



Using critical thinking and reasoning to enhance the service you deliver.

Time: 30 minutes

When deciding on how best to handle a customer complaint, you need to make sure that you use all of the information at your disposal to help you to come to the fairest possible decision about it. The way in which you review the background details and evidence that led to the complaint being made in the first place, is crucial in the outcome of the complaint itself. That's where the use of critical thinking and reasoning comes in.

Interesting quote

"The person who thinks before he acts seldom has to apologise for his acts."

Napoleon Hill - Author

Really taking the time to think about the complaint, review all of the information you have at your disposal and making an informed decision, all comes on the back of critical thinking and reasoning. Even though you might not recognise this as being the process you've followed.

The way you work through the information needs to be done in a logical and considered way.

This activity will explain how critical thinking and reasoning can be applied to a problem. It will give you the opportunity to practice your own critical thinking and reasoning skills and finally, it will explain how you can apply these skills to your role

The goal of this session	What you'll need:
To identify some specific techniques to demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning skills and how to apply them to your role.	Note paper Pens Handout: Critical Thinking and reasoning activities
The Aim of this session:-	
For you to understand how to use critical thinking and reasoning skills when reviewing information and how this logical approach helps in the decision making process needed to resolve your customers' complaint.	



What is Critical Thinking and Reasoning?

Ask: Who's heard the terms "critical thinking" and "reasoning skills" before.

Tell: No matter who you are or what you do, you have to make decisions on a regular basis.

Explain: You may not realise it, but even those decisions that seem like second nature—like deciding what to wear when you're getting dressed in the morning—require some critical thinking and reasoning skills.

When you decide what to wear, you take many factors into consideration—the weather forecast, the current temperature, your plans for the day (where are you going, who will you see, your comfort level - will you be walking a lot or sitting all day and so on.

Thus, you are already a critical thinker on some level.

But your life is complicated, and you face decisions that are much more difficult than choosing what to wear. How do you handle a conflict? Solve a problem? Resolve a crisis? Make a moral or ethical decision?

While there's no guarantee you'll always make the right decision or find the most effective solution to a problem, there is a way to significantly improve your odds—and that is by improving your critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Ask: Think for a minute about the words critical thinking. What does this phrase mean?

Look for answers to include:

- Critical thinking is a decision-making process.
- Specifically, critical thinking means carefully considering a problem, claim, question, or situation in order to determine the best solution.

Tell: when you think critically, you take the time to consider all sides of an issue, evaluate evidence, and imagine different scenarios and possible outcomes.

It sounds like a lot of work, but the same basic critical thinking skills can be applied to all types of situations.

Critical thinking is so important because it helps you determine:

- How to best solve a problem
- How to best answer a question



- How to best handle a situation

Explain: Reasoning skills, on the other hand, deal more with the process of getting from point A, the problem, to point B, the solution. You can get there haphazardly, or you can get there by reason.

A reason is a motive or cause for something—a justification for thoughts, actions, or opinions.

Reasoning skills ask you to use good sense and base your reasons on facts, evidence, or logical conclusions rather than just on your emotions.

Ask: Why do you think having strong reasoning skills would be an asset when you're resolving complaints?

Look for answers to include:

- When we deal with customer complaints we have to base our decisions on facts, evidence and make logical conclusions.

Explain: that when you decide on the best way to handle a situation or determine the best solution to a problem, you should have logical (rather than purely emotional) reasons for coming to that conclusion.

Ask: What do you understand by the term Logical?

Look for answers that include:

- according to reason
- according to conclusions drawn from evidence or common sense

Ask: What about the term Emotional?

Look for answers that include:

- drawn from emotions,
- from intense mental feelings

Explain: It would be wrong to say that anything emotional is not reasonable. In fact, it's perfectly valid to take your emotions into consideration when you make decisions.

After all, how you feel is very important. However, when deciding on the outcome of a complaint, and to make sure each customer is treated fairly, you need to remove emotion from your decision making and rely purely on critical thinking and logic.

Explain: One way to help make sure that you're using your critical thinking and reasoning skills is to always justify your decisions and actions.



Ask: How do you do this when handling complaints at the moment?

Look for answers that include:

- We explain why we made the decision we did
- How we came to that decision
- We use evidence/ information

Explain: that having strong Critical Thinking and Reasoning Skills will help you

- Compose and support strong, logical arguments
- Assess the validity of other people's arguments
- Make more effective and logical decisions
- Solve problems more efficiently

Ask: How does Critical Thinking and Reasoning fit into your role?

Look for answers that fit around complaint handling processes and relate to the specific areas below:

- Critical thinking is the act of carefully considering a problem, question, or situation in order to determine the best solution.
- Reasoning skills, which go hand-in-hand with critical thinking, ask you to base your decisions on facts, evidence, and/or logical conclusions.
- Critical thinking and reasoning skills are implemented simultaneously to help you make smart decisions and solve problems effectively.
- They also help you make stronger arguments and better evaluate the arguments of others.

Explain that you're going to do one of three possible activities to start to build your Critical Thinking and Reasoning Skills.

ACTIVITY

Choose one of the activity sheets to focus on today. You can run the remaining activities as separate sessions in the future

These can be completed either as an individual activity with a follow up Group discussion or as a Group Discussion around the problem.

The key elements that you're looking to draw out of the exercises is how the advisers demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning to their decision. Allow 15 minutes in total.



Some possible questions to help focus the session and bring the session to a close.

Ask them to notice how many decisions they make throughout the day and how many different problems they face.

Ask them what kind of decisions and problems do they encounter most often at home? At work?

Ask them to consider evaluating a decision or problem they solved recently. Do they think it was a wise decision or effective solution? Why or why not? Did they consider the range of issues, or did they neglect to take certain issues into consideration? Did they make their decision based mostly on reason or mostly on their emotions?

1. What's the impact of not applying these skills?
2. Does anyone recognise these skills as being things they don't do at the moment or that they could improve?

Explain that advisers can continue to build their skills until next time

Ask them to consider writing down the process they went through to make a decision or solve a problem today. What did they do to get from point A, the problem, to point B, the solution?

Agree Actions

- Following the feedback, ask them to come up with:
 - One thing they're going to stop doing.
 - One thing they'll continue to do.
 - One thing they'll start doing differently.



Activity One – Buying a computer

1. For practice, imagine this scenario—buying a new computer—and apply critical thinking and reasoning skills to it. First, critical thinking:

What different things should you take into consideration when thinking about what kind of computer to buy? List at least five different considerations. One is already listed for you.

Things to consider:

1. price
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
2. Imagine that you do really have to buy a computer. Using your critical thinking and reasoning skills, write down what kind of computer (brand, price, etc.) you'd buy and why. You can make up the specifics: what's important is that you include several different reasons that show you've thought about your decisions carefully and critically.

Kind of computer:

Approximate price:

Reasons for this choice:



Activity One – Buying a computer – possible answers

Answers

1. You probably listed several important issues, such as:

- Condition: new or used
- Speed
- Amount of memory
- Internet access
- CD/DVD player
- CD burner/Video card
- Size—desktop, laptop, tablet?
- Brand name/manufacturer
- Type of keyboard
- Hardware or software—what programs do you need?
- Available tech support
- Reviews of product

2. Answers will vary. Here's a sample answer:

Kind of computer: new Dell laptop

Approximate price: £400

Reasons for this choice:

- Dell is a solid brand name with full tech service and a one-year warranty
- A laptop fits my needs because I want the convenience of being able to take it away with me.
- The price is about average and I found a deal that saves me £100 instantly, so I'm actually getting a £500 laptop
- It has two times more storage than the other laptops I looked at
- It has an extended battery life
- It's lightweight so I won't have a problem carrying it in my backpack
- It has a CD/DVD burner included and an excellent graphics card

Activity Two – Which job should John take?

Use your critical thinking and reasoning skills to solve the following problem.

John has been out of work for two months then in the same week, he is offered jobs by two different engineering companies - the Johnson Corporation and Samson Brothers.

They are paying the same hourly rate but the Johnson Corporation is offering a better benefits program, while the Samson Brothers is located far closer to John's home.

What should John do?

- List the different issues John should consider in making this difficult decision.
- Make a decision for John and explain why that's a good decision for him.
- Feel free to make up the various circumstances in his life—for example, whether John is married with children or single. The more reasons you can give for his decision, the better.



Activity Two – Which job should John take? Possible answers.

Some of the issues John needs to consider include:

- Job security
- Insurance benefits
- Hours
- Job environment
- Specific job responsibilities
- Location/commute
- Room for promotion
- Stability of company

Answers will vary. Here's a sample answer:

- John should take the job with the Johnson Corporation.
- They are offering private medical insurance and a pension plan.
- Since John has four children and a wife with some health problems, both of these are important factors.
- Although he would save travelling costs and time by taking the closer job, it would not be enough to outweigh the advantages of the Johnson's benefits.
- In addition, the Johnson Corporation has a stellar reputation in town and John is sure that with time and hard work, he will be able to move into a higher position within the company.



Activity Three – Where does Mickey Mouse live?

This is best completed in small teams.

The purpose of this activity is to apply logic and reasoning to the information that you're given in the clues below in order to answer the following question?

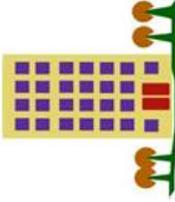
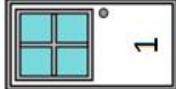
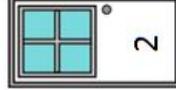
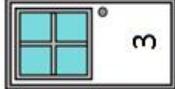
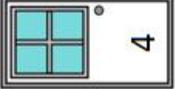
Where does Mickey Mouse live and what sort of house does he live in?

Logic Activity Clues

1. The character who has the apartment is not Mickey
2. Minnie's door number is one higher than the person who lives in the bungalow
3. The person who lives on Park Street does not live in a bungalow
4. Either the one who lives on Oak Avenue or the one who lives on Lake Road is Donald
5. Goofy does not live on North Street and does not have a town house
6. Donald lives in a cottage
7. The one who lives on Lake Road has an Apartment
8. The character living at number 4 does not live on Park Street
9. Whoever lives in the town house has a door number that is one more than Mickey's
10. Of the character that lives in the apartment and the one that lives on Park Street, one has door number 4 and one has door number 2



Answer grid: Teams may find it useful to have a visual that represents their options.

 Minnie	 Donald	 Goofy	 Cottage	 Bungalow	 Town House	 Apartment	 1	 2	 3	 4		
									 North Street	 Oak Avenue	 Lake Road	 Park Street



Puzzle Solution



Bungalow – 1 North Street



House – 2 Park Street



Cottage – 3 Oak Avenue



Apartment – 4 Lake Road