

The importance of your ‘Tone of Voice’ in Customer Service

Time: 30 minutes

Interesting quote:

“To my customer I may not have the answer, but I’ll find it. I may not have the time but I’ll make it” - Unknown

When customers call us with a query or complaint they may be feeling anxious about whether you can help them or not. The way you talk to them, the words you use and the way you say those words will all impact on the customers’ perception of the service you’ve delivered.

This buzz activity is going to look at what you need to consider when you’re speaking to customers over the phone.

The goal of this session	What you’ll need:
To identify some specific skills you need to adopt when dealing with customers over the telephone.	Note paper Pens Handout: Activity ‘Do you hear what I hear?’ Handout: ‘Tips for improving your tone of voice’
The Aim of this session:-	
For you to understand the importance of your tone of voice, listening and questioning skills and the part being prepared has in helping delivering great customer service.	



Activity:

What phone behaviours annoy you?

Ask: I want you to think about your own experiences of dealing with contact centres or being on the phone to somewhere. What behaviours don't you like/ annoy you?

Look for answers to include:

- Quoting policy
- Not Listening
- Talking over you
- Not doing what they've said – no follow up
- Being passed from pillar to post
- Clear scripting

Tell: Remember customers are just like you so they'll get annoyed by the same things. That's why it's so important that wherever possible you avoid doing any of these things yourself.

We've talked about the importance of first and last impressions in an earlier buzz session.

Ask: Who can remember what the most important elements of your call opening were? What specific things do you need to make sure you include in your conversation opening

Look for:

- Tell them your name.
- Let them know they're talking to the right company.
- Tell them what you can do to help.
- Take ownership.

Ask: Why is it important that you give customers your full name?

Look for answers to include:

- The customer knows who they are speaking to.
- Professional
- Builds trust

Ask: How do you think your customer would feel if you only gave them your first name or no name at all?

Look for answers to include:

- Unprofessional



- They might think you're hiding something.

Ask: What else is important about the way you act when you're talking to customers over the phone?

Look for answers to include:

- Be polite
- Friendly
- Smiling

Ask: What extra things might you want to ask customers if you're calling them?

- Checking if it's a convenient time to talk.

Ask: Why is it important to ask the customers' permission?

- The customer may be busy

Tell: What details might you want to repeat from the greeting?

Look for answers to include:

- Your name again

Ask: Why might you want to give your customer your name for a second time?

Look for answers to include:

- Repeating your name establishes ownership and credibility
- Most customers don't remember your name if you only give it once.

Ask: How might you phrase the introduction of your name this second time around?

Look for examples to include:

- Thank you for that Mr Smith. As I mentioned earlier I'm Helen Green how can I help?

Tell: We've looked at the words you might use to greet customers, what might be more important than the words themselves?

Look for answers to include:

- The way you say it
- Tone of voice

Ask: Who has heard of the circle of communication? (this was a theory by Albert Mehrabian, over the phone only 20% of communication is through the words that



used, 80% is tone of voice, in face to face situations these percentages are 7% words, 38% tone of voice, 55% body language). Can anyone remember the percentages that related to: Words, Tone of voice and Body Language?

Answer:

- Words – 55%
- Tone of Voice – 38%
- Words – 7%

Tell: Over the phone you lose the element of body language in as much as you can't see the customers' movement. This being the case how does that affect the importance of the words you use?

Look for answers to include:

- Makes them more important.

Tell: that's right the impact of the words you use would account for 20% of the communication process. However that leaves a massive 80% being attributed to your Tone of voice .i.e. how you say those words.

It's therefore critical that you adopt the right tone when talking to customers to make sure you have the most positive effect on them.

Ask: What do you think we mean by tone of voice? What tone of voice would be preferable?

Look for:

- **Calm**
- **Positive**
- **Sounding interested**

Explain: A positive and calm tone can give you control of a call at the outset. The correct tone and personalised empathy can create real rapport with a customer and have a positive effect on an otherwise emotional or aggressive customer

We're going to do an activity to look at how the tone of your voice can totally detract from the message you're giving and demonstrate the importance of adopting the correct tone of voice in our customer interactions.

Activity: Do you hear what I hear?

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how adopting a different tone to the same words can impact on the customer experience.



- Split your team into pairs & handout Activity sheet – ‘Do you hear what I hear?’ Facilitate a discussion once activity complete

Handout:

Activity - Do you hear what I hear?

In your pairs I'd like you to both adopt a different tone of voice, but read the same scripted words. I'd like one of you to think how you'd be feeling if you really loved your job, were having a really great day, and were feeling on top of the world and the other to imagine that they've just had an irate customer shouting at them, they were late for work this morning because their car broke down and to top it all your holiday request's just been denied.

Now, using the script below, play out a short excerpt of conversation with your partner, how might your state of mind affect your tone of voice? How did you sound? How would your customer be feeling?

Discuss instances where you've overheard colleagues talking to customers on the phone where their tone of voice has detracted from the customer experience

What can you do to make sure you always have the most positive tone of voice for your customers, regardless of how you're feeling?

Inbound

Good Morning. Good Afternoon/ Good Evening <Company Name> may we help you?

"I'd like to"

Certainly I can help you with that/ Certainly I can do that for you/ Yes I can do straight away, my name is *David Beckham*, may I have your name please?

"Mr Brown"

Thanks Mr. Brown you're speaking to Ann Adviser. So that I can do that for you/ help you with that/ get that sorted out for you/ get this cleared up for you/ resolve your complaint, it's normal to run through some questions/ security details first – is that OK?

"Yes"



Call Closing

Name – Use the customers' name

Thanks – Thank the customer. If the customer says Thank you in their parting greeting then say something like “ My pleasure, You're Welcome” rather than saying Thanks again

“thanks for calling, bringing that to our attention/ thanks for taking the time to clarify those points/ to go through those questions with me.

Positive closing statement – Enjoy the rest of your day/ weekend/ glad I could help/ you can be certain we'll get your complaint progressed now.

Facilitate discussion – agree what team members could do to make sure they always speak to customers with the most positive tone of voice?