Lesson Plan

Understanding Internal Customer Service

Objective: Students will describe internal customer service and analyze its effect on external customer service.

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.
- Collaborate with team members.
- 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.C, 6.LU, 6.W, 7.RV, 7.RL, 7.C, 7.LU, 7.W, 8.RV, 8.RL, 8.C, 8.LU, 8.W, 9.RV, 9.RL, 9.C, 9.LU, 9.W, 10.RV, 10.RL, 10.C, 10.LU, 10.W, 11.RV, 11.RL, 11.C, 11.LU, 11.W, 12.RV, 12.RL, 12.C, 12.LU, 12.W
- History and Social Science: WHII.12, VUS.10, GOVT.14

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Display the phrase "internal customer service." Ask students what they think it means.*** Discuss and define (internal customer service refers to the service employees provide to other stakeholders [e.g., other employees; coworkers] within a company). Explain that effective internal customer service results in a positive work environment characterized by mutual respect, helpfulness, trust, and patience. Positive work attitudes such as these translate into not only an enjoyable work environment but also into effective external customer service.

2. ***Demonstrate (or ask student volunteers to demonstrate) how our attitudes affect those around us.*** Role-play a person walking into work with a negative or disrespectful attitude. How is that person perceived, and how does that person make others feel? Then role-play a person walking into work with a positive, respectful, and

professional attitude. How is that person perceived, and how does that person make others feel? Record the positive and negative emotions on a "T" chart. Ask students which emotions they'd prefer to feel at work (or school) each day?

3. ***Brainstorm a list of behaviors that encourage positive emotions at work or school.*** The list could include items such as the following:
    - Always use "please" and "thank-you."
    - Show consideration for your co-workers (e.g., be willing to take a shift for someone when they need coverage; you'll be more likely to get your shift covered when you ask for help).
    - Step in and assist a co-worker when appropriate. Show an "all for one and one for all" attitude.
    - Smile.
    - Say "good morning" and "good evening."
    - Keep complaints to a minimum; unless you are proposing a solution to a workplace problem, you're just complaining and encouraging negativity.
    - Encourage and congratulate your co-workers when appropriate.
    - Remember: you and your co-workers ***are*** the company.
    - Show gratitude.
    - Practice kindness.

    Option: assign this step as an Internet research project. What articles, tips, or best practices can be found that relate to positive work environments and effective internal customer service?

4. ***Break students into pairs and ask them to complete Handout #1: Internal Customer Service Becomes External Customer Service.*** Discuss the scenario, how it could be changed, and answers to the follow-up questions as a whole class.

5. ***Ask students to formulate their own short skits/scenarios in small groups to demonstrate the concept of effective internal customer service, and how it can translate into effective external customer service.*** Have students critique each group's skit using one of the forms found on Teacher Resource #1: Peer-to-Peer Feedback Forms.

6. ***Close with a class discussion surrounding the following question:***

    We all spend a lot of time at school and/or work. We will always be more satisfied when we can look forward to a positive environment at school/work. What can each of us do today to help all of those around us (including ourselves) experience more positivity at work or school? How can habits such as these contribute to career success?

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: Internal Customer Service Becomes External Customer Service.
- Evaluate student participation in the role play activity.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, end the lesson after step #4. To provide scaffolding, Handout #1: Internal Customer Service Becomes External Customer Service can be read and completed as a class.
- To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to teach the concept of internal customer service to another CTE class, using the best practices discussed in class as well as the skits the students created to demonstrate the concept.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Invite a manager or business owner to discuss the concept of internal customer service and strategies to encourage a positive, professional work environment.
- Practice positive internal customer service in the classroom. Evaluate how the effort affected everyone's feelings, productivity, and behaviors.

Handout:
Internal Customer Service Becomes External Customer Service

Read and discuss the scenario below with a partner. Highlight phrases that indicate the attitudes of employees toward one another. Underline phrases that indicate the attitudes of employees toward customers. Then, re-write this scenario using the best practices for internal customer service discussed in class and answer the questions that follow.

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, and you are feeling impatient. 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!" You respond with "Speed it up!"

Order #301 comes to you in a couple of minutes. You turn back to Bob and say, "It's about time!" You see Bob walk off to take a break as 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. You roll your eyes as the next customer approaches, looking impatient.

As you take the next order, you hear yourself saying, "What do you want?" rather than "How may I help you?"

Questions for discussion:

How is internal customer service related to external customer service?

If internal customer service equals external customer service, what kind of service might the next few customers receive?

What changes did you make when you re-wrote the scenario?

How do you predict the interactions with customers would change based on changing the way employees interact with each other?

Teacher Resource #1:

Peer-to-Peer Feedback Forms

	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Effectiveness of presentation	The main point of the presentation was clear.	The presentation was somewhat effective.	The presentation left the audience wondering about internal or external customer service.	The presentation did not demonstrate internal or external customer service.
Group demonstrated examples of positive internal customer service	Several examples demonstrated positive internal customer service.	One or two examples demonstrated positive internal customer service.	Examples were ambiguous or unclear regarding positive internal customer service.	The presentation did not include examples of positive internal customer service.
Group demonstrated the link between internal and external customer service	Student presentation demonstrated an understanding of link between internal/external customer service.	Student presentation somewhat demonstrated an understanding of link between internal/external customer service.	The link between internal and external customer service was weak or unclear in the presentation.	The presentation made no link between internal and external customer service.

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