Internal Customer Service

Heavenly Hamburgers is a national fast food chain that specializes in charcoal broiled hamburgers. It has a good reputation for quality, and there is a significant amount of repeat business.

You are part of a six-person team that works the evening shift. You work the drive-in window, and two team members work the main counter. The kitchen/prep area has three employees.

It's 5:00 p.m., and the vehicles in the drive-in window lane are backing up. It has taken a bit longer than usual for the kitchen to prepare and deliver your last order. You shout at Bob, the lead in the kitchen, that you need your order #301. Bob hears you, continues to work, and says, "You'll get it when it's ready!"

Order #301 comes to you in a couple of minutes. You give the customer his order; he looks disgusted as he says, "You must have new help in the kitchen. I've been waiting almost 10 minutes! You won't see me in this restaurant again!" The customer drives off in a rush.

Questions

1.   What are you feeling at this time? To what degree are you feeling it?

2.   How will the interaction between you and Bob and between you and the customer influence your performance with the other customers in line? Explain.

3.   Suppose Bob continued to respond in curt, rude tones to you and other team members. What would be the impact? How would you handle the situation, short-term and long-term?

4. If internal customer service equals external customer service, what kind of service might the next few customers receive who are waiting in your line for carry out orders? Explain.

5. Bob and his team members in the kitchen are internal suppliers to you and your team members at the front counter. Considering the performance criteria of Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness (RATER), what marks would Bob get on this day? Use 1 as the lowest mark and 5 as the highest.

6. If Bob's demeanor were the same toward his team members in the kitchen, how might it affect their performance?