

# **Name of Activity: Defining Spectacular Service: How We Impact Our Customers Everyday**

By Amy S. Tolbert, Ph.D. and Joanne Carlson

## **Brief Overall Description:**

We all have a lot of ideas about what goes into spectacular service. Since we all frequently have the opportunity to be customers, we usually think we know good service (and poor service) when we see it. That really is only one perspective, however. The people in the best position to talk about all the qualities of spectacular service are those who not only receive service but those who provide it every day as well. They really are in the best position to describe what it means to give good service. Participants fall into that category since they are actively providing service every day. This activity gives participants an opportunity to develop a shared definition of what makes up spectacular service.

## **Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to:**

- Define what is meant by spectacular service
- Identify some key characteristics and components of spectacular service
- Explore the three service differentiators that separate one company from another
- Discuss the two sides of the service delivery equation.

## **Method of Instruction:**

This activity is designed for a classroom situation with a facilitator and participants broken into small groups that will define spectacular service, create a word map and present their definition to the large group.

## **Facilitation Notes:**

1. Length of time for the activity: 45 minutes
2. Preparation:
  - Photocopy the Spectacular Service Word Map.

## Word Map Group Activity

10 minutes

**Introduce** the activity. **Tell** participants:

- Since we all frequently have the opportunity to be customers, we usually think we know good service (and poor service) when we see it.
- That really is only one perspective, however. The people in the best position to talk about all the qualities of spectacular service are those who not only receive service but those who provide it every day as well. They really are in the best position to describe what it means to give good service.
- Participants fall into that category since they are actively providing service every day.
- This activity will give them an opportunity to develop a shared definition of what makes up spectacular service.

**Divide** participants into small groups or let them work in their “table” groups.

**Distribute** a Quality Customer Service Word Map to each participant.

**Distribute** a blank flipchart page and markers to each team.

**Tell** teams to appoint a reporter and a recorder. The recorder will prepare the group’s presentation (definition of service) and the reporter will give the presentation to the large group.

**Tell** participants:

- They will now have the opportunity to work in their groups for about 7-9 minutes to create a shared definition of spectacular customer service.
- You’ve given them a worksheet organizer to help generate some creative thinking.
- The word map is simply a series of spaces where they can enter statements, adjectives, examples and other descriptors of service.

**Describe** the use of the word map:

- The word map is not linear, you are encouraged to jump around when you use it.
- The word map is just an aid to help teams develop a definition of service.
- They use the word map by jotting down answers to the questions listed.  
“What is it?” In the left hand boxes, participants should write what they think high quality or “spectacular” customer service really is. In the three spaces at the bottom of the page, they should write some examples of spectacular service.  
In the right hand column they should write metaphors or similes that help the define service, e.g., “giving good service is like being on a winning basketball team; everyone does their part”.
- After the group has used the word map and discussed the issue for a few minutes, they should come up with a shared and agreed upon description or definition of spectacular service and post that description to their chart page.

## Group Presentations – Definition of Spectacular Service

25 minutes

**Allow** groups to work for 7-9 minutes. At the end of that time, reconvene the large group and ask the reporters from each of the groups to present their definition of spectacular service.

**Tell** participants that their definitions of service should be appropriate for **both internal and external** customers.

During the group presentations **write and post** any key words and concepts that appear repeatedly within the definitions and presentations of different small groups.

Following each small group presentation, build on and draw out discussion about the following key concepts:

- Attitude and enthusiasm
- Knowledge
- Care, concern and courtesy
- Responsiveness
- Reliability
- Skill and expertise
- Helpfulness – going the extra mile

Following each group's presentation, **post** the chart page containing the definition they developed.

**Ask** participants to vote on the one or two definitions they feel are most comprehensive in describing all aspects of spectacular service.

Provide a small reward to the members of the winning team (or teams).

15 minutes

**Debrief** the small group presentations.

**Ask** participants: "Which is more important when serving and trying to satisfy customers, product or the person?" "Which has a more important role, the product or service purchased by the customer or the people involved in delivering and providing the product or service?"

*(Answer: Help participants understand that, while there is no clear cut right or wrong answer to this question, the product plays a smaller role than the person delivering the product and helping with the buying and/or customer service process. If a customer purchases a wonderful product but has a bad experience, he or she will not remember all the good things about the product, only the bad experience. On the other hand, if the customer purchases a poor product, but the people are really help and understanding in the process, the customer will be less upset about the product. Give examples as necessary.)*

During the debrief discussion, ensure that these key points are surfaced:

- The “service” a company provides is different from the “**services**” it provides. A cleaning organization provides the service of cleaning your home or office; the manner in which they do the cleaning, e.g., thoroughly, on a timely basis, courteously, unobtrusively refer to their level of service.
- Service means adding people to the product (in the earlier example, if the office cleaning is the product, then the way the office is cleaned is really the service portion of the equation.)
- The importance of service is demonstrated every day; patients in a doctor or dentist office want more than just treatment, hotel guests want more than just a room, restaurant patrons want more than just a meal.

Show OH –  
Key  
Differentiator  
s

**Display** the overhead and briefly review the things that differentiate one organization from another, using this discussion to emphasize the importance of **people** and the service they provide as essential to an organization’s success.

**Tell** participants that this fact has placed pressure on all organizations to be better, faster or different in the way in which they provide service to their customers.

Show OH –  
Two Sides to  
Service

**Display** the overhead and briefly review the importance of the process and people sides of the service delivery equation.

**Tell** participants that, there are really two important components to an organization’s and an individual’s ability to deliver spectacular service. When providing spectacular service, they are to focus on two factors:

- The procedural side of service, which consists of the systems and procedures, used to deliver the product or service.
- The personal side of service; how service personnel (using their attitudes, behaviors and verbal skills) interact with customers.

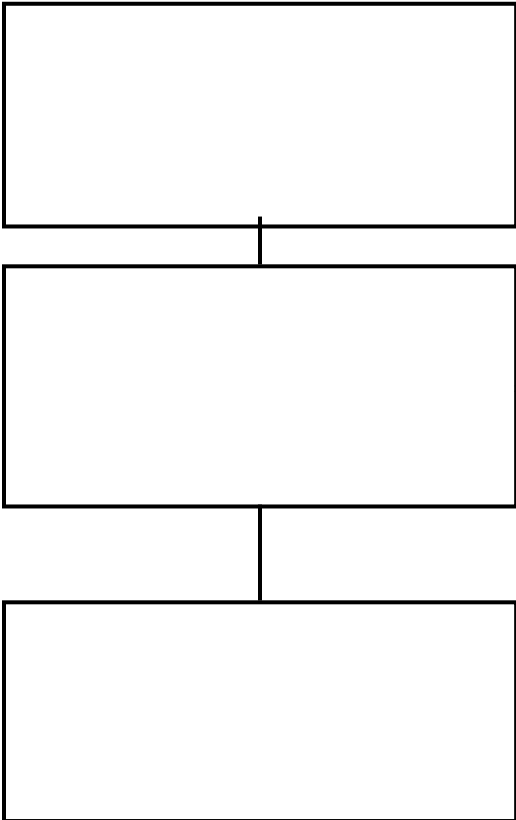
**Ask** participants which of the two factors they can influence the most.

*(Answer: The personal side, since they have direct and immediate control over this factor while the influence they have over the procedural side is actually shared with the organization.)*

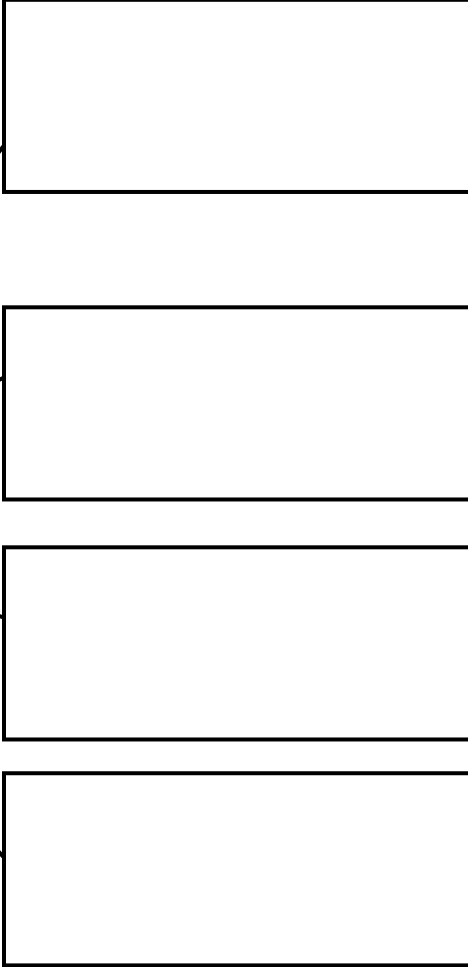
**Recap** the definition activity by emphasizing that, however you define spectacular service, it involves identifying what the customer needs and wants and then meeting those needs in a prompt and courteous fashion.

# Spectacular Customer Service Word Map

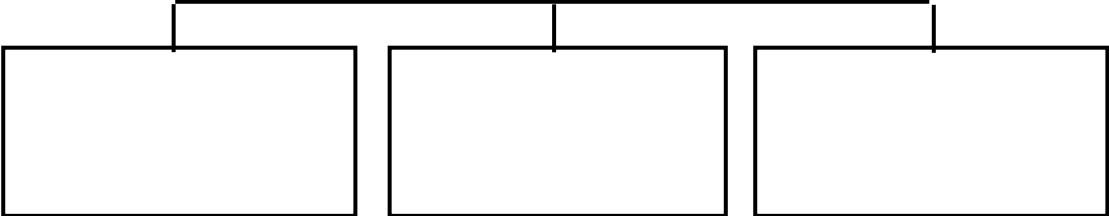
**What Is It?**



**What Is It Like?**



**What Are Some Examples?**



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Amy S. Tolbert, Ph.D., develops multicultural organizations and individuals by bringing cutting-edge topics, such as, fun/results-driven diversity initiative, the leadership within, managing to style, and creating breakthrough teams to you.



She is a principal of Effecting Creative Change in Organizations (ECCO International), which specializes in creating a new sense of spirit and preparing people and organizations for sustainability in an ever-changing environment through e-learning, technology and facilitated learning. ECCO partners with businesses in the areas of diversity/cross-cultural education, leadership, communication and bringing e-learning strategies to life.

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Joanne Carlson is an accomplished training consultant with more than 20 years of experience in consulting, instructional design, training program development and project management. She is knowledgeable in the principles of adult learning and experienced in applying those principles to audiences from a wide variety of industries.



Her extensive design and consulting experience gives Joanne expertise in properly blending product knowledge and selling skills information into company-specific training applications.

# ***Overheads***

# ***Key Differentiators***

**There are three things that distinguish or separate organizations from one another:**

- The product or service they provide and the price of that product or service**
- The quality of the product or professional service**
- The type of service they provide (the way they do business with their customers).**

## ***Two Sides to Service***

- **Procedural – The systems and procedures used to delivery products and/or services.**
- **Personal – How service personnel (using their attitudes, behaviors and verbal skills) interact with customers.**