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## **Barrier**

A barrier is something that interferes with the relationship between the customer and the customer service provider. The barriers that are discussed in this course are: self interest as the barrier between needs, tension as the barrier between feelings and defensiveness as the barrier between people's behavior.

## **Bridge**

Bridges are the means of overcoming the barriers which divide customers' and customer service providers' needs, feelings and behavior. The bridges discussed in this course are; understanding as a bridge over self interest, empathy as a bridge over tension and trust as a bridge over defensiveness.

## **Behavior**

The manner in which a person behaves or acts. Understanding people's behavior is a very important part of customer service as it helps alleviate negative behavior such as defensiveness.

## **Customer**

A customer is someone who expects something from you. There are two different types of customers, those in a retail/ wholesale situation are called external customers, they usually want to purchase an item or commodity or service from you. Internal customers are people that belong to the same organization as you and can require anything from information to advice on reports.

## **Customer Service Provider**

A customer service provider is someone who provides service to internal or external customers.

## **Excellent Customer Service**

Excellent customer service is service which exceeds the customers' expectations. To do this the customer service provider must build up a relationship with the customer - a relationship where the customer service provider knows and understands the customer and is able to quickly satisfy the customer's primary need.



## **Empathy**

Empathy means trying to understand another person's point of view or seeing the situation from that person's perspective. It is important in customer service as it helps alleviate tension between the customer and the customer service provider.

## **Primary need**

A primary need is the dominant need that a customer has at a particular time. The one customer will have a different primary need depending upon the situation. The degree of intensity of the primary need will also vary from situation to situation and from one customer to another.

## **Proactive**

Taking the initiative in directing the course of events.

## **Relationship**

A customer service relationship develops when the customer trusts the customer service provider. Trust is dependent upon the customer service provider being; reliable, open, accepting, and direct.

## **Results Need Customer**

Customers with a results need are concerned with efficiency. They expect customer service providers to be fast and effective, they do not like to be kept waiting for any reason.

## **Security Need Customer**

Customers with a security need are concerned with quality, value for money and a product's guarantees. They do not like taking risks and like to be sure that they are making the right decision. Because of this they can sometimes be slow to make a decision.

## **Social Need Customer**

Customers with a social need like service with a personal touch and despise being treated with indifference.

## **Trust**

Trust is the bridge that can be used to overcome the defensive barrier that sometimes forms between customers and customer service providers. It means having confidence in the ability or intention of a person. In relation to customer service, trust consists of four main elements; reliability, openness, acceptance, and directness.



## **Reliability**

Customer service providers demonstrate reliability when they follow a task through to the end and keep their customers informed of all details, at all times.

## **Openness**

Customer service providers demonstrate openness when they listen and respond to all different types of customers, even if they do not necessarily agree with them. It also means being willing to give and receive feedback and if necessary rethink their position.

## **Acceptance**

Customer service providers demonstrate acceptance when they respect their customers' values and opinions.

## **Directness**

Customer service providers demonstrate directness when they are straightforward and honest with their customers. Being direct is not the same as being tactless.

