in a customer encounter, you may want to take \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for reference and to ensure accuracy.

Use appropriate questions to sort out \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-end questions establish a number of facts and are used to seek substantial amounts of information and encourage dialogue.

Traditionally, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-end questions start with verbs such as: “do, did, are, and will”; elicit short, one-syllable responses; and gain little new information.

Use questions to further your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Chapter Six: Customer Service and Behavior**

Behavioral \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are actions or reactions exhibited when you and others deal with tasks or people. As a service professional, you need to be aware that not everyone is the same. There is no “one best type” of behavior and that behavior can change from one situation to another.

They key to effectively managing your behavior and addressing that of others is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to what the customer is saying, watch nonverbal cues, and consider the information you are about to read.

Behavioral Styles are observable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (actions that you can see or experience) that you and other people exhibit when dealing with tasks or people.

Part of being a customer service professional is that you need to understand human behavioral style \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Each contact in a customer service environment has the potential for contributing to your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of your own style preferences can then lead you to a better understanding of customers, since many also possess similar style preferences.

Although everyone typically has a primary behavior pattern (the way a person typically acts or reacts under circumstances to which they revert in stressful situations, people are a combo of various behavioral styles that they pull from as situations \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Because of the complexities of human behavior, you should not try to use behavioral characteristics and cues as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ indicators of the type of person with whom you are dealing.

Since people are a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of styles, they may exhibit some, but not all, of these characteristics at any given time. They may also exhibit characteristics from other style categories based on a given situation or their emotional state.

The (4) RIDE Behavioral Style Categories include: **R** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **I** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **D** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **E** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Style is characterized by being quiet, reflective, task-focused, and systematic.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Style is characterized by being introverted, task-focused, and detail-oriented.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Style is characterized by a direct, no-nonsense approach to people and situations.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Style is categorized as being people-oriented, fun-loving, upbeat, and extroverted.

Once you recognize people’s style tendencies, you can improve your relationships and chances of success by tailoring your communication \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Building stronger customer relationships means that you discover customer needs, seek opportunities for service, and respond appropriately to customers’ behavioral \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Recognizing and relating to customers’ behavioral styles is just the first step in providing better service.

To deliver total customer satisfaction, you will need to make the customer feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which often requires skills such as relationship building through effective communication and problem solving.

Whether a situation involves simply answering a question, guiding someone to a desired product or location, or performing a service, customers should leave the interaction feeling good about what they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

There are many ways of partnering with either internal or external customers to solve problems and produce a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ situation (one in which both the customer and you and your organization succeed and feel good about outcome).

If you must decline a request or cannot provide a product or service, do so in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ manner.

View \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a chance to create a favorable impression by solving a problem.

You should strive to provide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ service to customers. This means that they should get great service and never have to worry about your problems or breakdowns.

You should strive to reduce or eliminate customer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Most people like to feel special and appreciated. Creating that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in others is what customer service is all about.

By creating a bond with your customers through positive words and actions, you can easily help them feel as if there is no other place they would rather be or with whom they would rather do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When customers feel good about themselves because of something you did or said, they are likely to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ what you and your organization can offer them.

The reality of a multicultural customer service environment further challenges your ability to deal with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is because, in today’s multicultural business environment, it is likely that you will interact with someone of a different background, belief system, or culture on any given day.

Even after you master the concepts of behavioral styles, you must remember that because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vary from one culture to another, behavior is also likely to vary.

Often there are many different \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of an event. Our perceptions are often influenced by many factors such as physical qualities, social roles and behaviors, psychological qualities, and group affiliations.

We tend to base our perceptions of others and categorize people by thinking about the following:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

People’s perceptions of events vary greatly, as do their perceptions of each other. As a customer service provider, you should be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of how you perceive your customers and, in turn, how they perceive you.

Stereotyping people affects your relationships with customers. The practice could even lead to legal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of disparate treatment and liability for you and your organization.

To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ categorizing or stereotyping people, spend time observing them, listen to them objectively, and respond according to each unique situation and person.