

# CUSTOMER SERVICE IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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# THOTS

**“I have learned that people will forget what you said; people will forget what you did; but people will never forget how you made them feel.”**



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*Maya*



# What is customer service

the *service* provided to *customers* before, during and after purchasing and using goods and services.

*customer service* is an experience

Customer service has products:  
compliment or complain

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- Customer service is not same as patient satisfaction
- Patient satisfaction: whatever the patient says it is!
- Customer service in healthcare is one of the indicators of QUALITY in the healthcare industry



# TYPES OF CUSTOMERS

- EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS
- INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

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# What is quality

- Quality is not static.

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**CLINICAL COMPETENCE [70 %]**

**+**

**SERVICE QUALITY [30 %]**

**=**

**PATIENT SATISFACTION**



# WHY is Customer Service Important?

Patient satisfaction, as an outcome of healthcare delivery, is an indicator of QUALITY care.

Our customers are now knowledgeable & well-informed.

They have high expectations and with every healthcare experience, their expectations increase.

Our customers have a choice on where to get their medical needs met.

They expect clinical competence but the **service** provided makes 'the difference'.

*“Expectations are Directly Correlated to Satisfaction”*

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- News of bad customer service reaches more than **twice as many** ears as praise for a good service experience

## The Takeaway

Take the time to address unhappy customers and do everything in your power to remedy the situation. It's not only worth keeping their business, but also avoiding any negative word of mouth exposure.



exposure.

*Source: White House Office of Consumer Affairs*

# YOU CANT GET PATIENT SATISFACTION WITHOUT QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

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# Patient Satisfaction Pays . Here's How :

- Greater profitability
- Improved patient retention
- Increased patient referrals
- Improved compliance
- Improved productivity
- Better staff morale
- Reduced staff turnover



# PRODUCTS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Complaint = dissatisfaction
- Compliment = satisfaction



# HOW CAN WE ASSESS OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STATUS

- Complaints Procedures
  - opportunities
- Compliments Procedures
  - rewards

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# Components of customer service in the hospital

Service orientation

Telephone etiquettes

Scheduling

Convenience

Comfort

Environment

Dignity

Parking

Interaction

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# What is Quality?

- In other words, Quality is the degree to which your service is free of defects.
- Who defines “defects”?
  - Regulators e.g.MOH
  - The customer / consumer



# What's It Worth?

1. **Market Differentiation**
2. Litigation Cost Avoidance
3. Employee Retention & Productivity

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# CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR IN THE FACE OF POOR SERVICE

- What they **aren't** telling you
- Only 4% of your dissatisfied customers will complain
- 96% wont
- And 91% out of them wont come back
- Customer behavior in the face of poor service
  - Less than 30% complain
  - They tell on average 11 people
  - How many others have heard about the service problem before you?

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- Did You Know? It takes **12** positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience.



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# WHAT HAPPENS AT YOUR POINT OF SERVICE

- How to reliably uncover issues before they turn into complaints
  - Remember that most issues occur close to the “point of service”
  - One of the surest signs of a bad or declining relationship is the absence of complaints...Nobody is ever *that* satisfied...The customer is either not be candid or not being contacted – probably both.”



# NEW FACES ALWAYS SEND A SIGNAL

## Employees As Competitive Advantage

- Loyal Employees → Loyal Customers
- Word of Mouth Marketing → ↑ Referrals
- Loyal Employees → Recruitment Magnet

## Employees As Operational Advantage

- ↑ Loyalty → ↓ Recruitment Costs
- ↑ Loyalty → ↓ Agency Costs
- ↑ Loyalty → ↓ Management Costs

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# THE QUALITY DIAMOND

- CUSTOMER

QUALITY  
MEDICAL  
CARE

- CONTINUITY

- COMMITMENT

- EXPECTATIONS  
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There are a variety of ways to provide good service. Keep four words in mind

- ❖ **CUSTOMER** is the reason for all the efforts.
- ❖ Without **COMMITMENT** you will achieve nothing that is meaningful.
- ❖ You should know the patient's **EXPECTATIONS** to satisfy, manage or exceed them.
- ❖ Good service demands **CONTINUITY** through daily attention and continual improvement.

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# Complaints & Compliments

- Considered together, they are both opportunities to address critical management requirements

| Complaint                                     | Compliment                                    |
|---|---|
| Delivered from high emotion<br>(unpleasant)   | Delivered from high emotion<br>(pleasant)     |
| Represent key operational issue<br>(negative) | Represent key operational issue<br>(positive) |
| To be addressed promptly<br>(risk avoidance)  | To be addressed promptly<br>(secure benefit)  |
| Damage to staff if mis-managed                | Loss of benefit to staff if mis-<br>managed   |



# Why do employees quit

- **We know, based on surveys**
  - Relationship with direct supervisor
  - I don't have any friends here
  - Lack of feedback (positive)
  - They feel they don't belong
  - No investment in me here[training]





# FEEDBACK PROGRAMS

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# Service Recovery



- C – Compassion for the Concern
- A – Apologize Sincerely
- R – Respond
- E – Empathize and Thank Them

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# Response Strategy

- For both Complaints & Compliments

- Prompt

- Speed of response is correlated to satisfaction

- Authoritative

- Don't equivocate – tell the consumer what will be done

- Follow up

- Do what you say will be done

- Measurement

- Measure effectiveness afterward

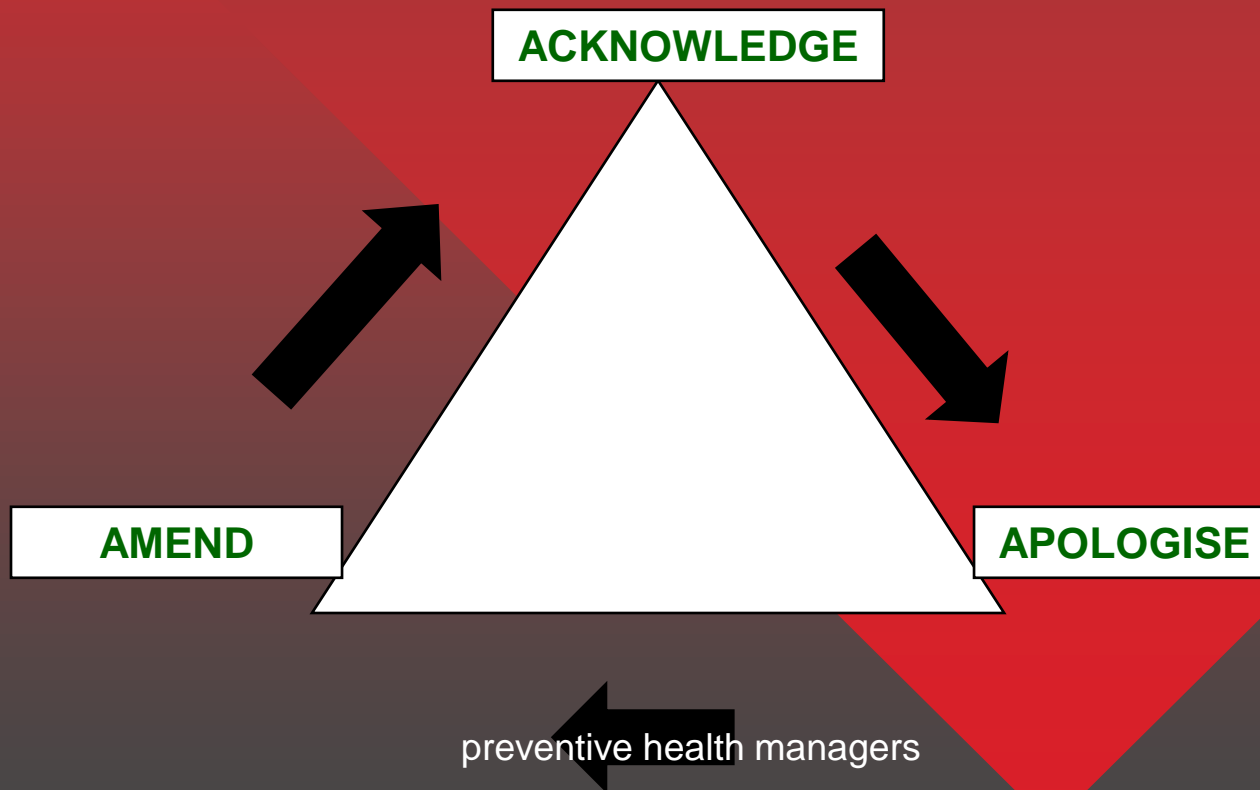
- Source: Chase & Dasu; Reicheld:  
Denove & Power

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# THE TRIPLE A ACTION PLAN

- Steps to Service Recovery



# Response Strategy

- Prompt

- Speed of the response is related to satisfaction with outcome

| Complaint            | Compliment     |
|----------------------|----------------|
| “I am sorry that...” | “Thank you...” |



# •Response Strategy

- **Authoritative**

- Do tell the person what will be done, when & ask permission

| Complaint                                     | Compliment                                     |
|---|--|
| “I will do<br>[.....] right<br>way, alright?” | “I would like to<br>share this with<br>], OK?” |



# •Tackle responses according to the error

## •Type of Response –

### •Varies by Type of Complaint

➤Task Specific Errors – e.g., lost or damaged articles, wrong meals, wrong Rx, wrong Tx

#### Recovery

- ✓Apologize
- ✓COMPENSATE
- ✓Demonstrate



# •Type of Response

## •Type of Response –

### •Varies by Type of Complaint

➤ Process Specific Errors – rude behavior or brusque behavior (actual or perceived), schedule delays, missed appointments

#### Recovery

- ✓ Apologize
- ✓ Explain
- ✓ Demonstrate





# Reasons why medical practitioners are being sued

- Those who sue, report the reason as:
  - The providers did not listen;
  - The providers were not responsive;
  - They want an apology (and didn't get one);
  - Want to protect others & prevent 'this' from happening again, and;
  - Revenge

Source: Young & Phillips; Selbst & Korin



# • Barriers to customer service in the health sector

## ➤ Effective Response Strategy

### ➤ The Barriers

- Personal Defensiveness
- Professional Pride
- Loss of Wisdom → Turnover
- “Task” focus vs. “person” focus





*If you are **interested** in something, you do it when you have time.*

*If you're **committed** to something, you make time to do it.*

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And sometimes your job  
seems impossible...



“The strength of any structure is only as strong as the weakest point.”

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# Part 2

## SERVICE DELIVERY

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# CONNECTING WITH PROFESSIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

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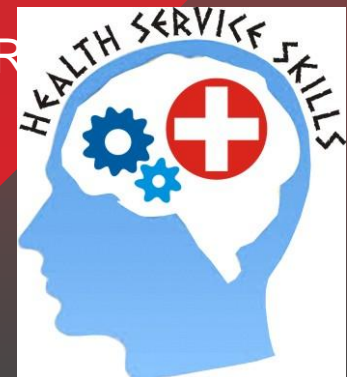




# Customers perception of service

- LONG CALLS
- DON'T CARE ATTITUDE
- UNRETURNED CALLS
- VOICE MAIL
- FRIENDLINESS
- BEING HELPFUL
- SHOWING APPRECIATION
- HONESTY/INTEGRITY
- PROMPT
- FOLLOW UP
- RESPECTING THEIR OPINIONS

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# MANAGING THE CUSTOMERS IMPRESSION: ATTITUDE

- VOICE TONE 7-12 seconds
- APPEARANCE – after 5 seconds
- COMMUNICATION-after 30 seconds



# Project a positive attitude

- 7% spoken word
- 38% tone of voice
- 55% body language

Spoken word: use names, thank you, avoid nagging and whining

Tone: smiling improves voice tone, customers prefer [bored, tired, indifferent, casual or detached] formal tone initially, then casual.



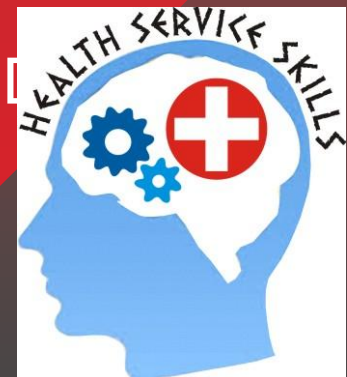
# Body Language Aspects

- Face
- Eyes
- Posture
- Gestures
- Voice
- Touch
- Appearance
- movement



# MANAGING A CALL

- ANSWER,GREET,INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND ASK FOR NAME OF CALLER
- ACKNOWLEDGE URGENCY OF REQUEST
- FIND OUT NEEDS
- EXPLAIN POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
- TELL THE CUSTOMER WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO AND HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE



# POWER WORDS IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

- ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH IN  
CUSTOMER SERVICE. THE TRUTH  
CAN ALWAYS REPRODUCE ITSELF



# POWER WORD

## EXERCISE: YES, HELP, PROVEN, TOGETHER

- I NEED TO [RESEARCH, LOOK INTO IT]
- I WILL [SEE WHAT I CAN DO, TAKE CARE OF IT]
- I WILL GET BACK TO YOU [AS SOON AS I CAN, BY TOMORROW AFTERNOON]
- I WILL [TRY TO DO IT, DO IT]
- MD ISNT IN NOW, CAN I [HELP YOU, TAKE A MESSAGE]
- LET ME SEE [IF, WHEN] I CAN GET THE INFORMATION FOR YOU
- THAT'S AN [UNUSUAL, IMPOSSIBLE] REQUEST



# DANGER ZONES IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

- INTERNAL PROBLEMS
- REORGANISATIONS
- MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS
- PRODUCT PROBLEM[SERVICE,DRUGS]





# TELLING THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

- IM SORRY IVE NOT BEEN PICKING CALLS WE HAVE HEARD A HIGH CALL VOLUME TODAY
- IM SORRY YOU'VE HAD TO WAIT SO LONG, HOW MAY I HELP YOU TODAY
- IVE PASSED THE PROBLEM TO THE LAB BUT THEY ARE NOT YET AROUND
- ILL BE HAPPY TO COLLECT YOUR RESULT FROM LAB THIS AFTERNOON AND UPDATE YOU IMMEDIATELY



# Lets answer the following questions

- Is there anybody sensible here that i can talk to today?
- Im sure I was told that the scan cost N500 you people are cheats
- How many times wuill you take my phone number and address?
- Do you have to charge me for consultation again and again,you people like money too much abeg
- These drugs are fake can I have the original please?



# Managing the customer

- Angry customer
- High pitch ,increase volume
- Short terse answers
- Foul language
- Condescending tone
- Two problems to solve:
- Relationship problem
- Specific technical problem

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- Apologise
- Stay calm
- Empathy
- Listen
- Ignore customers mistakes[save face]
- Suggest solution and get a buy in
- Thank

### Avoid Negative Phrases

- Cant/wont
- I am not authorized
- Company policy
- You have a problem

### Use

Lets see,Together,I understand how you feel,



# Escalating a request

Assess impact

Action plan

Notify customer

Assign resources

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- Beyond service
- Team player
- Hire for attitude

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# So much said!

Thank you for listening.

For group training and hospital  
performance audits contact us.

Contact 08029750628

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