

# **50 Activities for Achieving Excellent Customer Service**

---

*Darryl S. Doane*  
*Rose D. Sloat*  
Authors & Editors

**HRD Press • Amherst • Massachusetts**

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
What This Resource Manual Will Provide for You .....	vii
A New Revolution in Customer Service .....	vii
A Memorable Experience .....	viii
The Seasoned Trainer .....	viii
The New or Occasional Trainer .....	ix
CD Documenter .....	ix
EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES .....	ix
<b>How to Use This Resource Manual .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Areas of Concentration:</b>	
<b>Part A. Service Attitude .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Attitude Check .....	3
2. Whose Attitude .....	5
3. Both Sides of Change .....	7
<b>Part B. Customer Service Icebreakers .....</b>	<b>9</b>
4. Team Task .....	11
5. Promoting Communications and Teamwork .....	13
6. Who Are You? .....	15
7. You've Got the Power .....	19
<b>Part C. Call Centers and the Telephone .....</b>	<b>21</b>
8. Have You Ever Called You? .....	23
9. The Power of Repetition .....	25
10. Calling Your Own Company .....	27
11. Evaluating Self .....	29
<b>Part D. Professionalism with No Excuses .....</b>	<b>35</b>
12. Excuses, Excuses, Excuses .....	37
13. Make It a Miracle .....	41
14. Overcoming Obstacles .....	47
15. The Rules Have Changed Game .....	51
16. Defining Spectacular Service: How We Impact Our Customers Everyday .....	55
<b>Part E. Communication—Listening To Your Customers .....</b>	<b>65</b>
17. Active vs. Passive Communication .....	67
18. Say What You Mean—Mean What You Say! .....	71
19. Name That Tune! How Moods Influence Customer Communication .....	73
<b>Part F. Customer Treatment (Internal and External) .....</b>	<b>77</b>
20. The Grab Bag .....	79
21. When You Were a Customer .....	81

22. WACTEO -----	85
23. The People in Your Office -----	87
24. The Internal Customer -----	91
25. The Golden Rule-----	97
26. A Visit to the Zoo -----	99
27. Team Circle—Together We Are One -----	101
<b>Part G. Essential Tools for Success .....</b>	<b>105</b>
28. Check Out Your Work Environment -----	107
29. Learn/Teach/Apply -----	111
30. Unification-----	113
31. Best Practices in Customer Service -----	115
<b>Part H. Customers and the World Wide Web .....</b>	<b>119</b>
32. Think Before Clicking the Send Key -----	121
33. Putting Your Company to the Test: Being Your Own Customer -----	123
<b>Part I. Asking for the Order .....</b>	<b>127</b>
34. Interdependence and Selling Up-----	129
35. Achieving Closure-----	131
<b>Part J. Fulfilling Needs/Providing Solutions .....</b>	<b>135</b>
36. Reacting vs. Responding -----	137
37. Transformations and Their Impact: A Reality Check -----	139
38. Probing the Mind of the Customer -----	153
39. Holding On -----	161
40. Candid Customer -----	163
41. Customer’s Perceptions: How Their Expectations Are Created -----	169
<b>Part K. Customer Service Assessments .....</b>	<b>177</b>
42. HRD Press -----	179
43. What Do You Do? The Gifts You Bring to the Workplace -----	183
<b>Part L. Uncomfortable Situations .....</b>	<b>187</b>
44. Real World Customer Encounters -----	189
45. Training Activity for Customer Treatment -----	193
46. Losing Control -----	195
47. Most Embarrassing Moment-----	199
48. Your Customer’s Perception of Reality -----	201
<b>Part M. Customer Service Stories .....</b>	<b>207</b>
49. Service in the News—Do Customers Have to Look the Part? -----	209
50. Eureka!-----	211
<b>Bonus Section .....</b>	<b>221</b>
Being in the Real World—Collected Bits of “Sage” Advice -----	223
<b>Appendix A: CD Documenter Learning Tool .....</b>	<b>225</b>
Customer Service Documenter -----	227
<b>Appendix B: Customer Service Reminders .....</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Author/Editor Biographies .....</b>	<b>255</b>

# Introduction

## What This Resource Manual Will Provide for You

1. Activities that are sensitive to the new revolution taking place in customer service and meeting customer demands.
2. Identification and creation of memorable experiences for your customer service representatives and their customers.
3. A valuable treasure of resources whether you are a seasoned veteran, a trainer/facilitator with middle-of-the-road years of experience, or a newcomer or occasional trainer.
4. Fifty high-quality activities that may be easily aligned with the specific needs and identified competencies within your customer service area.
5. User-friendly activities that take you step-by-step through the training process, allowing you to deliver high-impact training that makes a difference easily.
6. Activities that are easily customized to your needs and include a number of variations and additional insights and ideas to make them the “right fit” for your programs.
7. A CD Documenter to identify and develop your own customized collection of customer service interactions within your organization.
8. Powerful bonus sections to complement and support your customer service core values and enhance performance.
9. A complimentary copy of *EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES . . . For Not Delivering Excellent Customer Service—And What Should Happen!*
10. Effective tools to assist you in attaining the next level of success with the individual who needs to be your primary focus—the Customer!

## A New Revolution in Customer Service

Did you ever hear of someone throwing a party and no one coming? The revolutionary ideas that struck such a note of excitement and encouragement in the customer service arena for the past 15 years left many feeling just that way. So much was planned and strategized, making expectations high. Unfortunately, these expectations were not met, and now the customer has raised the ante. Many expectations have now become demands.

This manual will help your participants respond to the following customer demands:

- Make my life easier.
- Focus on me.
- Help me to be more successful.
- Respond to my needs.
- Build a customer-responsive relationship.
- Know my problems and provide solutions.

See Section #1, “**Service Attitude**” and Section #4, “**Professionalism with No Excuses,**” for activities to take this new customer service revolution to your participants. They will emphasize your customers’ new demands as well as the individual and team attitude necessary to support and deliver the required service.

## A Memorable Experience

The relationships you build with your customers must become memorable experiences in the customer's mind and perception. You want to develop a customer hunger for your style of service and caring that brings them back again and again.

Your training experience needs to be memorable for your customer service participants also, leaving them with the necessary knowledge and skills and ability to professionally transfer what was learned in the classroom setting to their normal, everyday behavior in the workplace while complementing and enhancing performance.

The activities in Part G, “**Essential Tools for Success,**” are specifically designed to support and enhance that memorable experience through the evaluation of the workplace environment and the best customer service practices for use with your customers.

Part J, “**Fulfilling Needs/Providing Solutions,**” focuses on building customer confidence, encouraging participants to get to know customers almost as well as they know themselves so that they can anticipate their changes, needs, and problems in order to respond appropriately.

These customer service activities are focused on and specifically targeted at the business and industrial arenas and their customers. The activities are intended to raise to a higher level of conscious awareness the creativity, interaction, participation, knowledge, and skill level of those you have chosen to have primary contact with the Customer, your organizations most precious commodity. These learning experiences have been expressly selected to validate, complement, support, and reinforce your existing and developing training programs, concentrating on that individual who must be the critical epicenter of your organization—the Customer.

## The Seasoned Trainer

This manual will provide you with a valuable treasure of resources to inject into your own programs, creating enthusiasm, focus, and raising the level of awareness of the critical significance of customer service training.

The knowledge and skills identified with each activity may be easily aligned with your recognized competencies and placed into appropriate programs or learning experiences. This is a wonderful resource for your training staff, organizational learning department, corporate university, or individual facilitators looking to add to their existing customer service base.

The wealth of knowledge and information found here could easily be used as a complete customer service training program. Each individual activity demonstrates a significant area of concern regarding customer service and may be presented independently or as part of a larger program. This resource manual is extremely flexible to your needs and the programs you present.

For the seasoned trainer, this manual offers a wide variety of different approaches in delivering your message to your people. New, fresh approaches can revitalize and reenergize not only participants, but the training staff itself.

You will find these activities easy to customize to fit your style and needs. This manual addresses the issue of *blended learning*. It easily moves from traditional, stand-up, highly interactive activities such as “**The People in Your Office**” (Part F) to high-quality assessments and instrumented learning tools such as “**HRD Press**” (Part K) and “**Putting Your Company to the Test: Being Your Own Customer**” (Part H).

We believe that as a seasoned, veteran trainer, you will find this manual to contain a plethora of easily acceptable, useful tools.

## The New or Occasional Trainer

Those of you who are new to your organization’s training department will find this resource manual invaluable. As you develop your customer service programs, what a benefit to have this treasure chest of very best activities, which get results, at your disposal. And, if you are only an occasional trainer with time constraints and demands on your schedule, what a powerful tool this becomes to enhance your own productivity and allow you to deliver high-quality activities.

As a newcomer to the training arena or the occasional trainer, you probably have an ideal picture of what customer service should deliver. We’ve all heard the expressions: a blinding flash of the obvious, good old common sense, the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” These reflect the feelings we’ve all had about what customer service should be. Unfortunately, we have also walked away shaking our heads disgusted, bewildered, dazed, and confused after receiving less than adequate customer service. It should be so simple. Treat the customer as you would a guest in your own home. The customer is number one. There would be no business without the customer. The customer needs to be the center of your organization.

We should know better, but still poor service continues—inadequate care for what the customer wants and desires, which is solutions, results, and the fulfillment of their needs. And, yes, the problem has even carried over to the information age. The World Wide Web confuses, abuses, and loses customer after customer and the results are devastating. Customers take their business elsewhere as they maneuver through the electronic debris of companies that quickly rose only to suddenly fall as they ignored the obvious: focus on the customer!

This resource manual is dedicated to awakening and strengthening that level of customer focus that simply must exist if any business wishes to continue its very existence and prosper. Here you will find the very best activities to support and complement your customer service development. We have gathered them from our respected peers in the training arena as well as including our own special contributions to this best-of-the-best collection.

## CD Documenter

The CD Documenter allows you to customize your organization’s own customer service experiences for future reference, training, role plays, new-hire orientation, group discussions, and a myriad of learning experiences.

The template on the CD sets the stage for easily creating your own library and resource of customer service situations from within your own company. Please refer to both **Appendix A** and the **CD** that accompanies your resource manual to begin your own customized collection of documented customer service interactions for your organization.

## EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

We have included our book, *EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES . . . For Not Delivering Excellent Customer Service—And What Should Happen!* with your manual. You will find a number of activities within the manual relating directly to the book, such as “**EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES**” (Part D) and “**Check Out Your Work Environment**” (Part G).

The “**Customer Service Reminders,**” **Appendix B**, were originally developed for the *EXCUSES* book. We believe that you will find this section and the *EXCUSES* book to be wonderful tools to complement and support your customer service programs and will want each of your customer sales and service people to have their own copies.