Lesson Plan

Turning an Unsatisfied Customer into a Satisfied Customer

Objective: Students will examine strategies for communicating effectively with unsatisfied or angry customers.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate customer service skills.**

Demonstration includes

- *defining **customer service** (e.g., internal customer service; external customer service)*
- *identifying the benefits of providing helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable customer service*
- *prioritizing customer service (both within an organization and to external customers and stakeholders)*
- *anticipating needs of customers and coworkers*
- *demonstrating how to provide helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable service to address customer and/or coworker needs.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

- Demonstrate work ethic.
- Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
- Demonstrate listening and speaking skills.
- Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
- Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
- Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

- English: 6.RV, 6.RL, 6.RI, 6.C, 6.LU, 7.RV, 7.RL, 7.RI, 7.C, 7.LU, 8.RV, 8.RL, 8.RI, 8.C, 8.LU, 9.RV, 9.RL, 9.RI, 9.C, 9.LU, 10.RV, 10.RL, 10.RI, 10.C, 10.LU, 11.RV, 11.RL, 11.RI, 11.C, 11.LU, 12.RV, 12.RL, 12.RI, 12.C, 12.LU
- History and Social Science: WHI.4, WHI.5, WHI.6, WHII.2, WHII.4, WHII.7, WHII.9, WHII.10, WHII.11, VUS.2, VUS.3, VUS.5, VUS.6, VUS.8, VUS.9, VUS.10, VUS.12, VUS.13, VUS.14, VUS.16, VUS.17, GOVT.1, GOVT.2, GOVT.3, GOVT.6, GOVT.11, GOVT.13

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Tell students that today they'll be examining customer service strategies for dealing with angry customers. Ask students to demonstrate (silently, with body language only) the behavior of an angry customer.*** Ask students what experiences they have either as an unhappy customer, or as an employee dealing with an unhappy customer. This will get students thinking about the various perspectives involved in dealing with unhappy customers. List some things that make us angry as customers (e.g., slow service, rude employees, carelessness).

2. ***Watch a YouTube video by MindTools entitled, "Dealing with Unhappy Customers"***

(https://youtu.be/TqJ3GqR5Txg). Discuss.

3. ***Break students into pairs and ask them to read the accompanying article by MindTools entitled, "Dealing With Unhappy Customers: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity" (https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/unhappy-customers.htm).*** The video is embedded within the article, so the students will have another opportunity to watch it if they'd like.

4. ***Ask students to take notes on Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity.*** Discuss.

5. ***Prepare students to role-play customer service scenarios.*** Distribute the scenarios on Teacher Resource #1: Customer Service Scenarios, break students into pairs or small groups, and ask students to practice acting out their group's scenario.

6. ***Demonstrate scenarios.*** Ask some or all of the groups to act out their customer service scenario for the class. Ask the student observers to identify strategies being used in the role play; are there any of those identified earlier in the lesson?

7. ***Hold class discussion to share final thoughts.*** Emphasize to students that no matter what field or industry they choose to enter, there will be times when dealing with an angry customer or client is part of the job. The more strategies they have to effectively communicate with customers and diffuse potential conflicts, the better prepared they'll be for future employment.

Formative Assessment**:**

- Assess student understanding and participation as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
- Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by notes recorded on Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity.
- Evaluate student participation in the role play activity.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, replace the role-play portion of the activity with an example in which a student and the teacher demonstrate just one scenario to the entire class. To provide scaffolding, the article and Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity can be read and completed as a class.
- To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to use what they learned in today's lesson to create a PowerPoint presentation about effective ways to communicate with unhappy customers.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Invite a manager or business owner to discuss the importance of communication in good customer service.
- Many elements of customer service (e.g., listening skills, conflict-resolution skills, resourcefulness) are skills that align with overall workplace readiness, as well as with success in the classroom. Ask students to create a bulletin board of "tips for success" that incorporate some examples from this lesson.

Handout #1:

Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity

SEVEN STEPS IN DEALING WITH AN UNHAPPY CUSTOMER	EXPLAIN: WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

Other helpful notes:

Teacher Resource #1:
Customer Service Scenarios

Scenario #1: Simone is working at a call center for a large financial institution. Mostly she fields questions from customers and assists people in setting up, transferring, and closing accounts. Today, however, Simone answers the phone to find a man on the other end of the line yelling and ranting about the bank's monthly fees and service fees. These are standard on the type of account this customer holds. How should Simone handle the caller?

Scenario #2: Cedric works in a hair salon as a stylist. He is very busy with multiple customers. One is getting her hair highlighted, another is under the dryer, and yet another is getting her hair shampooed nearby. A customer whose hair he cut and colored the previous day enters the salon, clearly very angry. She demands to speak to Cedric about the quality of her haircut and color. How should Cedric respond?

Scenario #3: Roberto is a chef at a local restaurant. On a particularly busy evening, one of the wait staff approaches Roberto, clearly upset. She explains that a customer is very unhappy with his dish and wishes to speak with the chef (Roberto) directly. Roberto has several items on the stovetop, and the oven timer is about to sound. The manager and an assistant chef are in the kitchen as well. What should Roberto do?

Scenario #4: Ashley works at an auto detailer and performs custom detailing jobs on a variety of sports cars. Ashley arrives at work one Saturday to a phone message from an angry client. Ashley had worked on the client's Ford Mustang the week prior, and according to the message, some of the pin striping has already come loose from the car. Ashley sits down to return the call. What should she say?

Scenario #5: Fred works in the hospitality and tourism industry, at a local hotel. It's been a busy night processing patron check-ins and completing final bills prior to the next day's departures. Just as Fred is ready to leave for the night, he gets a call from room #405, where a family of four is staying for the night. The family is very upset about the condition of their room, saying that the bedding is not clean and that there is a musty smell in the room. The hotel is booked for the night. What can Fred do to help these patrons?

Handout #1: SAMPLE STUDENT NOTES

Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity

SEVEN STEPS IN DEALING WITH AN UNHAPPY CUSTOMER	EXPLAIN: WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?
1. Adjust your mindset.	This means to set aside any defensive feelings and recognize that the only thing that matters is that the customer is upset and it is your job, as the service provider, to remedy the situation. This is called a "customer service mindset" and it is important in approaching challenging situations.
2. Listen actively.	It is important to fully understand the customer's point of view and the details of the situation, so listening actively, without interrupting or contradicting the customer, is important.
3. Repeat the customer's concerns.	Repeating the problem shows the customer you were listening, which can help lower his anger and stress levels. More than this, it helps you agree on the problem that needs to be solved.
4. Be empathic and apologize.	This helps the customer/client understand that you are concerned about him/her and that it is your intention to remedy the situation. An apology can go a long way with an angry customer.
5. Present a solution.	The customer needs a solution to his/her problem, and it is your job as the service provider to present a solution. If unsure, you can ask the customer, "What can I do that would make this situation better for you?"
6. Take action and follow up.	This proves that the customer's satisfaction is important to you and the company. Following up to ensure customer satisfaction demonstrates concern and commitment to quality customer service.
7. Use the feedback.	This step is important because whatever upset the customer could repeat itself, and the situation is an opportunity for the company to identify problem areas and areas for improvement.