**Role Playing**

**Change How You Deal with Consumers to Gain Loyal Customers**

Is the price of a wanted product the most important thing these days or is it the buying experience? If you guessed the buying experience, you’d be correct. Because of the urgency to please the customer, more companies are leaning toward training aimed at offering up the very best.

**Role Play for Success**

If you want your staff to offer hats off consumer interaction, look no further! Here, I’ll offer up three customer service training scenarios and while I can’t anticipate every situation, most will help your employees deal with the angry, the unhappy and the lost.

When role-playing, make sure you include the entire customer service staff and give each an opportunity to participate and then discuss how they felt the customer was handled, what could have been done better and point out the good and the bad.

Read the setup out loud to the class, and then have students act out the scripts below. Read the Ending Scenario out loud to the class (if there is one). Now have students discuss what should have happened. After they have completed the discussion, read the Solution to them followed by Lessons Learned.

**The Confused Consumer**

**The Setup:**

An elderly man purchases a top of the line new car from his local dealership. He signs the required papers, pays for the vehicle and drives the car home to show off to neighbors, family members and friends.

When the man drives the car to meet up with coffee friends each morning he keeps hearing a loud clicking sound. His friends urge him to visit the dealership’s service department. He drops the car off, attempts to explain the clicking sound and the dealership shuttles him home where he waits for a call letting him know the car has been serviced. The man returns, thanks the service manager who tells him “no charge" and drives off.

On his way home, again he hears the clicking sound and frustrated, once home, calls the service manager.

Man: “You didn’t fix a thing! It still makes that sound!"

Service Manager “There’s not a thing wrong with that car sir, we checked everything."

Man: “I want to speak to your supervisor right now!’

Service Manager: “He’s not in right now. Can I have him call you?"

Man: “What choice do I have but I better receive a call."

**Ending Scenario**: The [service manager forgets to give the message to his supervisor](http://www.brighthub.com/office/entrepreneurs/articles/108958.aspx) (the general manager) and after a few days of waiting, the man returns to the dealership demanding his car be fixed right, right now!

The general manager is still unaware of the problem and again the man is shuttled home to await his car repairs. Believe it or not the above delivery of the “repaired" car and subsequent conversations continue between the man and the service manager for two weeks and five attempts to fix what the man hears as a clicking sound—the service manager holds to his opinion—there is nothing wrong with the car. Beyond that, the above conversation now includes shouting, some not-so-nice language from both and the man threatens to sue.

**The Solution:**

I offered up this customer service training scenario because it actually happened—to my father-in-law and my husband, who was a district manager for the manufacturer of the vehicle he purchased (we lived in another state.) He finally called the service manager, even though the dealership was out of his district and said, “Did you have the technician who worked on the car perform a pre-repair test drive with my Dad?"

“Well no," the service manager says!

Still wanting to sue somebody, my father-in-law agrees to one more trip to the dealership for a pre-repair test drive with a technician. The problem? Because the car was new and had all the bells and whistles my father-in-law wasn’t aware of, on the test drive it was discovered that the “clicking sound" was his door locks automatically locking once he reached the speed of 17 miles per hour. Problem solved.

So, through two weeks and five repair visits, this customer is definitely unhappy and swears to this day he will never utilize that dealership again.

**Lesson Learned:**

No matter what product you sell, if the customer complains it doesn’t work or has problems, meet with the customer and run through the product while the customer is onsite to duplicate the problem. If not, the above unhappy customer example will happen to you.

**The Angry Consumer**

**The Setup:**

A woman calls a carpet cleaning company to utilize a special coupon she received in the mail to clean three carpets at a discounted price. The appointment is set and the cleaning crew arrives on time and gets to work while the woman heads off to run some errands.

Upon returning home, the crew is gone and as she wanders through the areas cleaned, she notices a large yellow stain the crew was unable to remove. She calls the owner of the carpet cleaning company and begins to scream—immediately.

Woman: “I’ve been cheated and who even knows how long your crew was here? They didn’t even clean the carpets correctly—I still have a huge yellow stain on one carpet! I will never recommend your company—you don’t do what you promise."

Owner: “Ma’am I’m sorry you’re unhappy but maybe you should have stayed onsite to make sure the job was done to your satisfaction?"

Woman: “So it’s my job to make sure your crew cleans carpets correctly?"

Owner: “My crews are all great and I’m sure the stain could have never been removed! Do you have a pet? Did your pet have an accident on the area you mention?"

Woman: “What? Your ad said 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed!"

Owner: “Well it was a discount coupon and if you read the back of the coupon it does state the coupon is only good for one visit."

Woman: “You gotta be kidding me," and hangs up very unhappy she even shelled out the money at all, grumbling*, I should have rented one of those machines myself!*

**The Solution:**

Back at carpet headquarters the crew returns for the day and the owner confronts them. The crew [tells the owner the woman was rude](http://www.brighthub.com/office/entrepreneurs/articles/53215.aspx). As soon as she opened the door she threatened to sue the company if any of her valuable knick knacks were stolen and even asked one of the crew if they were a U.S. Citizen!

Of course this does indeed seem like a customer you can never please—she’s probably cranky and rude all the time right?

Discount coupon or not and no matter how rude the customer was to his cleaning crew, the owner should have offered to return to see if the spot could be removed. Even if the spot could not be removed due to age or type, if he wants to keep this customer happy, he should have offered up an additional room carpet cleaning for free—at her convenience and request she stay in the home.

**Lesson Learned:**

No matter how angry a customer is or if one is sure she has been treated wrong purposely, going above and beyond by offering something free will turn this angry customer into a valued customer. Have a service company? Consider walking your employees through this scenario and better yet, empower your team to offer the free service so the angry woman never makes that call to you.

**No Communication**

**The Setup:**

Certified Public Accountant Joe is lost and it’s tax time! His trusted receptionist is out on maternity leave and he’s asked a staff member to replace her with a local temp from an agency. He hears from other employees that customers are calling them directly wondering why Joe isn’t returning their calls and where in the heck their tax returns are—they are getting a refund after all!

Joe to Temp: “You didn’t take or write down any messages for me since you’ve been here!"

Temp: “No sir, I have, I gave them all to Wendy in the mail department."

Joe to Temp: “Why would you give them to Wendy? What did you think she’d do—mail them to me?"

Temp: “Wendy was the one who hired me sir and she told me to give all messages to her, especially yours."

Joe Yelling “Wendy! Wendy! Get in here now! (Wendy arrives) “Did you tell the temp to give all phone messages to you, especially mine?"

Wendy: “Yes sir, that’s what Pat in bookkeeping said you always did in the past."

Ending Scenario: Next, Pat is called in and an argument ensues in front of the weary temp who cries and storms off stating “she’ll never work in this office again!"

**The Solution:**

Employ [proper communication policies](http://www.brighthubpm.com/methods-strategies/79351-basic-principles-of-communication/) and make sure those policies can be accessed by everyone—even a weary temp who knows nothing about how your office runs. If your office manager is in charge of communications with regards to customers, have he or she speak with all onsite staff and ask them their preference when it comes to customer calls. Ensure she writes up a great communication plan so customer queries can be handled quickly.

**Lesson Learned:**

If you don’t have written policies (where everyone’s on the same page) about how communications should be dealt with in your office, especially regarding your customers, you’ll not only lose customers you’ll also have workplace conflict and frustration.C

**Conclusion**
To avoid the confused, the lost, the angry and the lack of communication at your business, get your group together, role-play these customer service training scenarios and see what happens. You will, for sure, be surprised at how much you can improve and quickly. Finally, if you believe the old saying, you can't please everyone, you need some training!