

Professional Development

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Training Conference
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Customer Service Skills

Customer service skills can benefit you in your professional and personal life.

Patience

- ❖ Think of how you would feel if you were in the customer's place.
- ❖ Remember this may be routine for you, but this is usually the only time they are here and they are generally unfamiliar with the Court's practices and procedures.
- ❖ Customers would rather get competent service than be rushed out the door.
- ❖ Remember to many customers, you represent the Court.

Attentiveness

- ❖ Be mindful of the person and what they are trying to accomplish.
- ❖ Pay attention not only to what they are saying, but their body language as well.
- ❖ Acknowledge their concerns verbally.
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions.
- ❖ Remove any distractions that impede your ability to listen to the customer.

Clear Communication Skills

- ❖ When speaking with customers (in person and on the phone), speak slowly and clearly.
- ❖ In speaking and writing with external customers, use full sentences and words, not acronyms or abbreviations – i.e. OSC, ROFO, NRPS.
- ❖ Get to the issue quickly. Be polite, but customers do not need your life story or how your day is going.
- ❖ Err on the side of caution if there is any doubt in your mind.

Knowledge

- ❖ Know your subject matter. If you are unsure of something, do not guess. Find someone who knows the answer to assist you. Listen and take the opportunity to learn.
- ❖ Not every employee should know every single aspect of the court, but rather they should know how your court functions and be able to direct customers appropriately.
- ❖ Observe other clerks, court proceedings, etc., to further your knowledge.

Positive Language

- ❖ Try to avoid negative words like NO, NOT, CANNOT, DON'T etc. Even if what has to be said is a negative, find a positive way to say it.
- ❖ Small changes that utilize positive language can greatly affect how the customers hears your response.

Time Management Skills

- ❖ Get customers what they need in an efficient manner.
- ❖ This should also be applied when realizing you cannot help the person. If you do not know the solution, find someone who does.
- ❖ It will not help either of you to waste time.

Willingness to Learn

- ❖ Those who do not seek to improve will be left behind by the people willing to invest in themselves.
 - ❖ Learn more about your Court's operations and other departments
 - ❖ Take online courses
 - ❖ Attending trainings
 - ❖ Research codes and statutes

Personal Development Goals for a Better You

We all want to enhance the quality of our lives, achieve more, become better people, and be a better version of ourselves.

Empathy not Judgment

- ❖ Empathy is objectively comprehending differing perspectives which in turn provides a wealth of insight into your own perspective.
- ❖ **DO NOT JUDGE.** You do not know what the other person is going through. They are likely feeling vulnerable or afraid.

Improve your body language

- ❖ Body language is non-verbal communication which includes the gestures and movements you project.
- ❖ The correct body language can help you connect effectively with others and convey your message more efficiently.
- ❖ Body language conveys your assertiveness, confidence, and perseverance.

Get along with yourself & others

- ❖ Getting along with yourself is a precursor to getting along with others.
- ❖ Learn to appreciate and accept your skills, experiences, aspirations and limitations.
- ❖ Look for means to create a rapport with others.
- ❖ Be honest with yourself and others.
- ❖ Your primary objection should not be manipulation, but rather to learn how you can relate to others and get along with others.

Stop procrastinating

- ❖ Understand that procrastination is not a character trait, but rather a habit.
- ❖ Habits can be unlearned.
- ❖ Strive to utilize time in the most effective manner and avoid procrastination.

Master the art of Conflict Resolution

- ❖ Conflict is a part of life.
- ❖ Develop the skill of conflict resolution.
- ❖ If you possess the ability to resolve conflicts rationally and settle disputes amicably, you will be more successful and happier.

Let go of the past

- ❖ One of the biggest hindrances to personal growth is holding on to the past.
- ❖ In order to be happy, it is important to be in the present.
- ❖ Learn to release the past and live in the now.

Manage stress effectively

- ❖ Stress impacts not only your physical health, but your mental & emotional health as well.
- ❖ Learn to effectively manage your stress.
- ❖ Develop the willingness to fight stress.
- ❖ Find what makes you relax and enjoy it.

Make better decisions

- ❖ Develop the habit to make better decisions.
- ❖ The choices you make determine the life that you will lead – your decisions shape your life.
- ❖ The better decisions you make, the better your life is likely to be.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT LITIGANTS

TYPES OF DIFFICULT PEOPLE

- ANGRY
- IMPATIENT
- INTIMIDATING
- TALKATIVE
- DEMANDING
- INDECISIVE

FACTS

- You cannot control anyone else's behavior.
- You have control over your own actions.
- You can influence how customers respond to you.

GET CONTROL OF YOURSELF

- Never argue.
- If you let them “push your buttons” you’ve lost the control of the situation.
- You can lose a good customer if you show boredom, irritation, disdain, or displeasure.
- Speak calmly and slowly. Lower your voice. By speaking in a quieter tone, the customer will have to listen more, thus quieting them and allowing them the chance to calm down.

LISTEN

- Everyone wants to feel heard.
- Acknowledge what the other person is feeling.
- Focus on what the other person is saying, not what you want to say next.

STAY CALM

- When a situation is emotionally charged, it’s easy to get caught up in the moment.
- Monitor your breathing.
- Take slow, deep breaths.

RESPECT & DIGNITY

- Reflect respect and dignity.
- No matter how a person is treating you, showing contempt will not help productively resolve the situation.

DEMANDING COMPLIANCE

- Don't demand compliance.
- Telling someone to be quiet or calm down will escalate the situation.
- What are they really upset about?
- Allow them to vent.

"I UNDERSTAND"

- Saying "I understand", usually makes the situation worse.
- Instead say "Tell me more so that I can understand better".

SMILING

- Avoid smiling.
- This may look like your mocking the person.
- Avoid humor.
- More often than not, it will backfire.

DON'T RETURN WITH ANGER

- Raising your voice or being disrespectful adds fuel.
- Use a low, even monotone voice.
- Do not talk over the person - wait until they are finished, then speak.

DON'T BLAME THE CUSTOMER OR COURT

- Explain the Court's policies.
- Use an indirect approach.
- Use "I" statements.
- Repeat back what is being said.

**ONE RESPONSE DOES NOT
FIT ALL**

- Be assertive.
- Saying "I'm sorry" or "I'm going to try and fix this" goes a long way.
- Remain flexible.
- Every person is unique and may respond differently.

**DON'T TAKE IT
PERSONALLY!!!**

- Helping customers is your job.
- Make sure your attitude is always: "I am here to help as best as I can."
- Anger comes from fear.
- Fear uses anger to gain control.

DEBRIEF

- Talk to someone.
- Discharge your own stress.
- Give yourself credit for getting through a stressful situation.
- Learn from the experience.
