

Top 10 Strategies for Excellence in Customer / Guest Services

Tip # 1: Get off to a good start – meet and greet for excellence

Customers/guests have developed their first impression within 45 seconds whether it is on the phone, in person or even by e-mail. Openings are a critical element of excellence in customer service.

Tip # 2: Break the old habit of apologizing

Minimize apologies and expressions which make the situation sound bad or unfortunate. When people hear "I'm sorry," or "unfortunately," they do not expect to get any good news in what follows.

Tip # 3: Emphasize what is next instead of what is past.

Help people get focussed on what is next. It is impossible to "undo" what has already happened. It is best to just get everyone focussed on moving on and looking for positive outcomes.

Tip # 4: Emphasize what can be done instead of what can't be done.

Remember, people don't phone, email or come to your facility to find out what they can't do or what you don't do. We need to be willing to share information that helps them understand what we can do and what is available to them.

When we emphasize positive action, it is difficult for people to be disagreeable or difficult.

Tip # 5: Offer choices, options and alternatives.

When people are presented with options, choices and alternatives, the focus turns to thinking about action instead of reaction. Achieving action is one of the keys to excellent service.

Sometimes, we just need to get people thinking about what else can be done. Our guests / customers today are used to having choices. There are choices in all aspects of life. Children today are given choices. The marketplace is based on options. People seek out alternatives for almost everything they do.

When things are going reasonably well, we can offer two choices and most guests / customers will respond. If anger or negative emotion is involved, we may need to offer three options. This is called the "tri-choice" approach. Sometimes we also need to use a forced choice. Offer the choices three times to positively push people to make a positive choice based on the alternatives.

Tip # 6: Set limits and boundaries for yourself and your customers / guests

Sometimes, people become emotional and make unreasonable and/or inappropriate demands. A very small proportion may even swear, yell, threaten or otherwise try to frighten and intimidate us.

It is important to stay calm, neutral, objective and always professional. As challenging as it is, we need to work hard to not catch this highly contagious behaviour. It is so critical that we don't imitate or respond negatively to such emotion. We need to clearly set limits and boundaries within which to work positively and productively.

Shared respect is the key to setting these limits and boundaries. Define limits, set respectful boundaries and plan assertive responses when providing customer service.

Tip # 7: Ask questions to engage and include the customers / guests in excellent service.

When you ask questions, people feel involved, included and engaged. Questions suggest shared information. Questions stimulate action and often lead to shared solutions.

Questions also get people thinking. Thinking (rational) behaviour is much easier to work with than emotional behaviour.

Tip # 8: Be willing to explain why.

We now live in a society where people expect to know why. They will ask why and we have to be willing to explain why. Once they understand why, they will often be more willing to move on and accept the information at hand.

This is particularly important when we are explaining policies, procedures, decisions and actions. Indeed, we should be proactive and prepare our explanations in advance.

Tip # 9 Ask For Help.

Some customers / guests feel that they have to go "higher" in the chain of command in order to get results. Discuss with your supervisor in advance how you will handle this.

Tip # 10: Develop a Positive, Action Directed Vocabulary.

Excellence in customer service requires an awareness of negative trigger words and positive words to replace them.

| Words to Avoid | | Words to Emphasize | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Sorry | Unfortunately | Yes | Can |
| Can't | Won't | Can do | Could |
| Couldn't | Shouldn't | Will | Action |
| Didn't | Don't | Decision | Would |
| Policy | Rule | Answer | Solution |
| Should have | Have to | Choice | Option |
| Must have | Never | Alternative | Good |
| Always | Problem | Better | Best |
| Trouble | Difficulty | Next step | Future |
| Inconvenience | No | Approach | Review |
| Not | Mistake | What works | Quality |
| Error | Unavailable | New | Progress |
| Unable | Not allowed | Improved | Available |
| Penalties | Delinquent | Ability | Quality |
| Mandatory | Late | Responsiveness | |
| Overdue | Decline | | |
| Fines | Requirements | | |

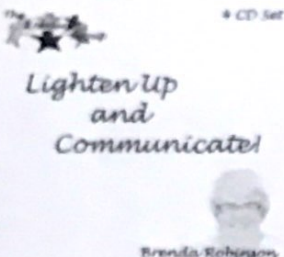
How could you give this same information in a more positive way?

1. I'm not showing that you paid your membership fee. Are you sure you paid it?
2. Every facility in every community has different rules – we can't speak for them.
3. There is no way you'll get into that program now. It has been full for months.
4. Sorry, the discount is only available to members.

5. We are very sorry we double booked the court. You'll have to rebook your group
6. We have no record of your booking. Maybe you thought you booked and forgot.
7. Pickle ball is scheduled from 9am to 11am every day. You have to be off the court by 11:00.
8. The policy states no children under six are allowed in this area. We can't risk the liability.
9. In order to accommodate your change, we needed 24 hours notice.
10. We have a zero-tolerance policy for abusive language in our facility.

The customer / guest may not always be right. They do have a right to believe that they are about something.

Resources from **The Robcan Group** - All of our books and audio are available at www.robcan.ca



Lighten Up and Communicate CD Series - Brenda Robinson

"Communication doesn't have to be heavy and serious. It can be light, friendly, personalized and positive. We've allowed negativity to creep into our style and approach for communication. Even in our families children between six months and three years hear *no* in relation to *yes* on an 80/20 ratio. By the time they are three years old, children know for sure what not to do. What they need to explore is what they can do or what can be done. How can we break the habit of negativity? We can lighten up and become positive communicators."



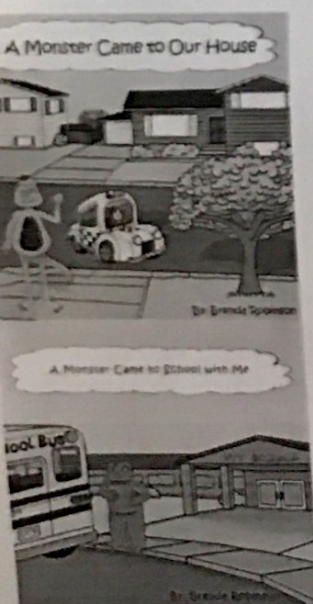
Lighten Up for Learning - Brenda Robinson

What is happening to the joy, excitement and love of learning? Why do students trudge off to school and learn only what they have to? Has school become so serious and business like that it is a chore instead of a challenge? This book has been prepared to invite other parents, grandparents, educators, coaches and administrators to think about ways to bring the joy back. Learning should be exciting, interesting, "joy filled" and just plain fun. Let this chronicle of the "school" experience challenge your thinking and your approaches to the learning environment. Lighten Up!!



Writing for the World of Work - Brenda Robinson & Harley Robinson

Writing for the world of work is a communication skill not a writing skill. Writing at work today is our way of communicating – we email more than we converse. Our writing now "speaks" for us. Technology has not changed the need for effective writing skills at work. Indeed, there may actually be an increased demand for good writers as we embrace the world of emails, electronic reporting, instant messaging and ...



A Monster Came to Our House / A Monster Came to School with Me - Brenda Robinson.

Colourfully illustrated books for young children and their parents to enjoy together. The monster books were written to help children address their fears in positive healthy ways. Sometimes, children are afraid of what they don't know. These fears become monsters. This monster series was designed to have children view monsters in a fun and friendly way.

The Robcan Group



Contact Us

(780) 467-4112

Email: admin@robcan.ca

Visit Us Online: www.robcan.ca

