

Telephone Skills



This is a practical half-day workshop looking at the role of the telephone receptionist and the skills and behaviours that help shape customers' first impressions of an organisation

Overview

Today, as customers, we interact with our service providers through multiple channels including the web, email, text, letter and, of course, face-to-face. However, if we exclude retail shopping, it is likely that our first 'human' interaction with our service provider is by telephone. How our call is answered and how our needs are met within the first few moments of a call being answered have a major impact on the impression we form of the organisation. Impressions formed at this time can endure and can often influence our future behaviour. If our first impressions are favourable, we are inclined to be less critical of occasional lapses in service delivery, giving the service provider the benefit of the doubt. If we are not impressed by this first encounter, however, this can lead to a much more critical appraisal of service delivery with, sometimes, unfortunate consequences for the organisation.

Even for those in non-commercial organisations, such as local authorities or health providers, there could also be some unintended consequences of a poor 'first point of contact'. Your customers may not receive all the information they need, so they make wrong choices or turn up to appointments at the wrong time. Alternatively, their poor customer experience may lead to a defensive or aggressive attitude towards staff. This might make it more difficult for the organisation to provide the care they need, resulting in wasted time, money and staff resilience.

This puts the role of the telephone receptionist in stark relief. Getting it right first time offers the possibility of a positive ongoing relationship with that customer.

Aims

This half-day workshop aims to provide participants with:

- An understanding of the importance of their role
- Some dos and don'ts for projecting a positive image of the organisation
- The opportunity to develop their customer service skills in a safe environment
- Confidence to be able to use their new-found skills after the workshop.

South East Training is the trading name of South East Training Network Limited

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Learning Objectives

By the end of the programme, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of the receptionist role in shaping customers' perceptions of the organisation as a whole
- Distinguish between customers' functional and emotional needs
- Create a positive impression with customers
- Develop relevant skills in communicating information efficiently and effectively over the telephone
- Develop listening skills to help identify and understand callers' needs
- Use voice control to maximise effectiveness
- Deal with enquiries, complaints and take messages quickly and effectively
- Deal with customer dissatisfaction.

Workshop Content

The People First Approach

- Why is Excellent Customer Service So Important?
- Understanding Your Customers' Needs
- Delivering Customer Service on the Telephone

Communicating by Telephone

- The Language of Customer Care
- Negative Words and Phrases Exercise
- Communicating Customer Care
- Tone of Voice
- Building Rapport
- Telephone Best Practice

Questioning and Listening

- Questioning
- Listening

Handling 'Awkward Callers'

- Awkward Callers - Who are they?
- The Power of Empathy
- Assertiveness Techniques

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