Introduction to Careers in Hospitality and Tourism

Unit 4 – The Role of Customer Service

**Instructional Strategy 8 - Key**

**Do You Work Well With People?**

**KEY**

**Do you work well with people?**

Candidates often say that they "enjoy working with people" but don't explain or expand upon their response. Anyone can say that they work well with people, but it's important to show hiring managers how you accomplish it.

How can you avoid the pitfall of giving a lame interview answer, but still make a viable point about your suitability for jobs requiring lots of interaction with people - and even for jobs which don't? What do you do that makes you a good people person at work? That's what the interviewer wants to know.

**Why are you applying to work here?**

When you are applying for a retail job one of the most common interview questions is "Why are you applying to work here?" Here is a selection of sample answers you can use to respond to questions about why you want to work at the company.

This has been one of my favorite stores for years. When I saw there was an opportunity for employment here, I was very excited at the possibility of becoming part of the team.

I really enjoy working with people in a retail setting, helping customers, organizing stock, and changing displays.

This seems like a really interesting place to work, with the variety of items and services that you offer, and I feel that given the opportunity, I could be an asset to the team.

I have a lot of experience in establishments like this one, and would welcome the opportunity to learn a new business, and share my expertise in selling.

**What is customer service?**

Customer service is more than waiting on customers. It includes trying your best to make sure that the customer is satisfied.

Customer service is being friendly and helpful to customers.

Customer service is helping customers satisfy the need that brought them into the store.

**What is good customer service?**

Good customer service means having thorough knowledge of your inventory, experience with your products, and being able to help customers make the best choices for them.

Good customer service is treating customers with a friendly, helpful attitude.

Good customer service means helping customers efficiently, in a friendly manner. It's one of the things that can set your business apart from the others of it's kind.

**A customer complains that the coffee tastes terrible, what would you do?**

I would offer to make a fresh pot for the customer, and replace her coffee with a fresh one.

I would take her complaint seriously. I would take some from the dispenser that hers came from, and smell and taste it. If it seemed off, I would make a fresh brew. If it seemed fine, I would offer her the option of trying another brew, as this one may not have been to her taste.

I would suggest that perhaps this particular brew was not to her taste, and offer her the option of choosing another.

**A customer leaves without paying for gas, what would you do?**

Hopefully I would have seen the license plate, and we could find who they are and remind them that they forgot to pay. It's possible that it was an honest error, and that the customer will return on his own to pay the bill.

If it was a regular customer that I was familiar with, I would make a note to my co-workers to mention it to him the next time he came in.Sometimes people are in such a rush that they forget to complete the transaction.

I would try to get the license plate, or a good description of the car and driver, and notify the manager.

**A co-worker is rude to customers, what would you do?**

That would depend on what kind of a rapport I had with him. If I felt comfortable, I would probably mention that being rude is probably going to be bad for him in the long run, since unhappy customers reflect badly on the sales associate. Otherwise, I would mention to the supervisor what I had witnessed, and let him handle it.

I would try to set a good example, by being courteous and helpful to the customers and my co-workers.

I'd try to get friendly with him, and see if there was something going on that was making him unhappy. Maybe he would just want to talk, and his attitude would improve.

If it only happened when the supervisor was gone, I would definitely call it to his attention. I wouldn't want to be a snitch, but a store's reputation depends largely on it's customer service, and rude sales associates can create a negative impact on that reputation.

**The credit card machine is broken. What do you say to the customers?**

When asking the interview question "The credit card machine is broken. What do you say to the customers?" the interviewer wants to know how you would handle a problem.

The answer can depend on what the individual store policy is. Some will take the credit card information, and manually authorize it after the machine comes back up. Others will ask customers to pay another way. In any case, safe answers would be:

I would offer to hold the merchandise for 24 to 48 hours, and offer to call when the machine is fixed, so they can return for it.

I'm so sorry that the machine is down. Usually it's back up in a little while. Can I hold the merchandise while you do some other shopping and you can come back in a bit for it?

We also take cash and checks, and there is an ATM on the corner. I'm sorry for the inconvenience, but if you'd like, I can hold the merchandise while you go to the ATM.

**A customer wants to pay for $15 worth of merchandise in quarters, do you accept it?**

When you are applying for a retail job, the interviewer will want to know how you handle different situations, like a customer paying in change, for example.

Here are sample answers you can use to respond to the question "A customer wants to pay for $15 worth of merchandise in quarters, do you accept it?"

I would, money is money, unless I was told of a specific policy otherwise.

I would prefer taking at least some of it rolled, so it wouldn't overflow the register.

Having extra change, especially quarters isn't usually a burden.

I would mention the bank next door, that it might be better to trade the change in on bills that way, but I wouldn't lose a sale over it.

**A customer wants to return a package of food that is open and half gone. What will you do?**

When you are applying for a retail position a typical job interview question is "A customer wants to return a package of food that is open and half gone. What would you do?"

Here are sample answers you can use to respond:

The company policy would be important to know here. Some food companies stand behind their product 100%, and you could feel confident to give the customer another package, and return the opened one for a refund for the store.

Clearly, this is a delicate judgement call. Generally speaking, I would take the package back, and replace it with another, unless I was certain that the customer was really trying to take advantage of the situation. Sometimes taking a small loss can pay off in customer loyalty.

**What is most important - a good product or friendly, fast service?**

When you are applying for a retail position a common job interview question is "What is most important - a good product or friendly, fast service?" Here are sample answers you can use to respond:

Both are extremely important. A good product is essential, but without the customer service to back it up, there is no reason for someone to buy it here as opposed to somewhere else or on line.

Fast, friendly service can make a bargain product that much more attractive to customers.

A superior product will speak for itself, and friendly, efficient customer service is what will set us apart from the competition.

**You are scheduled to leave at 6 pm. Your replacement worker doesn't show up. What would you do?**

When you are applying for a retail position a common job interview question is "What would you do if your replacement worker doesn't show up?" Here are sample answers you can use to respond:

I would call my supervisor to let her know, and would stay until I was sure the selling floor was covered.

I would try calling him to see when he would be coming in, and I would make arrangements to stay until he arrived.

If she was unable to make her shift, I would find a replacement, and stay until the replacement came in.

http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/retailquest.htm