



## THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT

*Distributors organize their businesses vertically (in functional areas like inside sales, counter sales warehousing). Distribution customers experience their business horizontally, from the beginning of a transaction to the end. They experience the transaction as the sum of all of the parts of that transaction. This means that everyone in the company impacts what the customer experiences. Superb service cannot occur unless all employees are committed and engaged.*

## A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

# Using Customer Service: The Path to Higher Profits

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:

The objective of ***Customer Service: The Path to Higher Profits*** is to help all your distribution team members understand how important they are to the core product you provide: Service. It will help them understand how their individual jobs add up to the total customer service experience by helping the company grow and provide increased opportunities and securities for each of them when that experience is good. When they complete this workbook your employees should buy into the idea that Superb customer service is not only good for the company, but for each of them personally.

Although customer service encounters happen between the frontline employee and the customer, the quest for Superb service does not begin or end there. To deliver consistent customer service that builds customer loyalty and lowers price pressures, management has to fulfill its responsibilities. *Superb* customer service needs to be planned for, reinforced, and rewarded.

### THE MANAGER'S ROLE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Managers who take the lead in delivering Superb service assume three responsibilities:

- 1. Define the company's customer service resources**
  - List the customer service tools that employees can apply to individual customers.
  - Make sure the employees know how to use the tools
  - Create and publish a customer service policy — a statement of just how the company wants to treat its customers.
- 2. Provide an environment where Superb customer service is possible**
  - Identify and eliminate policies and processes that prevent the employee from providing the *Superb* service defined in your service policy.
  - Make sure there are no discrepancies between what you are asking for and what you are rewarding.
- 3. Model Superb service with your own behavior**
  - Make sure you lead by example. Employees will be quick to recognize and ignore lip service. Make your efforts exemplary and highly visible. They will follow.

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### THE REWARDS OF *SUPERB SERVICE*

Superb customer service is your best strategy for long-term growth. Here are a few thoughts to discuss with your team:

- The longer you are able to keep a customer, the more profitable that customer becomes. The only way to hold on to them is to keep them happy.
- *Superb* service reduces the time and other resources spent in dealing with irate customers.
- *Superb* service improves employee morale. It's more fun to work in a place that has an excellent working relationship with its customers.
- *Superb* service sets your company apart from the majority of companies in your industry.
- *Superb* service is your most powerful tool for profitable and continued growth. Increasing customer satisfaction increases employee satisfaction.

### USING CUSTOMER SERVICE THE PATH TO HIGHER PROFITS

#### Using Customer Service in a classroom or meeting sessions:

- Seek to be inclusive rather than exclusive in deciding who participates.
- Require employees to read and complete the "bringing it in house" sections that will be discussed prior to your session.
- Consider rotating discussion leaders to build cooperation, discussion and meeting skills.
- Establish simple meeting ground rules such as turning off cell phones, participating actively in the session, respecting and recording all ideas etc.
- Keep in mind that there are no strictly right or wrong answers to the "Bringing It In-House" questions, but that they should indicate an understanding of your service goals.

#### Using Customer Service for self-study:

- Explain the importance of the participant's role in providing Superb service
- Agree with the employee on a time frame for completing each section.
- Emphasize the importance of the "Bringing it In-House" sections.
- Establish when you or another employee or mentor will meet to discuss the section of the workbook.
- Keep in mind that there are no strictly right or wrong answers to the "Bringing It In-House" questions, but they should indicate an understanding of your service goals.

#### After the course is completed:

- Record all the recommendations on service improvements then establish a schedule for those the team decides to implement.
- Celebrate completion of the exercise.
- Continue training and meeting activity to keep the momentum.



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