

NC Association of Zoning Officials  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Conference

**You Want Me to Do WHAT?!**

*Communication Techniques for  
Delivering Great Customer Service*

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# Session Overview:

- Perceptions and styles influence the customer service experience
- Obstacles to effective communication & exceptional customer service
- Strategies to improve our communication and customer service effectiveness



**WORKPLACE  
COMPETENCIES**

**Customer Service Skills**

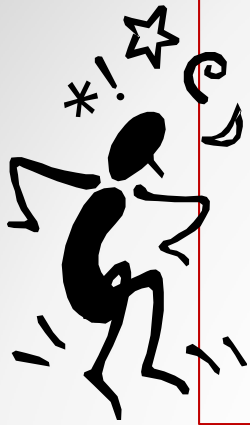
**Communication Skills**

# Effective Communication & Customer Service...

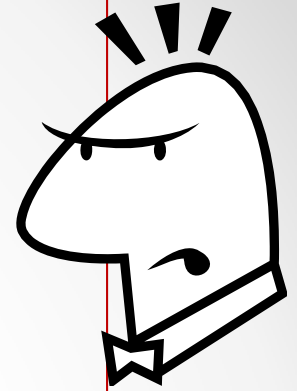
- **Involves interactions** between you and others – it's not just what one person does or doesn't do.
- **Gets inhibited** by misunderstandings and poor listening skills
- Depends upon **how you think** about them.

# Effective Communication & Customer Service...

- Is influenced not just by **WHAT** you say but **HOW** you say it
- Involves considering the **perspectives of others**
- Requires using a variety of **communication styles and tools**



# YOUR Perceptions: Interactions with “Difficult” Customers



- Have **YOU** ever been **a difficult customer** in a business situation? Explain why you felt the need to be “difficult” in that interaction.
- What are some **behaviors that tend to be challenging for you** to manage during “difficult” customer interactions at work? How do you tend to respond?

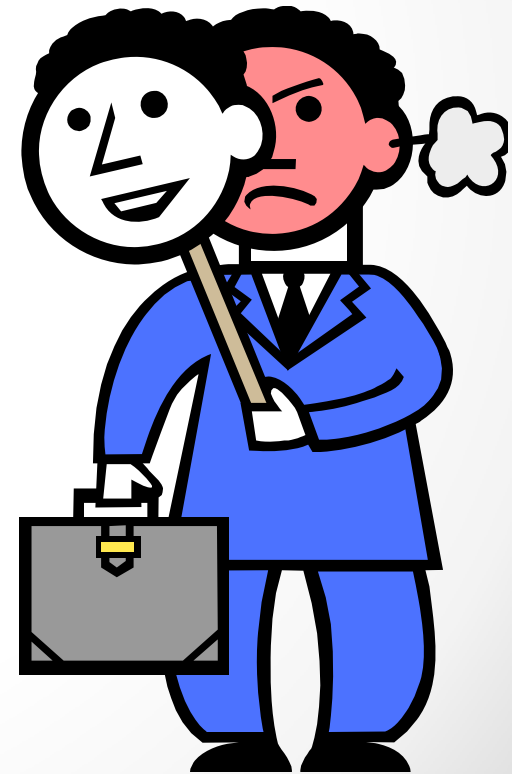


# Understanding Difficult Behavior

- Difficult behavior **vs.** difficult people
- Reacting defensively to difficult behaviors can mean **YOU** are exhibiting difficult behaviors TOO!
- Difficult behaviors = survival, coping, fear
- **Effective communication** is the **most effective strategy** for managing difficult behaviors

# Our Perceptions Impact Our Behavior

- Avoiding embarrassment
- Defending ourselves
- Saving face
- Seeking revenge
- Wanting to win...
- What else?



# Describing Great Customer Service

- Think back to a time when you observed someone providing **GREAT** (more than ordinary) customer service.
- **Describe the behaviors and characteristics you observed** that contributed to the outstanding performance.

# Communication Competency

- Generates messages straightforwardly, saying what needs to be said so the intent is clear
- Checks for understanding periodically with the listener
- Asks questions for clarification and to ensure understanding

- Analyzes thoroughly and/or interprets accurately and insightfully the information needed to achieve work goals
- Conveys the intended message through appropriate nonverbal communication
- Gathers thorough, accurate information needed to achieve the goal

# Customer Service Competency

- Remains alert to customers and promptly initiates contact, with a courteous, energetic greeting and offer to help
- Listens to customer needs and follows through on requested actions quickly and accurately
- Follows up when promised on actions that require additional information gathering or approvals
- Handles upset customers professionally, listening and resolving (or assisting in resolving) their problems while remaining calm

# Customer Service Competency

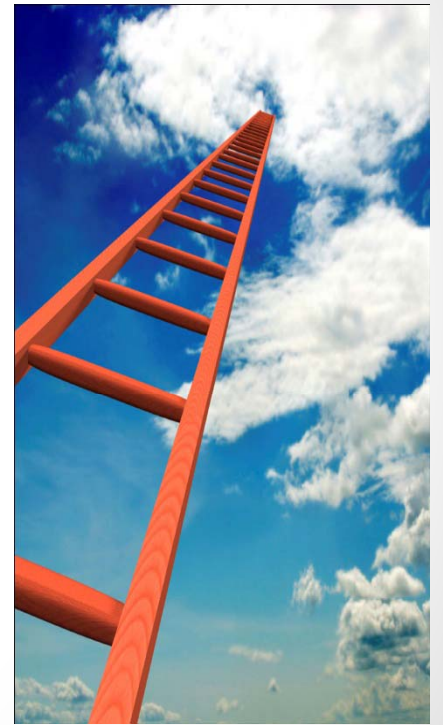
- Accepts personal responsibility for moving a problem toward resolution, without getting defensive or projecting blame on anyone
- Resolves customer issues following relevant laws, regulations, policies, etc.

# What CUSTOMERS want:

- Clear, concise, accessible information about regulations, policies & procedures
- Consistent & fair application of policy/rules
- R-E-S-P-E-C-T!
- Staff that is knowledgeable, courteous, professional, timely, cooperative and helpful
- Reasonable fees & timeframes

# EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- **L**ook at the person speaking to you.
- **A**sk questions.
- **D**on't interrupt.
- **D**on't change the subject.
- **E**mpathize.
- **R**espond verbally and non-verbally.



# Keys to Managing Difficult Behaviors

Step One: Adjust Your Mindset

Step Two: Listen Actively

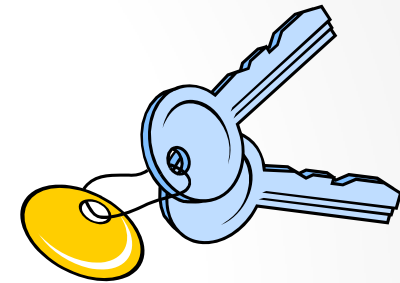
Step Three: Repeat Their Concerns

Step Four: Be Empathic and Apologize

Step Five: Present a Solution

Step Six: Take Action and Follow-up

Step Seven: Use the Feedback



Q & A

