

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session delegates should be able to effectively use different questioning techniques to help understand customer needs and deliver appropriate and timely customer service.

Each delegate may be given a Personal Action Plan to record any learnings and personal development commitments that they make as a result of this training.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Customer Service Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

PRACTISE - At the end of the series of videos there is a 30 minute practical training exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Using your voice effectively (That's your customer service voice is it?)
- Questioning techniques (part 1 - Do you recall what I said about recall questions?)
- Questioning techniques (part 2 - Could you be any more guilty?)

VIDEO 1 - USING YOUR VOICE EFFECTIVELY

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

Most people change their voice depending on the situation they're in. However, when you're dealing with lots of people it's easy to end up with an unnatural or unfriendly tone.

THINK (discussion, 10 minutes)

Why do people change their voice in different situations?

It's not always a conscious thing but we often change our voices to create rapport with the person we're speaking to.

How do customers react to people similar to them, physically or verbally?

Most people are more comfortable with 'people like them' and will be more open and communicative.

Are any of the group aware that they have a different voice for different situations; it's often most evident on the telephone.

REMEMBER – (recap, 2 minutes)

Think about your pitch, pace and tone. Use your natural voice when engaging customers. Be warm, and medium paced, without being smarmy or too effusive. Try engaging customers by following their voice patterns a little, but mirror them, but don't mimic them by over doing it.

- Pitch, pace, tone
- Use your natural conversation voice
- Mirror pitch, pace and tone to engage

Additional points...

- It's not just what you say it's the way that you say it which makes a difference.
- Remember to maintain your professional standards even if a customer is angry or swearing.

VIDEO 2 - QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES (PART 1)

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

In this video 'Good Service' and 'Bad Service' are interrogating a suspected shoplifter using a range of questioning techniques.

THINK (discussion, 10 minutes)

Why is it useful to use closed questions?

Because it helps get basic information quickly and effectively it can be useful at the start and end of conversations, as well as to check a customer's understanding during a conversation.

Why are open questions much better for information gathering?

They give a customer chance to expand on a subject, potentially giving information that wasn't known about. It lets a customer feel as though they are being listened to.

How are recall questions different to closed questions?

Recall questions will tend to have longer answers and can be used to get more specific detail from information gathered during open questions, and they can help to build a history of the customer.

REMEMBER – (recap, 2 minutes)

To get to know your customers and their needs, use closed questions to get facts, open questions to learn more, and recall questions to build a history.

Use open, closed and recall questions...

- Open questions tend to start with who, what, why, when where and 'open' up a conversation.
- Closed questions can be answered with one word and are a 'dead end' but can be useful for getting facts.
- Recall questions start the thinking process and can help to start a conversation.

VIDEO 3 - QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES (PART 2)

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

The video continues with the questioning of Ollie, a suspected shoplifter, and eventually reaches a conclusion. Ollie has stolen some boxing gloves and is made to pay for them.

THINK (discussion, 10 minutes)

What are some common examples of rhetorical questions?

This can be fun, most people will have some examples with prompting. Some funny ones are:

- Does my bum look big in this?
- Do you really want the last piece of chocolate?

Can some questions be more than one type?

Yes, there is no hard and fast rule on questioning as it depends on how, when and where you use the questions, try to get some examples of questions that may be more than one type from the team.

‘You don’t really want that last piece of chocolate, do you?’ which would be a leading, closed, rhetorical and assumptive question.

REMEMBER – (recap, 2 minutes)

To help guide and control your customer’s interest, use rhetorical questions to confirm understanding, assumptive questions to create decisions, and leading questions to direct them towards a sale or solution.

- Leading questions guide a customer to a defined course of action or choice and are useful in a sales process
- Rhetorical questions are ones where the answer is usually known in advance and are used to check understanding. They are useful to let a customer know you have been listening
- Assumptive questions guide a customer to a choice and can be useful where someone is undecided. People are often more sure of what they don’t want rather than what they do and an assumptive question usually helps to narrow choices to a clear decision

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY – PRACTISE

During this exercise delegates will get the opportunity to practise their questioning techniques and identify different question types.

It may be useful to write the six types of questions discussed in the videos onto a flip chart or similar so that the group have a visual reminder.

Open, Closed, Recall, Leading, Assumptive, Rhetorical

Start by getting the delegates to stand or sit in a circle, then a leader should start with an open question, the next person should turn the same question into a closed question, and the third in line should then turn the closed question into a recall question. The fourth person should be able to keep the dialogue going by asking a leading question. Number five will turn the leading question into an assumptive one, and the next person turns it into a rhetorical question.

The next person starts with a new open question.

This activity can go on for as long as it takes until the group have a common understanding of the types of questions and are familiar and comfortable using them.

An example could be:

- O. What are you doing this weekend?
- C. Are you going away?
- R. Do you remember where you are going?
- L. Have you thought about visiting the castle whilst you are there?
- A. I assume you will be going with your partner?
- R. You'll have a great time, who wouldn't want to go to Edinburgh?

After completing this practical exercise delegates should be familiar with different types of questions, and the types of response that they are likely to elicit.

Invite each delegate to capture at least one thing that they will do differently in their workplace as a result of this exercise.