
The Training Connection

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THE TRAINING CONNECTION, INC.

Strengthening the Connection Between Employee Development and Organizational Effectiveness

Six Keys To Customer Service

All customers have certain expectations about what good service should be. It is the personal responsibility of every employee to provide exceptional customer service.

Customer expectations differ from one person to another but, basically, they all expect the same things.

Customers expect:

- **Value - Fair Prices**
- **Quality**
- **Variety**
- **Pleasant Atmosphere**
- **Friendly Service**
- **Interested Employees Who Care**
- **Attentiveness To Their Needs**

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Are you providing exceptional customer service?

Five Essential Qualities Of Leadership

Leaders and leadership are top-of-the-mind subjects among businesspeople, coaches, athletes, politicians, clergy, and individuals in all walks of life. We demand more from our leaders every day but do little to prepare people for

the leadership roles they take on during their lives. To paraphrase Shakespeare, some people are born leaders, some achieve leadership, and others have leadership thrust upon them. By whatever means a person attains a leadership position, there are five essential qualities that he or she must possess to be successful as a leader over time.

1. Above all else, a leader must have **Courage**. The majority of people fail to achieve the quality of life they seek because they are shackled by their own fears. Thoreau said, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” It’s not that the courageous leader is not afraid. Everyone is afraid at one time or another. Courage is the will to press on, to do what is necessary and what is right, to overcome obstacles even when afraid. It isn’t courage if you’re not afraid. The only antidote for fear is courage.
2. Fear has a partner in crime – self-doubt. Self-doubt is that little voice in your head that says, “You can’t get that promotion, you’ll never make the team, you aren’t attractive enough, or you just can’t cut it.” Fortunately, there is an antidote for self-doubt as well: **Confidence**.

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There are six keys to excellent customer service.

1. **Competence**
2. **Knowledge**
3. **Pride**
4. **Appearance**
5. **Courtesy**
6. **Extra-Effort**

Key 1: Competence

People who enjoy what they are doing usually do it well. Before a person can really begin to enjoy the job, he or she must be confident in his/her abilities to do every aspect of the job correctly. The amount of time we take and the efficiency we display doing our job shows to others our level of competence.

Key 2: Knowledge

We can increase our level of competence by learning as much as we can about our own jobs, the functions of other departments and the total organization. The elements of job knowledge include areas such as product information, procedures, problem solving, and the ability to answer questions.

Key 3: Pride

The attitudes that we show are very important to excellent service. An attitude of pride is one which gives employees the energy and the incentive to become more knowledgeable and competent. The amount of interest and commitment we bring to the job affects the quality of service that we provide to our customers.

Key 4: Appearance

First impressions are extremely important. It tells the customer how we feel about ourselves and our job. Customers notice the care we use in our personal appearance. They also notice the eagerness we show in performing our job and the approach we use when we address customers. We never get a second chance to make a first impression.



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Key 5: Courtesy

Customers view courtesy as a basic part of service. Courtesy is the single most important behavior a customer expects from us. We demonstrate courtesy by what we say, the tone we use to say it, and the gestures we use. Through our actions and words, we show customers how we feel.

Key 6: Extra-Effort

The absence of courtesy makes a lasting poor impression. On the other hand, a little bit of extra-effort leaves a lasting positive impression. The extra-effort we extend to customers is the part of service that keeps customers coming back. Do you always go the extra step for your customers?

Rate yourself and your staff in each area. What are your strengths? What areas need improvements? What action steps will you take?

Rate from 1 to 10 (10 being the best)

- ◆ Competence
- ◆ Knowledge
- ◆ Pride
- ◆ Appearance
- ◆ Courtesy
- ◆ Extra-Effort



Excellent customer service doesn't just happen. It happens because you focus on leading by example and following the six keys to excellent customer service.

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Confidence is the unshakable belief in yourself; that you can make happen what you want to happen. It's not the self-doubt that limits you; it's your reaction to that self-doubt. Confidence allows you to keep trying until you get better, to seek help and advice, to ignore the well-meaning spectators who are ready at your first misstep to tell you that you can't do it right, you never were good enough, and you never will be. Confidence is infectious. If you believe in yourself, others will believe in you.

3. Even though a leader is courageous and confident, if he or she does not have the capacity for intense **Concentration**, that leader is likely to drift off course. Concentration has two parts. The first is persistence, the most important determining factor in an individual's success. Persistence is the unwillingness to quit until the goal is achieved. Persistence does not require talent, only determination. The second component of concentration is focus, or the ability to stay on track, organize oneself, and reduce debilitating distractions. Great leaders have the ability to separate what is immediately pressing from what is truly important.
4. Why are leaders able to inspire others? It's because they have **Passion** for what they do and what they believe in. They are consistently enthusiastic, upbeat, and optimistic. They bring a genuine joy to whatever they do. Even when things are not going well, they can instill in others the belief that together they can make the situation better. Great leaders are also committed to whatever they undertake. Commitment means throwing yourself into whatever you do with everything you have. It has been said that some people drink from the fountain of knowledge while others only gargle. Leaders don't gargle.
5. Finally, leaders must have a strong sense of **Values** if they are to succeed in the long term. Values are enduring standards of behavior. They are the stuff upon which our reputations are built. They help us determine whom we can count on, how people will react in given situations, and whom we want as friends. The chances are good that if you follow the golden rule, do the right thing when nobody is looking, and live your life the way your grandmother told you to, you will be demonstrating a sense of values that others will readily respect and follow.

Submitted by Angelo C. Valenti, Ph.D, Fearless Leadership System. Phone: 615-221-8745 or visit his website at: www.fearlessleadership.com

There is no such thing as a failed experiment, only those with unexpected outcomes.

— Buckminster Fuller



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Delete Pages From Your History

In Internet Explorer 6.0, you can delete individual pages from your History. Do this by clicking on the "History" button in the toolbar, right-click on the page you want to delete, and select "delete" from the pop-up menu. You can delete your entire History of visited by pages, by going into the Tools menu, under Internet Options.

Easy Eyeglass Protection...

To prevent the screws in eyeglasses from loosening, apply a small drop of Maybelline™ Crystal Clear nail polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.



Sore Throat?

Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey and take 1 tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.



The Mentoring Connection

Selecting a Mentor

Finding the right mentoring match is critical to ensuring the mentoree gains the most from the mentoring process. Mentorees often make the mistake of assuming the best mentoring match is someone of like style. While style compatibility may offer a comfortable relationship, it does not always result in the best mentoring match. The most rewarding mentoring partnerships are often those in which there are key differences such as: experiences, behavioral style, location, gender, race, etc. When choosing a mentor, it is helpful to use the following 7-step process to ensure that you are identifying the person from who you can learn and gain the most.

1. Set Developmental Goals – Before identifying a mentor, it is important that you clearly understand your own developmental goals. This is often easier said than done. Try jotting down some answers to these questions:

- ◆ Where do I expect to be five years from today?
- ◆ What are my career aspirations?
- ◆ What am I interested in learning to help me get there?

2. Describe Your Ideal Mentor – As a logical extension of step 1, describing your ideal mentor helps you to identify what it is you are seeking from the mentoring partnership. Ask yourself:

- ◆ What capability would my ideal mentor possess?
- ◆ Am I looking for someone with the same functional background or would I like someone to help me bridge into a new career field?
- ◆ Am I interested in a mentor with specialized experience or would I be better off with someone who brings a broad background rich with varied organizational experiences.

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- ◆ Am I looking for a mentor who has a similar behavioral style or would someone with a contrasting style suit me better?

3. Create a List of Potential Mentors – Once you have clarified your goals and have identified the characteristics of your ideal mentor, it is time to create a list of potential candidates. It is important to look for people who possess the traits and skills you wish to develop. It is also advisable for you to be willing to select a mentor from outside your technical field as one of the best ways to increase your learning is to choose someone who comes from a different background or perspective than your own.

4. Select 5 Potential Mentors from your List – Research your candidates' backgrounds. Solicit advice from an outside source like your supervisor or people in your professional network. Collect information from articles the mentor may have written or explore their contributions to highly visible projects.

5. Arrange Meetings with your Top Two or Three Choices – Arrange these meetings (either in-person or via the telephone) to explore the possibility of establishing a mentoring partnership with your potential mentors. Gain as much information as you can about the mentor's accomplishments and character. Ask guided questions about the mentor's background such as:

- ◆ How did you get to where you are today?
- ◆ What factors and skills have made a difference in your career?
- ◆ What have you found to be the secrets to your success in this organization?

Then be prepared to share some information about your background, accomplishments and areas in need of improvement. Be honest and forthcoming as a good mentor will also be evaluating you to see if the match will reap worthwhile benefits.

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6. Prepare for “The Close” – You will need to prepare for three potential outcomes of your meetings. In the first, you select a mentor, ask for her participation in the mentoring partnership, and she accepts.

Be sure you have the following questions answered before you go to the meeting.

- How will I communicate my interest in being mentored by this person?
- What are my expectations of the mentoring partnership and how will I best communicate these desires?
- How much time do I expect to commit and be committed to the mentoring partnership?
- How do I explain why this mentor’s talents suit my developmental needs?
- Be prepared to set up a future meeting.

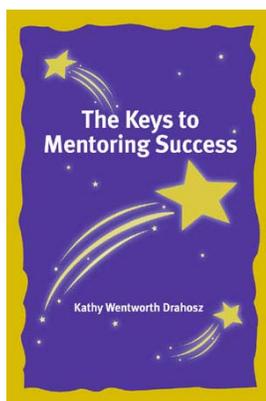
In the second scenario, you select a mentor and request his participation, but he denies this request. First of all, don’t get discouraged. You must understand that the mentor candidate maintains the right to say no and that this denial

may be due to a number of factors (the timing may not be right, he cannot commit the necessary time to a mentoring relationship, he may feel that he does not have what it takes to mentor you, etc.). Be prepared for this possibility so that you can respond with grace and professionalism despite the initial disappointment.

In the third scenario, you have met with a candidate that you decide, for whatever reason, is not the right mentor for you. How do you communicate this? You will need to balance your response with respect and directness, just as you would hope a mentor would offer you in the second scenario above.

7. Select the Most Appropriate Candidate – Once you have narrowed down your mentoring choice, e-mail a message to the mentor expressing (or reaffirming) your interest.

Identifying and selecting the right mentor is both critical to the success of the mentoring partnership and a challenging task. With the tools and knowledge of this 7-step process for selecting a mentor, you will be prepared to make a choice that will best suit you and your mentor alike.



The Keys to Mentoring Success

By Kathy Wentworth Drahosz

This is a comprehensive 7-step guide for the establishment and implementation of successful and dynamic mentoring programs. Mentoring expert Kathy Wentworth Drahosz takes the mentoring practitioner through the entire process from inception to completion. There is even a section on troubleshooting. A must read for every mentoring professional.

The Keys to Mentoring Success for \$14.95 each.

