Dealing with Difficult Customers

Course Outline

Customers are becoming increasingly demanding and discerning, often expecting exemplary service. If they have a complaint that it isn’t being heard and/or dealt with effectively, they’ll either go elsewhere, or they will become increasingly difficult/aggressive until they get what they want/need. No matter how customer focused or efficient an organisation is though, things will inevitably go wrong occasionally. Anyone in a front-line role is therefore not only likely to have to handle negative feedback and complaints from time to time, but they will also have to deal with customers who are increasingly demanding. How these situations are dealt with can have a significant impact on the future relationship and loyalty of our customers. Anyone who can successfully defuse difficult situations can turn dissatisfied customers into loyal allies. They will also be able to minimise the levels of personal stress that these encounters can cause.

This course is particularly suitable for front line staff, including customer service and call centre personnel, reception staff and sales team members who regularly deal with customers either face-to-face or on the telephone. It is also suitable for anyone who provides a service to ‘internal customers’ and will enable all delegates to deal professionally and calmly with demanding/challenging customers, achieving positive outcomes for all.

KEY AIMS

1. To assist the organisation to increase maximum performance through improved customer relationships
2. To introduce powerful and flexible tools for use by both individuals and teams within the organisation, whatever their previous experience or circumstances.
3. To enable participants to become more knowledgeable, effective, and motivated in their roles through the development of skills in handling difficult/demanding customers.
4. To focus on key issues and challenges relating to difficult/demanding customers.
5. To accommodate a range of learning styles, by including a variety of group challenges, practical exercises, opportunities for personal assessment, and presentation of key techniques and strategies.

KEY BENEFITS

Participants will:

- Have a better understanding of their customers’ needs
- Feel more comfortable about handling complaints and difficult customers
- Handle complaints and difficult conversations more positively and confidently
- Know how to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty
Organisations will:

• Have fewer serious complaints / escalations
• Reduce the need for compensation/refunds
• Improve levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty
• Reduce the impact/consequences of stress and pressure on front-line staff

FEEDBACK

• "At last, some constructive ways to meet and even exceed the expectations of our very demanding customers. Thanks!"
• "I now feel far more confident in my ability to respond to customers who are being difficult.”
• “It was extremely useful to think about why customers are sometimes difficult and how the use of empathy and problem solving techniques can diffuse many difficult encounters.”
• “The course was excellent, well structured, and full of practical tips and examples.”
• “Thanks again for another great course! Nobody likes dealing with difficult customers but now I don’t dread having to deal with them any more.”

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

• Understanding customer expectations
  – Exploring the factors that underpin customer satisfaction and loyalty.
• Why customers complain
  – Identifying the issues that are most likely create frustration and dissatisfaction, and how to minimise the chance of these occurring.
• Identifying and dealing with different ‘difficult’ customer types
  – Developing an understanding of the different types of difficult customers, and learning how to adapt your style to match them.
• Influencing our customers
  – Learning how to influence the behaviour of our customers through our own behaviour.
• Improving customer relations through effective communication
  – Reinforcing the importance of using an assertive communication style together with active listening and questioning skills to forge positive customer relationships.
• Staying professional when under pressure
  – Learning to use personal stress management techniques to stay calm and professional, even when on the receiving-end of aggressive or difficult behaviour.
• Dealing with difficult incidents
  – Using simple yet effective techniques to manage confrontations and deal with difficult incidents and/or difficult relationships with particular customers.
• Handling customer complaints
  – Examining the principles for dealing with complaints effectively and applying a simple model for responding to complaints and taking the heat out of the situation.
• Action Planning
  – Identifying continuing personal development needs and extending learning into the workplace.

COST

We understand that training is an investment - not just in terms of the cost, but also in time. We are therefore committed to providing excellent value by ensuring that our open courses are competitively priced. Unlike other inexpensive open/public courses, we deliberately restrict the number of places so you can rest assured that the training will be focused on the needs of every delegate, and will be an effective learning experience.
Fees for 1-day open courses from H2 are as follows:

- Per delegate: £395 + VAT
- 2 or more delegates: £355 + VAT each
- Public Sector: £355 + VAT
- Registered Charities and self-funding individuals: £325 + VAT

Fees are fully inclusive of:

- Course tuition / materials
- Workbook, with comprehensive reference materials / proformas
- Lunch / refreshments
- Personal action planning
- Certification (on request)
- Follow-up support (on request).

**CONTACT**

Tina Halperin, Director
H2 Training & Consultancy Ltd.

**Freephone:** 0800 0015151

**Email:** th@h2training.com