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| Providing Customer Service Across Cultures   * Value respect of other cultures:   + Reinforce the importance of recognising customer diversity. Employees show genuine a sense of fairness and goodwill and take customer requests seriously. * Educate yourself about cultures:   + Know your customers and seek out culture-specific knowledge. * Recognise communication patterns:   + Listen actively and recognise patterns. Avoid jargon, jokes and complex puns as these might result in a misunderstanding or risk causing offence. * Create a diverse workforce:   + Create a welcoming environment by having a diverse workforce. * Share experiences:   + Share your cultural experiences with colleagues to work out consistent approaches. | Principles of Great Service   * Speed   + The main determinant of service quality.   + Has the highest impact on customer satisfaction. * Accuracy   + Customers assume accuracy as a minimum.   + Accuracy doesn't raise satisfaction, but inaccuracy causes dissatisfaction. * Transparency   + Not knowing what is happening makes customers feel uneasy.   + For example, if there is a delay, state how long the delay will be and the reason for it. * Accessibility   + Reduce customer effort.   + Make it easy for customers to contact you. * Empowerment   + Good service allows customers to feel in control.   + Knowledge is power – again, transparency is crucial. * Friendliness   + Friendliness and politeness are key.   + Don't let eCommerce make your service entirely inhuman. * Efficiency   + You can have the world's best service but what is the use if it is eating up your profits. |
| Defusing Situations with Customers   1. Paraphrasing – mirroring the customer’s statements with empathy:  * Listen well before responding * Reflect the world as the customer sees it, not as you see it * When reflecting, put their words into your own words – do not reflect back verbatim  1. Observation – reflecting on what the customer is thinking and feeling. 2. Validation – letting customers know their feelings are valid:    * “You have every reason to be upset.”    * “I can understand why you would be upset.” 3. Identification – sharing what you feel in common with the customer:    * The phrases involve you – “That would bother me too.”    * If you can’t identify with a person, then don’t attempt to! | Listening to Customers  Establishing and maintaining dialogue with customers relies on good listening skills. Paraphrasing and other listening techniques convey to the customer that you have really listened to them. Here are five principles of effective listening:   * Listen with your full attention * Make short, affirming statements * Take notes * Restate what you have heard * Use open or closed-ended questions as appropriate   Customer Focussed Organisations   * Drive everything in their business with a customer focus * Ask the right questions * Exceed customer needs and expectations * Maintain happy employees * Create and use service standards * Have a written plan for ensuring excellence in customer service * Deal effectively with difficult customers * Use follow up information as a way to keep in touch with customers * Learn from their competitors and use their successes in their business * Smash the barriers to excellence * Offer their customers options * Walk the talk at the top of the organisation |