

# MODULE 8: THE ART OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

## INTRODUCTION

Most people think that customer service only kicks in when something goes wrong. In fact, this is not true. Most people who are asking for service just need help, not because something

is wrong. This module discusses some of the most important skills in hospitality like customer service. This is about how to handle a difficult situation and the power of a review.

## OVERVIEW



### Knowledge

- The students know that their attitude towards a guest can shape the experience of the guest and how powerful a review can be.



### Attitude

- The students feel comfortable helping guests and know they can only improve because of reviews.



### Learning Goals

- The students learn how important customer service is and how it can make or break a guest's visit.



### Skills

- The students learn what it takes to be a good customer service person.

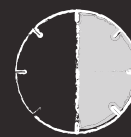
SESSION 8A: What can I do for you?

SESSION 8B: I know you're angry - how can I help you?

SESSION 8C: The power of a review

## BEFORE YOU START, YOU NEED...

- Markers and pens
- Flipcharts in place
- Large pieces of paper
- Printed student diaries
- Printed supplementary pieces



- Preparation time (30 min)
- Training time (3 x 90 min)



# SESSION 8A: What can I do for you?



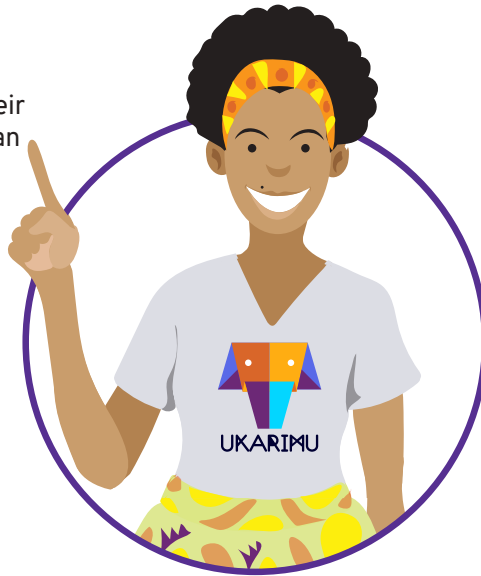
## Knowledge

- The students know that their attitude towards a guest can shape the experience of the guest.



## Attitude

- The students feel good when they have helped someone in a positive way.



## Learning Goals

- The students learn how important customer service is and how it can make or break a guest's visit.



## Skills

- The students learn what it takes to be a good customer service person.
- The students learn that hospitality is not about them, but about the guest.

## AGENDA



### Energizer

(10 min)



**Exercise:**  
Take the  
Challenge!  
(5 min)



**Exercise:** A day in  
the life of a customer  
service person - YOU!  
(40 min)



**Exercise: QUIZ:**  
The ABC's of  
customer service  
(15 min)



**Discussion:**  
What does it  
take?  
(20 min)



## INSTRUCTIONS

### Energizer (10 min)



The Energizer team leads an energizer.

### Exercise: Take the challenge! (15 min)



#### INTRODUCTION

This session is designed to give the students an organized view of customer service skills. These are universal principles that can be used in any job, at any level, anywhere in the world. Start with taking the challenge which will run all through the day.



#### SAY:

- *Go and stand somewhere in the room where you have enough space to move your arms around good morning! Today is a special day. I want all of us to take the challenge! The most important skill in hospitality is customer service. It is not always easy and not everyone is good at it. We live in a very “me me” society, but the first rule of hospitality is that it is not about me (you- the employee), but it is all about them- the guest- the visitor! People spend weeks, maybe months, planning their trip to come to your country. They work hard every day and save their money so they can have a great holiday. Because they have spent their hard earned money they expect everything to be perfect- and it is up to you to make it happen. For the entire day today, I want you to treat each other like guests. See what you can do or say for your colleague to make them feel special. Greet each other, complement each other, say or do whatever you can to make the other person feel that they are guests on holiday having the perfect holiday in your hotel!*



#### READ

#### TAKE THE CHALLENGE!

Every day is a new day and a new challenge. Take the challenge to be the best customer service person you can be. Take each guest as a challenge to see just how helpful you can be. Treat each guest as though they are the only one that you have and all of your attention is on them. See how \*\*\*\*SPECIAL\*\*\*\* you can make them feel. Start at home with your family and friends. Have good manners and always be kind, courteous and respectful. Ask what you can do for them and not what they can do for you. You may be surprised at the results!



#### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

*This is an exercise that will run through the day, but make sure they keep it up. Make notes through the day when you see an act of kindness. Perhaps start by having them turn to their neighbors and greet them. They should hold doors open for each other, carry things for each other, Smile a lot... see what they can come up with to make each other feel special!*



## Exercise: A day in the life of a customer service person - YOU (40 min)



### SAY:

- Now let's look at a day in the life of a customer service person: you! This corresponds with the ABCs in your diaries.

### READ

- A day in the life of a customer service person: you.

#### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

The students have this in their diaries as well as the ABCs of Customer Service. There are supplemental pieces for the facilitator. Each letter of the alphabet is in the narrative, but the alphabetized list gives them a clear reminder.

## Exercise: Quiz (15 min)



### SAY:

- Now let's take the quiz. You can refer to the ABCs of customer service for the answers. The quiz is in your diaries.

1. Even though my guest speaks another language I wait for them to ask their question because I am \_(PATIENT)\_\_\_\_\_.
2. I know that the \_(VISITOR)\_\_\_\_\_ has spent time and money to come to my country and I am glad to have them here!.
3. I \_(UNDERSTAND)\_\_\_\_\_ the needs of my guest because I \_(LISTEN)\_\_\_\_\_ very carefully to them.
4. Even though I was having my lunch I jumped up to help the guest because I am always \_(WILLING)\_\_\_\_\_ to help.
5. I enjoy my \_(JOB)\_\_\_\_\_ because it is a happy place to work.
6. I always look nice, my clothes are clean and I smell fresh because I have \_(DEVELOPED GOOD WORK HABITS)\_\_\_\_\_.
7. I \_(GIVE GOOD SERVICE)\_\_\_\_\_ always because I \_(RESPECT)\_\_\_\_\_ everyone!
8. I know that the one most important thing in Customer Service is to make my guest feel \_(SPECIAL)\_\_\_\_\_!





## Discussion: What does it take? (20 min)

Encourage the students to discuss what they think it takes to be a good customer service person and why is it important. Is it easy?



### FACILITATOR'S TIP:

See the facilitator guide about different ways of leading a discussion for some inspiration.



### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

*Make sure they are keeping up the challenge, even when they go to lunch!*



# SESSION 8B: I know you're angry - how can I help you?



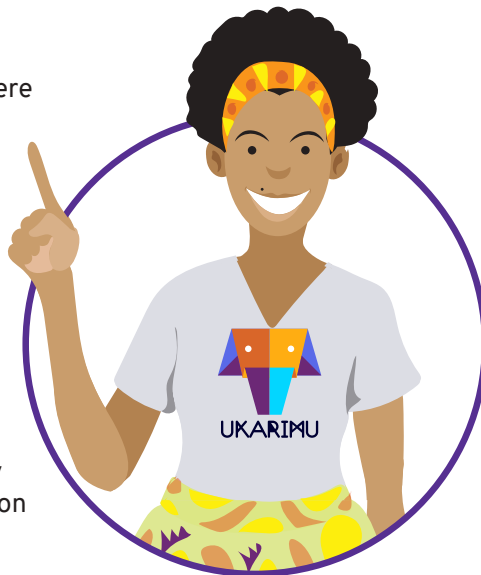
## Knowledge

- The students know that there are certain steps they can take to alleviate a difficult situation.
- The students know when it is necessary to call for assistance.



## Attitude

- The students feel that they are in control of the situation and comfortable trying to assist a difficult guest.
- The students know when the situation needs to be elevated to a manager.



## Learning Goals

- The following session is designed to give skills to the student when they are faced with a difficult guest.



## Skills

- The students learn skills to diffuse a difficult situation.
- The students learn skills to take care of the guest in a professional manner.

## AGENDA



### Energizer

(10 min)



### Exercise:

Roleplay 1: How can I help you

(20 min)



### Exercise:

10 Ways to help an angry guest

(20 min)



### Exercise:

Roleplay 2: How can I help you better?

(20 min)



### Discussion:

Are you feeling any better?

(20 min)



## INSTRUCTIONS

### Energizer (10 min)



The Energizer team leads an energizer.

### Exercise: How can I help you? (20 min)



#### INTRODUCTION

##### SAY:

- *One of the most difficult things to realize in customer service is that it is never about you – it is all about them: the guests! It takes a brave and resourceful person to be a customer service person because you are on the spot all the time and most likely you are the first point of contact for an angry person. Even though visitors are supposed to be happy (after all they are on holiday!) things can go wrong - or seemingly wrong and you have to know how to handle the situation. They want everything to be perfect and you are the one to make it happen. Let's have some fun and put our skills into practice. Take a partner. Between the two of you decide who is the angry guest and who is the employee. Briefly decide why the guest is upset. Make it realistic. Do not discuss how it will be solved. Then each pair will come to the front to play out their scene. You will have 2 minutes to come to a satisfactory conclusion.*



##### FACILITATOR'S TIP:

See the facilitator guide about different ways of leading a discussion for some inspiration.

### Exercise: 10 Ways to help an angry guest (20 min)



##### SAY:

- *Let's get some help. Let's read '10 ways to help an angry guest'. This is in your diary for future reference.*



##### READ

Supplemental piece: 10 ways to help an angry guest

##### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

*It is particularly important that they understand why they become a 'non-person' and become the object of someone's frustration.*



## Exercise: How can I help you better? (20 min)



### SAY:

- Now that we have learned a few tips on how to handle an angry person I want you to pair up with the same partner. This time you will switch roles and the person who was the employee before will now be the angry guest. Use the same reason you had before on why you are angry, but let's see how the situation will change. Keeping these 10 tips in mind you will have 2 minutes to play out your scene and hopefully come to a satisfactory solution. The others are to observe and make note of which of the tips are being used.



### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

Give each team 2 minutes. Make notes on how the situations change such as who starts first - the guest or the employee? Does the employee promise things they can't deliver? Does anyone ask for help? Do they laugh when they are being yelled at?

## Discussion: Are you feeling any better? (20 min)



Being at the other end of an angry situation can be very scary. Encourage the students to discuss how they felt when they were being yelled at. Did they want to run away? Did they freeze? It is very important to use good skills when you are trying to resolve a situation. It is up to the employee to make sure the situation does not get out of control.



### FACILITATOR'S TIP:

See the facilitator guide about different ways of leading a discussion for some inspiration.



### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

Remind them to keep up the challenge!





# SESSION 8C: The power of a review



## Knowledge

- The students know that what they do will come back to them in a review.
- The students know how powerful that review can be.



## Learning Goals

- This session is to make the student aware of reviews, both good and bad and how quickly they can be spread.



## Attitude

- The students feel that a review can be good or bad but either one is equally important.
- The students feel that they can only improve because of reviews and will not fear reviews (anymore).



## Skills

- The students learn how to conduct themselves in a professional manner.



## AGENDA



### Exercise:

A customer survey: How does it help?  
(15 min)



### Exercise:

Write what you mean: Review a review  
(30min)



### Discussion:

How do reviews affect you - both good and bad?  
(20 min)



### Discussion:

How did the challenge work?  
(15 min)



### Reflection

(10 min)



## INSTRUCTIONS

### Exercise: A customer survey: How does it help? (15 min)



#### ASK:

- *Have you ever been in a restaurant or hotel or shop when someone has given you customer survey? Why do you think they gave it to you? Why is it important?*



#### SAY:

- *Let's look at one.*



#### READ

There is a supplemental piece of a survey. Read this one.



#### SAY:

- *The first 7 questions are Yes or No questions. Do you remember when we learned about asking questions to get good information. Questions 8-11 are “open” or “probing” questions which will encourage more information from the guest. Perhaps they have ideas that management had not thought of. Feedback is a very important tool. Surveys like this allow the guest to express their ideas. Perhaps their server was particularly good. This gives them a place where they can tell management how good they were which makes everyone happy. On the other hand, though, what if the guest had a bad experience? They were going to go home without saying anything. Do you think they would come back to that place? Which review do you think is more important?*
- *It is actually the bad review. The restaurant/hotel cannot afford to lose guests. It is always nice to know when their staff is good, but it is more important to learn about the bad things so they can be improved.*



#### FACILITATOR'S TIP:

To make it more interactive, let some students give some answers.



## Exercise: Write what you mean: Review a review (30 min)



**SAY:**

- *In this day of modern technology it is more important than ever to be aware of what you are writing. Because of social media information can be spread to thousands of people within seconds! People have lost their jobs or friends because of what they might have said on the internet. Unfortunately people are more likely to write about bad things rather than good so if they have had a bad experience at your restaurant or hotel they will spread the word instantly. Make sure that whatever you write you can back it up with facts.*



**ASK:**

- *What affect do you think that will have on your business? Do you think people will come if they see negative reviews? On the other hand, people also now look to social media for positive reviews, such as TripAdvisor. Either way, reviews can be very powerful!*



**SAY:**

- *Now I would like you to form small groups. I want half of the groups to write a good review about a meal you had at a restaurant and the other half a bad review. Be sure to give details of what happened (both good and bad) and what advice you would give the owner to either keep or change the way they are doing things.*



### **FACILITATOR'S NOTE:**

*Let the groups have a few minutes to formulate and write their reviews. Then let one person from each group read their review.*

## Discussion: How do reviews affect you- both good and bad? (20 min)



Encourage the students to discuss how powerful reviews can be. Are they always true? What happens when remarks are taken out of context? Do the students feel that they would be influenced by a good/bad review? Remind them of how important it is to be aware of what you say or write because you never know who is going to see it!



### **FACILITATOR'S TIP:**

See the facilitator guide about different ways of leading a discussion for some inspiration.



## Discussion: How was the challenge? (20 min)



Hopefully the students kept up the challenge during the day. What kinds of things did they do for each other? How did they feel when someone made them feel special? Did anyone go the extra mile? You can wrap up the day with an overview of why customer service is so important. Did they find it easy to be nice? Did they feel scared when someone was yelling at them? Discuss it!



### FACILITATOR'S TIP:

See the facilitator guide about different ways of leading a discussion for some inspiration.

## Reflection (10 min)



### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

*You've covered a lot of material today. Let the students have some time to reflect.*



### SAY:

- *We had a special day today and learned a lot!*
- *Maybe we can take the challenge again tomorrow?*



## QUIZ FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 1- Even though my guest speaks another language I wait for them to ask their question because I am \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2- I know that the \_\_\_\_\_ has spent time and money to come to my country and I am glad to have them.
- 3- I \_\_\_\_\_ the needs of my guest because I \_\_\_\_\_ very carefully to them.
- 4- Even though I was having my lunch I jumped up to help the guest because I am always \_\_\_\_\_ to help.
- 5- I enjoy my \_\_\_\_\_ because it is a happy place to work.
- 6- I always look nice, my clothes are clean and I smell fresh because I have \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7- I \_\_\_\_\_ always because I \_\_\_\_\_ everyone!
- 8- I am always prepared and make sure I have the right \_\_\_\_\_ for my job.
- 9- I like to go \_\_\_\_\_ because it is important.
- 10- I know that the one most important thing in Customer Service is to make my guest feel \_\_\_\_\_.

### Answers:

1. Patient
2. Visitor
3. Understand/Listen
4. Willing
5. Job
6. Developed good work habits
7. Give good service always/Respect
8. Tools
9. The x-tra mile
10. Special



### **A-ATTITUDE!**

**B**-Be proactive

**C**-Create an enjoyable atmosphere

**D**-Develop good work habits

**E**-Enthusiasm/Energy

**F**-Find solutions and Follow through

**G**-Give excellent service- ALWAYS!

**H**-Help your guest as much as possible

**I**-Interest in your guest

**J**-It's your JOB!

**K**-Know your hotel, your neighborhood and your resources

**L-LISTEN** to your guests

**M**-Manners/Courtesy

**N**-Never argue

**O**-Organized

**P**-Patience is key

**Q**-Question your guest to see what they need

**R**-Respect everyone

**S-SPECIAL!** Make your guest feel special!

**T**-Tools to do your job

**U**-Understand your guest and their needs

**V**-Visitor- remember they are from a different place

**W**-Willing to always help in any way

**X**-X-tra mile- go beyond expectations!

**Y-YOU** - YOU make the difference!

**Z**-Zero in on the guest



## A day in the life of a customer service Person: YOU!

The loose definition of customer service is “excellent service provided to the customer **BEFORE, DURING** and **AFTER** the situation.” This may be puzzling- how can someone provide service to someone even before they have met them? This can happen in many ways:

### **BEFORE:**

When you first come to work you **CREATE AN ENJOYABLE WORK AREA** for your guests. Let’s say that you work at the front desk of a hotel. When you start your shift you make sure that your work station is clean and free of any trash. Your **ATTITUDE** is positive, and, because you have **DEVELOPED GOOD WORK HABITS**, you are well dressed, clean and ready for the day. You are **ORGANIZED** and have all of the necessary **TOOLS** to do your job well- your pens work, your receipt books are handy, there is paper in the printer and you have a good supply of local maps and brochures for your guests. You are in a great mood, have a genuine smile on your face and are prepared and **WILLING** to take on anything the day has to offer. You know that if a guest needs something you will **BE PROACTIVE** by asking if you can **HELP** them even before they come to you. You know that it is important to **GIVE EXCELLENT SERVICE ALWAYS** because you have **RESPECT** and take **INTEREST** in each and every guest you serve.

### **DURING:**

When you first greet your guest you will **Zoom** in on them and give them your best greeting using your best **MANNERS** to address them appropriately (Mr., Miss) and have your best smile on. You are **ENERGETIC** and **ENTHUSIASTIC** because you love having a **JOB** and you are **PATIENT** with your guests because they are coming to you for help. Perhaps they are looking for directions to a church they have heard about, or a market or a museum. Perhaps they need an **ATM** machine or a place where they can buy crafts to take home. You are confident because you **KNOW** what is in your hotel and your neighborhood so you are able to help them. Some guests are challenging because, as you remember from previous modules, that not everyone speaks the same language, but you have learned to **NEVER ARGUE** with them. You have **QUESTIONED** the guest and have learned how to really **LISTEN** to what they say and **UNDERSTAND** their needs. After all, you know that the **VISITOR** is your priority and you are glad that they are in your beautiful country and they have come to you for help.

### **AFTER:**

How can you provide them with Customer Service after they have left you? When you see them later you can go the **X-TRA MILE** and ask them how their day went, or if they enjoyed their meal, or if they enjoyed the market. If you have promised that you would do something for them then **FOLLOW THROUGH** and make sure you have done it. You know that **YOU** can make a difference in the experience that your guest has and, above all else, you know that the most important thing in Customer Service is making them feel **SPECIAL!**

**THERE ARE NO POTHOLE IN THE X-TRA MILE!**



1

### When a guest makes a complaint, take a step back.

Collect yourself and know that the guest does not see you as a person, but as a scapegoat for his/her frustration. An emotional response from you will only make the situation worse.

## STAY CALM!

2

### Give the customer your full attention and listen to the whole problem before reacting.

Try to put yourself in their shoes. If you were having a problem you would want someone to listen to you and not argue with you.

You are a “non-person” at this point. They don’t know you personally and are not yelling at YOU, but rather releasing their frustration. Do NOT take it personally!

3

### Don’t jump the gun

You might deal with complaints on a regular basis and you may have even dealt with a similar situation, but to the guest their complaint is unique.

Treat them with **patience** and **actively listen** to their complaint.

4

### Learn how to apologize... without accepting blame.

Sometimes people just want to express their anger and hear an apology.

Without taking direct blame for the error or situation you can genuinely apologize that the situation has occurred such as “I’m sorry this happened to you... Let’s see what we can do.” Be very careful what you admit to.

5

### Take the initiative to sort out the complaint

Do not pass the guest off to someone else unless you are SURE that the other person is the BEST person to handle the situation.

No one wants to be passed from person to person like a plate of matooke with no one taking ownership of the situation.

Try your very best not to add to the customer’s frustration, but rather use your resources to make them feel as though they are truly being taken care of.





Remember, you are a professional representative of your company!

**6**

### **Know your resources and what authority you have within your company.**

Every company should have guidelines for their staff as to the limits of authority you have as an employee.

It is your responsibility to try to work out the situation within the guidelines you are given.

What can you recommend be done to satisfy the customer?

Do you have the authority to compensate the customer?

Know your company's guidelines!

**7**

### **Customers do not want to hear excuses**

If someone is spending their hard earned money on their holiday they want 100% satisfaction and attention.

They do not want to hear that your child is sick, or you were stuck in a traffic jam. They want to know that you are focused on their problem and what you are going to do to fix it.

### **It's all about them!**

**8**

### **The problem should always be resolved as quickly as possible**

The goal is to make the customer feel that their complaint is being handled quickly and professionally.

Do not be distracted. Give them your full attention.

**Zero in** on them and see how quickly you can get results.

Do not go to lunch!! If you have to leave the room then **TELL** them that you will be right back- and come right back!

**9**

### **Keep track of the guest's complaint and FOLLOW THROUGH**

If you tell someone that you will take some action to solve their problem keep track of this and **follow through** with your promise.

If you are not able to do what you say you will then be proactive and **KEEP THE CUSTOMER INFORMED!**

**10**

### **Know when to elevate the problem**

Dealing with an angry guest can be very difficult.

Again, they are turning you into a non-person BUT you must be there for them.

**\*\*\*\*\* REMAIN CALM\*\*\*\*\*.**



Do NOT guess or say “maybe...” which will just frustrate the person even more.

Some people can be very abusive. You are not paid to take abuse.

If the guest gets too difficult to handle, or they are just not willing to work with you, call in your manager or supervisor. Do not be afraid to ask for help.

**You are serving a guest - not a life sentence in prison.  
Be proud of your work!**

