

SMILE:
A First Impression
Can Change Everything

Participant Book

Draft 3

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on being selected to participate in *SMILE: A First Impression Can Change Everything*, a valuable program designed to help you learn and practice the habits and skills of positive outlook and a positive attitude. These, in turn, can help you find your own genuine, inner smile and to share it with others. The lessons and techniques described in this program can help you develop a routine to build your own confidence and resilience, improve your interactions with your customers, and be more effective in difficult situations that arise on the job. In addition, this program offers a management approach to help distinguish your organization from the competition.

Successful companies set themselves apart with the service they provide to their clients and customers. The training and techniques outlined in this program can help you improve your interactions with everyone at your organization from your customers and co-workers to your supervisors. In addition, the skills built here can help you take that next step up the ladder within your organization.

A smile—one of the first elements in superior customer service

No matter what goods or services your organization provides, whether commercial, industrial, health care, or government, at the core are your customers—people. Your business and your job would not exist if there were not people who needed what you do—people to “buy” what you can provide.

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A smile costs you nothing while it invites customers in.

At work, a smile instantly conveys to your customer:

- “I like you”
- “I care about you as a person”
- “I value you”
- “I care about your needs”
- “I’m ready to help”

Smiling is about more than what happens to the muscles on your face. Even from a distance, a genuine smile, even a small one, conveys a positive attitude and projects respect.

People are naturally wired to notice and evaluate faces, even at a distance.

From birth, we are conditioned to recognize faces and look for patterns. And unless we are busy or preoccupied, our minds continue to look for patterns and in faces throughout our lives.

One of the most instinctive patterns we recognize is a smile. There are two kinds of smiles: intentional (sometimes called “forced”) and genuine.

A genuine smile:

- affects muscles around both the eyes and the mouth

- is controlled by the emotional center of the brain

A fake smile:

- can only control the muscles around the mouth
- is controlled by the motor cortex in the brain

So, a fake smile is only mechanical. A genuine smile lifts the corners of your mouth, raises your cheeks, and makes small wrinkles appear around your eyes. When you can find a genuine smile for yourself, you trigger your own, positive emotions. A genuine smile comes from inside of you—it happens when you think of or experience something pleasant. And perhaps most importantly, it conveys a positive, can-do attitude.

As you greet someone, whether a friend or a stranger, a genuine smile, even a small one, conveys openness and interest.

A simple, genuine smile can go very long way in setting the tone for whatever interaction follows.

Most employees DON'T genuinely smile

Think about where you live and shop.

When you walk into a store, what percentage of the employees notice you and genuinely smile?

How does it make you feel?

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How do you think it makes your customers feel when you don't smile?

Think again about where you live and shop, about a government office you've used, about your doctor's office. What if 100% of employees offered you a genuine smile when you entered an office or a store?

How would it make you feel if they did? Would you feel better about shopping there?

How would it make your customers feel if everyone at your organization genuinely smiled?

Keys to putting a smile into your interactions with customers

1. Offer a genuine smile. A genuine smile can connect with a customer. And it makes YOU happy, too. More about that later.
2. Maintain a positive attitude. Find a way to frame interactions in your mind that can help you keep a positive attitude. Think about how you can help your customer get what they need.
3. Communicate with empathy. Even when your customer is unhappy, find a way to understand where they are "coming from". Empathy goes a long way in diffusing tense situations.

CHAPTER 1 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- A smile is one of the first elements in superior customer service
- A smile costs nothing
- A smile instantly conveys
 - “I like you”
 - “I care about you as a person”
 - “I value you”
 - “I care about your needs”
 - “I’m ready to help”
- A genuine smile comes from inside of you

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

2. A Smile Can Change Everything

My boss is telling me to smile. What is there to smile about anyway? I don't exactly love my job; customers can be a royal pain and wearing a big goofy fake smile all day leaves me grumpy and exhausted. WHY BOTHER?!

Stop smiling for those other people. Start smiling for yourself.

Did you know that when you truly smile, even a little, you make yourself happier?

Maybe you're someone who doesn't believe that. Maybe you've been in a situation where you felt you had to paste on a big, fake smile and that just annoyed you.

If you can smile *for yourself*, even a little, you will truly feel better, both physically and emotionally.

Researchers have shown that a smile can signal to your brain to release endorphins—chemicals in the body that help you relax and lift your mood.

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Endorphins: dopamine, and serotonin are sometime called feel-good hormones. Their job is to tell your mind and body to relax and to feel better, Feel-good hormones work in seconds.

Don't believe it? Try this: Close your eyes. Picture someone, somewhere or something that makes you happy. Maybe it's a friend, a pet, a favorite place, or even a favorite dessert. Can you feel the corners of your mouth lift a little? Do you feel a bit of joy wash over you?

That wave comes from those hormones.

And the smile works both ways. You can smile after you think of something pleasant. Or here's the amazing secret: you can get yourself to smile, even a little, and feel the hormones wash over you because of the smile! It can work when you are anxious or in a bad mood too. You can choose to smile and make yourself feel better.

Researchers have shown that a smile, while you are under stress or immediately after a stressful situation, helps your brain produce those hormones and promote recovery to your mind and body.

It doesn't take much of a smile to trigger your brain to release feel-good hormones. One experiment involved having people hold a pencil sideways in their mouths. This made the muscles in the corners of their mouths turn up a bit—like a small smile. Researchers determined that the mechanical act of using those muscles, made people feel happier! They felt better BECAUSE they smiled a little.

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A little half-smile is a gift you can give yourself any time. In any stressful or boring situation, a small smile can be helpful. First thing in the morning, a half-smile can help you face the day. Whenever you do, your brain will release those feel-good hormones.

Try giving yourself a half smile whenever you can. You deserve it! It will allow you to let go of a little stress and feel better.

As you feel better, stronger and more confident, your personal relationships will improve. Friends will warm to you, partners and family will see you in a better light.

I can hear you arguing that a big, forced smile doesn't work. You may be right. Researchers discovered that when people feel that they HAD to smile all day, they wore themselves out. They had to clamp down on their feelings all day and used up all their self-control on the job, leaving them deflated and miserable.

Smiling because you HAVE to is not the same as smiling because you WANT to. Instead of smiling because you have to, try to smile for yourself! Give yourself a genuine half-smile to feel better and your brain will help you out. Even when you have to face an unhappy customer, say to yourself "I can feel better and be better-able to cope with this if I take a deep breath and give myself a little smile." And that smile could also communicate a calming welcome and a willingness to help to your customer.

Real smiles come from within

Some people smile a lot. They always seem to have a sunny outlook. They always seem to find the best in a situation. Or maybe they are able to minimize unpleasant situations and look forward to something more positive.

The truth is, we all have “down” times, even “sunny” people. Nobody feels like smiling all the time. But “sunny” people have learned to see the positive whenever they can. They’ve learned to carry a positive attitude and a sense of purpose. They’ve learned to focus on what they can control and let go of the rest.

If you choose, you can cultivate that kind of positive attitude in yourself. And if you do, you’ll do yourself a favor by making your personal life and your work life better. There’s growing medical evidence that a positive attitude can not only help you to live happier, but to live longer too!

Give yourself reasons to smile

You can learn to smile, even when the going gets tough. Smiles come from a positive outlook and a positive attitude. Growing a positive attitude in yourself grows your ability to smile! Here are a few ways to do it.

Notice and let yourself feel joy. Whenever something pleasing happens, try to slow down, and focus on it and let it “soak in.” Start with small things—your first sip of a favorite drink, a breath of fresh air, the sight of someone you love. Train your body and mind to give extra-large attention to what you enjoy.

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Notice what you are thankful for. Maybe even keep a list—a gratitude journal. Write down what you feel when something makes you smile.

Practice mindfulness. “Mindfulness” is training your mind to really focus on what is happening RIGHT NOW and RIGHT HERE. The value of mindfulness is that you can often find things that bring you happiness in any situation. This allows you to “reframe” events in real time and to let you find the positive bits.

When mindful, you are connected to activities and situations. You have more capacity to deal with unpleasantness. You are less likely to be bothered by stressful situations, and less worried about past or future, success, or failure.

Why you should smile

First, genuinely smiling is good for *you*. As we mentioned, it triggers endorphins which lower your blood pressure and raise your mood. When you can share a smile, it costs you nothing and conveys warmth and welcoming. A smile can invite customers to engage with you. It shows that you care and are willing to provide quality service. At work, a smile instantly conveys to your customer:

- “I like you”
- “I care about you as a person”
- “I value you”
- “I care about your needs”
- “I’m ready to help”

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Smiling is about more than the muscles on your face. Even from a distance, a genuine smile, even a small one, conveys a positive attitude and projects respect.

While your smile can benefit you, it can also help you see customers as people—more than just another sale or problem to endure.

A smile is worth the investment. In addition to making you feel better, it can set the tone for a positive customer interaction. It can improve your day AND the customer's day while it creates opportunities to provide quality service and helps head off potential problem situations.

When not to smile

When it comes to how your smiles reach others, think about happy smiles, joyful smiles, connecting smiles, open smiles, empathetic smiles. There are times and situations when these smiles aren't appropriate. But even then, your face can support your customers. Think about understanding smiles, empathetic smiles, even sad smiles. Think about and try to feel or empathize with their situation. When you do, a look of understanding or empathy will come to your face when that's what's needed.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- If you can smile *for yourself* you will truly feel better, both physically and emotionally
- In any stressful or boring situation, a small smile can be helpful
- Smiling because you **HAVE** to is not the same as smiling because you **WANT** to
- Real smiles come from within
- Give yourself reasons to smile
- Growing a positive attitude in yourself grows your ability to smile!

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MY NOTES AND IDEAS

3. Smiling Throughout Your Organization

A culture of positive attitude and smiles in an organization provides a consistent positive experience for customers. That builds confidence in the services you provide. It also projects a dedication to customer service throughout the organization.

Smiling across the company

What *is* the culture of your organization? It's almost certainly written on the faces of employees at all levels. Sure, there are serious business targets to hit, goals to reach, and deadlines to meet, but from the top down, fostering an attitude of positivity and resilience in your organization will pay big dividends. Employees who feel heard and supported can become far more effective and empowered. Proactive productivity goes up as morale improves.

People who enjoy coming to work and feel a part of a team like to contribute their ideas and hard work for a common and shared cause. Helping employees feel positive about what they do is good for business.

Some organizations do not prioritize the customer experience. For them, *connection* with customers isn't valued. There is no emphasis on positive customer experience in any way, including offering a smile.

Smiling and your co-workers

Building a positive outlook and a positive attitude in yourself improves your own resolve and self-confidence, and this can be contagious to others. With

a positive outlook and a positive attitude, you'll look forward to coming into work. And when you like your co-workers and interact with them positively, you'll look forward to partnering with them on projects. You'll work more efficiently and effectively.

Why employees don't smile

People in some cultures rarely smile. There are many reasons for this. In some cultures, smiling might not be a sign of warmth or respect. For some, smiling is seen as suspicious—as evidence that you are either a fool or a scam artist.

For individuals, the choice—or tendency to smile may come and go. There are lots of reasons someone might not smile. Personal problems of all sorts can keep us from wanting to smile. A sense of loss can seem to rob you of reasons to smile. Your personal relationships might be in upheaval. There might be other problems at home.

We all have “bad days” for lots of reasons. Think about when you've interacted with a coworker having a “bad day.” How did it affect you? It was probably not a good experience for either of you. When you have a bad day, try to keep a sense of purpose. And when tough times do come, it's especially important to continue to eat right and stay active.

Then there are job concerns—the things we can control, and things we can't.

- The dread we can all feel when facing a difficult customer interaction
- Unhappiness about the level or pay of your job

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- Feeling like “it’s just not my problem”
- Your organization seems not to care about customer engagement, with or without a smile
- Rushed or haphazard organizational hiring and training

That is where this seminar comes in. By learning to smile from inside yourself, by fostering a positive attitude, you can *keep yourself* stronger.

Impact on customers

When employees have positive attitudes, customers feel more valued, heard, understood, and supported in whatever it is they need. This increases customer satisfaction and creates a much more solid customer engagement throughout the organization. With each positive customer encounter, the opportunity to provide customer service and to build customer loyalty increases. When a customer feels valued, heard, and supported, encounters are much more positive, and customers are much more likely to interact with your organization again. They share the positive experience with other people which increases return business.

When employees don’t smile

Sour attitudes are bad for business. In any organization, government agency, health care institution, industrial operation, or service sector, you don't want to annoy your customers.

Let's think about what happens in an organization when people have a bad attitude and there are few smiles. Customers can feel ignored and perceive you as standoffish, aloof, disinterested or not caring. They are repelled. Any sense of confidence or loyalty is eliminated. If you depend on repeat business, you can forget it—unhappy customers will bad mouth your business and keep other potential customers away. The organization's reputation suffers. Business declines.

Sour attitudes make for a sour culture. They make for an environment of negativity throughout the organization and bring unhappy employees and high employee turnover.

Fostering a positive environment

A positive organizational culture can carry all the way from the top to customers. Changing the culture only works if everyone in the organization is on board. If managers and executives do not properly model the same positivity and attitude that they ask of their frontline employees, then the process will fail. The employees will feel like they are only following a directive and smiles will go from genuine to forced and fake. Customers can sniff out a disgruntled workforce within a minute of entering a business or talking on the phone. The positivity, the smiles, the glass half full attitude must filter down from the top of the organization for it to truly work its magic during every customer encounter.

CHAPTER 3 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- Foster an attitude of positivity and resilience
- Employees who feel heard and supported can become far more effective and empowered
- People who enjoy coming to work and feel a part of a team like to contribute their ideas and hard work
- Helping employees feel positive about what they do is good for business
- Some organizations do not prioritize the customer experience
- A positive organizational culture can carry all the way from the top to customers

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

4. How You Look. How You Sound. What You Say.

You may interact with many, many customers in a day, but for each of one of those customers, their time with you is a unique encounter. Strive to make each interaction positive. YOU must take the initiative to make a good first impression.

How you look

How you look and how you carry yourself are reflection of your internal attitude. Slouching and avoiding eye contact scream to your customer that you'd really rather avoid them; that you don't care about yourself or about them or what they need.

Adopt an open stance: keep your head up, shoulders back, hands comfortably at your sides. It shows that you value your job and your company and most importantly, it shows that you value your customers.

Combine these with a genuine, open smile, and you'll project your self-confidence and willingness to help your customer. Carrying yourself well—confident, standing up straight and offering a warm open smile invites customers to come to you.

When you first greet a customer, show that you are more than just “aware” of their presence. Be genuine—avoid smiling as you might for a picture. Turn your entire face toward them. Make eye contact. Move forward to greet them. Smile from inside—as you would with a friend or family member.

How you sound

When you speak with a customer, how you speak can mean just as much as what you say. Speak clearly. Use a welcoming tone of voice. Put your empathy into what you say. Find your internal positivity. Your attitude, whether positive or negative, will sound in your voice and show on your face.

Put "I'm glad to help you" and "thank you" into your voice. Put a SMILE in how you sound.

What you say

Offer a greeting. You are the customer's first impression of the business. What you say in those first few seconds sets the tone for the customer's entire experience with you and your organization. Take advantage of that opportunity to start things off on the right foot.

"Good morning. Welcome to Tech Center."

Make yourself available to help.

"Hi! What can I help you with today?"

Be willing to help, but don't push.

"Is there anything I can help you with?"

"I can go check in the back for you."

Whenever you can, use magic words: Good morning! Welcome! How may I help you? Thank you! And when you must, even, I am sorry.

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There are a few things to avoid. These can be obvious and often insulting:

- Scripted and robotic announcements like “Welcome to Dairytown. Beef jerky is just 2 for a dollar today...”
- Plastic or fake communication (over-the-top words or tone of voice) like “One in...” or “ a lifeless “Hey”

And always finish with something positive, even if the interaction has been difficult.

“Again, we’re sorry for the inconvenience. I hope you’ll give us the opportunity to do better for you next time.”

CHAPTER 4 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- How you look and how you carry yourself are reflection of your internal attitude
- Speak clearly
- Use a welcoming tone of voice
- Put your empathy into what you say
- What you say in those first few seconds sets the tone for the customer's entire experience

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

5. Put a Smile into Practice

As we've said, a genuine smile comes from within. But that doesn't mean it's automatic. Just as you have to practice the habits and skills of maintaining a positive outlook and a positive attitude, you need to practice applying your smile and positive attitude at work. Keep practicing and giving yourself genuine smiles.

When you do interact with a customer there are several steps you can use to project positivity and increase the likelihood of a successful encounter.

Step 1 – Acknowledge and Smile

When a customer enters your space, you'll want to show that you really care about them and are ready to assist them. Don't ignore them or look past them.

Even if you are helping someone else, take a moment to acknowledge the new customer. Offer eye contact, a smile, and let them know you will be with them in a moment. If things are really busy, see if you can get another employee to help if possible.

Step 2 – Engage purposefully

As you begin to interact, offer a "true" greeting with a genuine smile.

"Hello"

"Good morning"

“How are you doing today?”

If you are far away to begin with, close the distance to make your communication clearer. If you remember the customer, add a greeting that acknowledges you recognize them:

“Hi Kathy! How has your dog been enjoying that new food?”

“Good evening, Mrs. Duplass. Let me call upstairs to your husband's nurse to let her know you've arrived.”

Step 3 – Inquire

Attempt to establish what the customer needs

“Is there something that you're looking for?”

“How can I help you?”

Even if they do not need assistance, this level of inquiry shows them that you care. Your actions and engagement show that you appreciate the customer's being there.

Step 4 – Assist

If they do want your help, keep your positive attitude as you help them quickly and efficiently. Ask questions to clarify what the customer wants. Help them to feel as though you're making progress together. As appropriate, share your knowledge, but don't show off.

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Use your training and expertise to efficiently assist the customer while you stay humble and ready to help. Suggest alternatives to help them move to a satisfactory conclusion.

Sometimes you may be unable to assist someone because you lack specialized training or experience. Sometimes this will happen because someone more senior to you must deal with the situation. When this happens, briefly and calmly explain why you cannot help to the customer, then quickly and efficiently find someone who can take care of the problem.

Sometimes a customer doesn't need help. They may know where to find what they need, or they may be already working with someone else. If they do not need your assistance, go to Step 5.

Step 5 – Disengage graciously

End every encounter with positivity and information.

“If there is anything else that you need, please do not hesitate to let me know.”

“Thank you so much for coming in. I hope that works for you”

Continue to make yourself available, but don't “hound” customers. And above all, remember to appreciate their patronage throughout the encounter and smile.

CHAPTER 5 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- Step 1 – Acknowledge and Smile
- Step 2 – Engage purposefully
- Step 3 – Inquire
- Step 4 – Assist
- Step 5 – Disengage graciously

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

6. Smiling in a Digital World

Have you ever made a phone call and with the first “hello” knew what kind of mood the other person was in? Why do you think that was? You could hear their emotion in the sound of their voice.

Even when we communicate using various kinds of digital tools, we transmit our mood, sense of confidence, and our expectations through that medium. As with meeting a customer in person, we need to think about how to smile using just our voice, through a camera, and even with text alone.

On the phone using voice alone

Customers can “hear” a smile in your tone of voice and in your words. *Before you make a sound*, try to put a genuine smile on your face. This also puts a smile into your voice. Think about how you can genuinely help someone, hold that image in your mind, find a little smile on your face and *then speak* that and greet someone genuinely.

How can I **help** you today?

Always avoid plastic or monotonous speech. If you can, avoid reading from a script or corporate speak. If you must use a script, practice saying it out loud until you can make it sound natural and genuine.

No matter what the caller asks for, stay calm and positive, and speak clearly.

On a virtual/video call

More and more often, digital media are used in our personal and professional lives. Your ability to use it effectively (or not) will directly reflect on your confidence and on how others see you. The better prepared you are, the more credible you will seem to others.

Know where your camera is and try to look directly into it when you can. It's like looking directly into the other person's eyes. Avoid looking away from the camera, especially when the customer is talking.

Sit close enough to the camera that the customer can see your face clearly. Be sure to have plenty of clear, but not harsh lighting. Do not sit in front of a cluttered or distracting background.

For the actual conversation, treat virtual meetings as you would an in-person meeting. Be clear and genuine.

Email or chat: Smiling in text

IF YOU GET A NOTE LIKE THIS YOU'LL THINK THE SENDER IS ANGRY

(even if they're not!)

The words you choose and how you send them affects how someone else may perceive them. In text, we don't *hear* emotion, and we don't see non-verbal body and facial cues that can subtly tell us what the other person intends. But our minds will still interpret what we see—often wrongly. If you get the message:

“I’ll bet you were really smart in school.”

...you may not be able to tell if the sender really meant that or was being sarcastic. If someone said it in person but rolled their eyes and exaggerated their voice, you might think they’re kidding you. Or they might be speaking those words literally—so that you would know that they intended to wager money based on your advice.

When using text by itself, in small or large chunks, choose your words carefully. Practice writing in a casual tone, Avoid overly technical words and “boilerplate” text copy. When you write, and before you send it, *read your text out loud*. Your ear will often hear things differently than you may have meant when writing them.

Emojis can be a nice way to express positive emotion and warmth... when appropriate. These are OK for some situations, but not the best choice for more formal interactions. You wouldn't want to get a note like this:

“Your doctor’s appointment is tomorrow at 3. 😊😊😊 ”

Overall,

- Utilize positive language and keep it simple
- Avoid industry jargon or complex ideas
- Write with focus
- Avoid long, run-on sentences or large paragraphs

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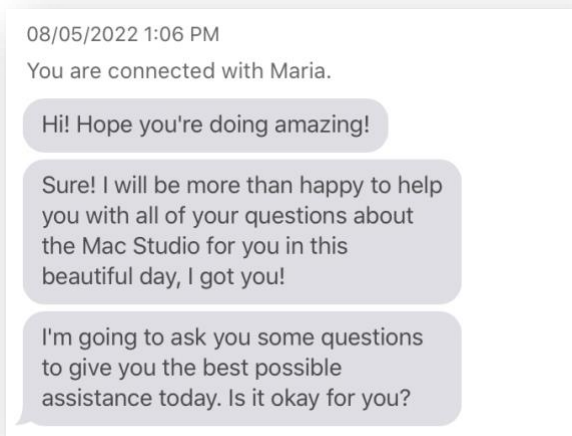
- Be brief and informative
- Close with a genuine, conversational goodbye

“Thank you for allowing me to help you today.”

“Let me know if there is anything else you need.”

“If you think of anything else here is my email address.”

Here is an example of positive chat session with a smiling online Apple shopping assistant. Notice how you can “hear” a positive attitude:



Don't worries!

It's a great choice to have AppleCare+ on your devices!

Thanks for contacting Apple, it was a pleasure to help you today!
Remember we are here for you! I hope you enjoy your purchase as soon as possible! Have a great day!

CHAPTER 6 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- Customers can “hear” a smile in your tone of voice and in your words
- Avoid plastic or monotonous speech
- Stay calm and positive
- Speak clearly
- Treat virtual meetings as you would an in-person meeting
- Utilize positive language and keep it simple

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

7. Smiling to Diffuse a Problem Situation

The Four C's

There are four essential characteristics you need to master in order to successfully handle irate customer encounters:

- Compassion
- Calm
- Confidence
- Competence

Each of these will help you dissect a situation, effectively react to stress and other stimuli, and work toward constructive and mutually beneficial resolutions.

Compassion. Putting yourself in the shoes of your irate customers and thinking about what they are going through will help you better understand what they want and need. If you can dissect their verbal and emotional cues, you can provide improved service and avoid a prolonged stressful encounter. Listen empathetically and try to understand the emotional as well as practical parts of why they are upset.

Calm. Keeping your cool gives you the best opportunity to diffuse any situation. By staying calm and collected you allow yourself to focus on the moment. A calm and peaceful demeanor helps stabilize the situation. Calmly ask questions and respond quickly to the provided answers.

Try not to echo insults. If you respond to anger with anger, you'll likely escalate the situation. Remember that irate customers don't know you any better than you know them. Their frustration is just boiling over in an unfortunate and inappropriate way; and you won't lessen their anger with your own fury. By keeping yourself composed, you can stay in the moment and work to solve the problem.

Confidence. You know what to do, and it's okay to be firm. Confidence in your skills as a service provider as well as in your role within your organization gives you plenty of opportunities to respond to a customer's complaints. Confidence in yourself and your abilities will allow you to counter emotion from an irate customer with rational actions based on strong principles of service.

Competence. Nothing matters if you cannot deliver when it matters most. Solve the problem. Acting effectively and efficiently to work toward concrete solutions shows customers that their needs matter to you and that you are willing to work for them. It will show your co-workers and supervisors that you can be trusted with increasingly complex responsibilities.

A genuine smile can head off irate customer encounters

When a problem arises with a customer, a genuine smile can be a great tool. It certainly won't be the only tool or even the primary tool that you will use to help them. A genuine, empathetic, understanding smile combined with the

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right words and actions can help a customer feel as though their problem is being taken seriously.

In these situations, a smile is a good addition. Here are a few steps to use when dealing with an upset customer:

Pay close attention to what the customer is saying, and not saying.

Stay neutral, yet attentive. Let your facial expressions show that.

Apologize for the distress the situation is causing. Take responsibility but avoid placing blame or insulting anyone or the organization.

Empathize with the customer. Read the situation to provide the right type of smile and tenor of voice based on the problem and level of customer anger or dissatisfaction. Be empathetic, supportive and confidently work on resolving the issue. At the appropriate time in the interaction, introduce a small, appropriate smile.

Never force a fake smile or one that is "too big" for the situation. These can make a situation worse,

When you can, provide calm, informative feedback. Keep a positive attitude and demeanor. Ask pertinent questions then use your training and knowledge to provide complete and competent answers.

Your goal is to solve the customer's problem quickly and efficiently. Offer a bigger, genuine smile to close the encounter:

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“Again, I’m sorry for your inconvenience. I’m glad we could get that straightened out for you.”

“Thank you so much for coming to me with this. We appreciate your business and hope to see you again soon.”

CHAPTER 7 REVIEW: Points to Remember

- Compassion
 - Put yourself in the shoes of your irate customers
 - Listen with empathy
- Calm
 - Stay cool and collected
 - Focus on the moment
- Confidence
 - Counter emotion with rational actions
 - Keep a positive attitude
 - Ask pertinent questions
- Competence
 - Use your training and knowledge to provide complete and competent answers
 - Act effectively and efficiently
 - Work toward concrete solutions
- A genuine smile and the right words and actions can help calm a difficult situation
- Never force a fake smile during an encounter with an irate customer

MY NOTES AND IDEAS

8. Closing

A well-timed, genuine smile provides plenty of benefits for you and those around you. It can calm your nerves, improve your health, and build your confidence. It can open communications with others and help them feel valued and understood while it puts them at ease.

At work these benefits can build your own effectiveness as a part of your team, build the positive bonds between you and others across your organization and increase customer confidence and loyalty.

How do you feel about what you learned?

Practice a moment of reflection, awareness and maybe even thankfulness.

How do you feel about what you learned?

Remember that a smile can change everything

For your customers—helping them to feel more confident in your ability to help meet their needs.

For your organization—helping your to be more effective and more valuable to your organization.

For your co-workers—building your confidence and ability to work effectively with others.

For you—improving your outlook and your health and making work a little more fun. And when you practice the habits and skills of positive outlook and a positive attitude, you'll find yourself smiling inside and out.

We hope the information we've shared has helped you to improve your own outlook, build your self-confidence and self-resilience, and find ways to give the gift of a genuine, heartfelt smile to yourself and to others.

9. Activities

[All activities from Leader Guide to appear here once finalized.]

Contact John Tschohl

If you have thoughts, comments, or ideas about this book, I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to write or call.

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Service Quality Institute provides a variety of quality service and recognition training programs that cover the entire work force. If you are interested in learning more about Service Quality Institute's on-site training programs, on-line learning, newsletters, and other resources or about John Tschohl's seminars and speeches, please contact Service Quality Institute at one of the above addresses.

Books by John Tschohl

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE THROUGH CUSTOMER SERVICE, Thirteenth Edition.
(Best Sellers Publishing, 2019, ISBN: 978-0-9909660-4-3, \$19.95)

MOVING UP

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EMPOWERMENT: A WAY OF LIFE

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LOYAL FOR LIFE

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