

11 Customer Service Training Must-Haves

To ensure outstanding results



Introduction

The ability to deliver outstanding customer service is an increasingly complex skillset. Training — exceptional training — is essential to ensure that your team is prepared for delivering outstanding customer experiences.

Whatever industry you're in, these are eleven elements that absolutely have to be a part of your customer service training program. Missing just one can seriously jeopardize the impact it has.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss these further, please don't hesitate to contact us!



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1. Clearly defined organizational needs

Why are you thinking of the training? Where are the gaps? What is the outcome you want? Just saying you want to 'take it to the next level' isn't good enough. It is impossible to achieve an outcome that isn't defined.

2. Clearly defined customer service standards

Remember the rule of the sharpshooter: "You can't hit what you don't aim for."

The only way you can create consistency in customer service is by establishing a set of strategic, non-negotiable customer service standards that apply to everyone. These give your people a common target - and ensure that everyone is focused on the same outcomes.

3. Training design that is engaging, meaningful and appropriate

Does your training engage people and get them thinking? Are the customer service examples and solutions specific to the workplace, or are they too general to be applied? Is it an interactive format? **If the training is less than 75% interactive exercises, it will fail.**

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4. Rock-solid content

The content of your training has to be rock-solid. Generic isn't good enough. It has to resonate with your people. They have to be able to relate to it. Most importantly, it has demonstrably help them succeed. The skills, practices and mindsets that are in your training have to be 100% evidence-based - either through research or significant anecdotal evidence. .

4. Training design that creates 'ah-ha!' moments

Many traditional training design practices don't work in customer service training workshops. Here's why:

The reality is that everyone already has preconceived ideas about customer service. Most people already think they understand it and are proficient with the skills required. Unfortunately, that's rarely the case. This means that a big part of a customer service training program is about helping people *unlearn* existing, limiting beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

The most effective way to do this is with entertaining traps and surprises that create 'ah-ha' discovery moments. (The worst way to do it is to preach at people)

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5. Organization-wide participation

If the team managers (and their bosses) won't participate in the training, you might as well not even bother with it. The single, most common comment in training programs is, *"Our management needs to go through this."*

6. Respect for participant skills and knowledge

It is not uncommon for people who train customer service to come across as condescending, or even a little preachy. This is because they fail to acknowledge and leverage the experience in the room.

Yes, you might need to remind people of the importance of smiling, but you don't want to present it in your workshop as though this is news to anyone. This is a critical training skill that many trainers unfortunately don't have.

7. A passionate trainer

Customer service training is about persuading people to change the way that they interact with people. That level of change is a big ask for anyone. To be effective, trainers have to create a bond of trust. They have to be credible. They have to build a strong case that there is greater risk in *not* changing than there is in trying new things. This can only be achieved when learners know that the trainer truly believes in the skills, attitudes and behaviours being introduced.

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8. Subject matter expertise

Many in the world of learning and development believe that a professional trainer should be able to deliver anything. This is, to some degree, true.

But. . .

Delivering on a topic in which everyone in the audience already has opinions, and considers themselves knowledgeable is an exception. Customer service trainers need to have deep knowledge and experience to earn credibility. They need to go beyond the leaders guide and really become immersed in the subject matter.

9. Time to practice

Theory isn't good enough. In order to move from theory to application in the workplace, there needs to be time to practice and time to absorb. To be effective, a customer service training program needs robust reinforcement program that extends beyond the initial training.

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10. Motivational energy

If a customer service training program doesn't have people walking out of the door excited, it's not going to stick. Customer service is all about interpersonal skills, and customer service trainers have to have those in spades. They have to be able to generate energy in a room.

11. Relentless support

There is never enough time during a workshop to develop customer service habits. This is just a reality of all training. The real key to stickiness is what happens *after* the training. You need to make sure that there are processes and people in place to actually measure and support the change following the training.

The overriding message in these eleven must-haves is that, whatever you do, don't leave your customer service training program to chance. Don't accept mediocre. If you're going to commit the valuable time of your team to attend the program, make sure it counts.

ABOUT BELDING TRAINING

Belding Training helps companies around the world create better customer experiences and workplace cultures. We leverage over 30 years of experience to help our clients succeed.

Our award-winning training division designs and delivers highly-effective, customized training in customer service, leadership and workplace relations.

Our consulting division gives you deep organizational insights and strategies to create unshakeable customer loyalty, a more engaged and productive workforce, and an outstanding workplace culture.

We are proud of our global reputation, and are committed to your success. Contact us today to find out what The Belding Group can do to help your organization succeed. We would love to hear from you!



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