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ATLAS Apple Technical Learning Administration System

Emily Nahmanson

Managing Customer Interactions

★★★★

Progress: ▌▌▌▌▌▌▌▌▌▌

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Managing Customer Interactions

Introduction

Course Description

The Managing Customer Interactions course teaches ways to partner with the customer and handle interactions in the supportive and sensitive manner that defines world class customer service. This benefits not only the customer but also the Technician whose job is made easier and more rewarding when a partnership is established.

Managing Customer Interactions is part 2 of two courses designed to help you provide an outstanding customer experience. Part 1, Customer Experience Skills, should be taken prior to beginning this course.

This course is part of the Apple Service Fundamentals curriculum and is used to prepare for the Apple Service Fundamentals Exam (SVC-16A).

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Managing Customer Interactions
Overview

Lesson Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Identify and validate strategies for setting realistic resolution expectations.
- Identify and validate strategies for educating customers.
- Identify and validate the customer engagement skills such as empathy, setting expectations, positioning a refusal of service and conflict resolution that will help you manage successful interactions.
- Properly position a repair, an upgrade or an attachment so that it is made clear that the recommendation directly helps to solve the customer's issue.
- Identify and practice appropriate communication skills for phone situations.

Audience	**Prerequisites**	**Time Required**	**You will need...**
Service Technicians	Customer Experience Skills course	60 minutes	The ability to play video clips

ℹ Your course is organized by chapters and pages. Chapters are sections you see on the side navigation. Pages are now found within a chapter. You can navigate pages by clicking the grey radio buttons at the bottom of a window.

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Managing Customer Interactions

Empathy

Customers want validation and respect, and they want you to see things from their perspective. Often in technical situations where expectations are high but understanding is low, people feel vulnerable and defensive. Nothing but empathy can immediately deflate a dissatisfied customer and act as a release valve in highly charged situations. Empathy is not a "nice-to-have," it is a "must-have" in building strong customer relationships.

As customer-satisfaction surveys tell us repeatedly, an accurate but unfriendly fix is not as highly valued as a supportive and empathetic no-fix. So, empathy is not just about being warm and fuzzy, it is also good business. The business impact of a lack of empathy is a lack of promoters. Who would recommend a bad attitude to someone else?

Empathy sounds like:

- "I'm sorry for the inconvenience."
- "I'd feel that way too."
- "I'm sorry to hear that."
- "I'm sorry that happened to you."
- "That must make you feel upset."
- "I appreciate how confusing this can be."
- "I realize this is time consuming."
- "I can appreciate why you're disappointed."

Empathy does NOT sound like sympathy, advice, pity, condescension, judgement or consolation. For example, it isn't:

Fixing it "What will help is…"
Advising "I think you should…"
Explaining "She said that only because…"
Consoling "It wasn't your fault."
Commiserating "He dropped your phone! What a jackass!"
Evaluating "If you hadn't been so rude…"
Sympathizing "Oh, you poor thing."
Overriding the Customer "You think that's bad? My experience was worse…listen to this…"
Storytelling "That reminds me of the time…"
Educating "You can learn from this."
Taking blame "I'm sorry, I should have…"
Assuming the other's perspective "I know how you feel"

When we show empathy, we accept the customer's feelings, ally ourselves with his or her point of view, and agree to help.

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Managing Customer Interactions

Appropriate Apologies

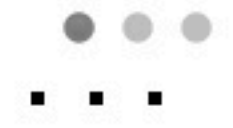If Something is Wrong, Apologize Appropriately.

Don't apologize for the business, the technology or your manager. You can be sorry the Customer feels frustrated or is having a difficult time.

Sounds like:

- I'm sorry you're feeling frustrated.
- I'm sorry you're having trouble with the software.
- Too bad about your soda spill accident.
- Sorry to hear you're under so much pressure.

Poor Example: "I'm sorry we're so slow, we're understaffed."
Better Example: "Sorry you've got such an aggressive deadline. I'll get this back to you as soon as I can."

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Educate Mistaken Customers

When the customer is mistaken, use the phrase "turns out" to correct the customer without blaming them or making them look foolish. For example, rather than say, "You're wrong, iPad with Retina display CAN take photos," say instead, "It turns out iPad with Retina display can take photos."

What Other "Correction" phrases are There. Click below to find out.

▸ "Correction" Phrases?

Sometimes the customer is mistaken or has bad information, for example:

Customer: I hear The iPad has a battery life of only 90 minutes! That's too short!

It's tempting to say, "Oh no, you're wrong! The battery life can extend to 8 hours..."

Even though this is good news, the customer tends to hear "no" and "wrong." These are stop words that can hijack your conversation.

A better way to phrase this would be, "It turns out (as it happens/in fact/the good news is) the battery life can extend to 8 hours..."
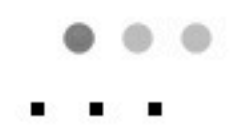
The phrase "turns out" or its alternatives stops you from being right and the customer from being wrong.

✅ **For Example...**

Customer: IBM stands for International Ballistic Machines, right?
Technician: Close! Turns out it stands for International Business Machines.

Customer: The OS isn't supported.
Technician: As it happens, it is supported in this version.

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Setting Expectations

A good way to avoid conflicted conversations is to set realistic expectations in the first place.

The definition of disappointment is expectations not met- so let's avoid disappointment and conflict by setting customer expectations properly. There's a way to do it that makes the customer a collaborator, not an adversary.

First, under-promise and over-deliver. Set generous margins in terms of time and effectiveness.

Second, use neutral, non-inflammatory language.
If you tell people their issue has an easy fix, or that of course you have the skills to fix it, or that Fed Ex never misses a deadline, you're setting yourself up.

Instead of saying: "You need a new hard drive. It's an easy fix. I can get the part FedEx'ed overnight and you should be ready to roll by lunch tomorrow"—

You might say: "You need a new hard drive. We don't have that part on hand, so it'll have to be ordered. It should be shipped overnight and the best estimate is that your Mac will be ready by the end of the day tomorrow, but it could be Wednesday. I'll call you as soon as I have a firm pick-up time."

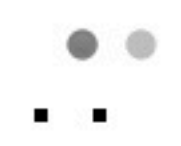If the hard drive is ready to go sooner than the estimate, you're a hero!

✅ By using conservative language you set expectations that can be met and that don't lead to disappointment. Some words to remember include:

  - **can, may, might, possible, likely, unlikely, maybe**

  Words and phrases to avoid are these:

  - **promise, on my honor, never fails, guaranteed, always, never**

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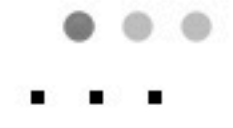Positioning a Refusal of Service

Even in the most customer service-oriented organizations, there are times when the customer's request is simply beyond the scope of service and the answer has to be no.

Sometimes customer issues involve misperceptions, for example, "Can I get an extra battery for this iPhone just in case the first one dies?" Sometimes customers are innocent victims of fraud - but the answer is still no.

• A No can be made even more irritating to customers when backed up by a refusal to offer any kind of help. Phrases like, "That's not my job" or "It doesn't work that way" make a very poor impression.

• When you must say no, tell the customer why and immediately offer "yes" options. Say what you CAN do.

• Always offer some assistance or a way forward for the customer, rather than simply shutting them down.

• When you must say no, tell the customer why and immediately offer "yes" options. Say what you CAN do.

What are some examples of positioning a refusal of service? Click below to find out.

▸ Refusal Examples

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Managing Customer Interactions

Recommending Upgrades/New Products

Recommending a product after or in place of a repair is often tricky because In a repair setting you run the risk of being seen as pushy, or even dishonest if you suggest upgrades or extra products as part of a solution.

Despite perceptions, a recommendation for a new product or upgrade or extra service is often best for the customer if the service goal is providing the best possible solution for the customer's needs

The key to having your suggestions accepted is positioning – that is, how you phrase your recommendation. Your approach to recommendations in a repair setting has to be empathetic, agreeable and supportive. A recommendation is your opportunity to help. If you see selling as a negative process, so will the customer.

Put yourself in the Customer's shoes: She came in because her Mac stopped working. She expected a quick fix - maybe a cost of 200 at most - so when you tell her the system is hopeless and she needs to start over with a new product that costs 1000, she's disappointed and often upset.

If you present the new solution as an opportunity, you take the focus off the cost and concentrate on enhanced performance, new features etc.
Setting expectations at check in very important. A recommendation should be part of the relationship, not a nasty shock.

If you know you're going to have to recommend new or upgraded products because the repair is complex or costly, let the Customer know as soon as possible.
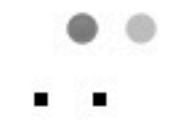
Sounds Like

- This could be a serious problem
- I'm not sure this can be repaired
- The fire damage is really extensive, this isn't looking hopeful
- Dropping the Mac in the bathtub was really unfortunate – generally this much water damage is irreparable
- This system is eleven years old now – it may have had its best days
- I'll do my best but this kind of system error is usually fatal

What are some good examples of positioning statements? Click below to find out.

› Good Positioning Statements

Click the dot on the right to go to the exercise on the next page.

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Positioning a Repair

Customers can sometimes become distressed and may challenge you when you tell them their device needs repair. There are several reasons:

- You may fail to meet their expectations - the Customer didn't anticipate a repair, he thought he'd simply get a new device.
- Customers may be reluctant to part with a device especially if they rely on it for key communications or work projects.
- Customers whose device is out of warranty may be reluctant to pay for a repair.

It's important to position a repair so the customer understands the issue and partners with you in finding a solution. The words you use matter. Words can be tools that help people understand, convey a message gently, give information clearly and calm volatile situations. A good repair recommendation always provides some way forward.

In poor recommendations, words can feel more like weapons when they're used to refuse, disrespect, or discourage a customer. These are often called "stop words".

The following video clips show how NOT to position a repair and some better alternatives!

▶ Play

Positioning a Repair

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Conflict Resolution Techniques

Even if you have good customer service skills and have followed the CES techniques faithfully, there are times when feelings run high and customers can become upset, angry, and frustrated. In the face of emotional behavior you should adopt a low-key approach.

Avoid stop words and inflammatory phrases such as:

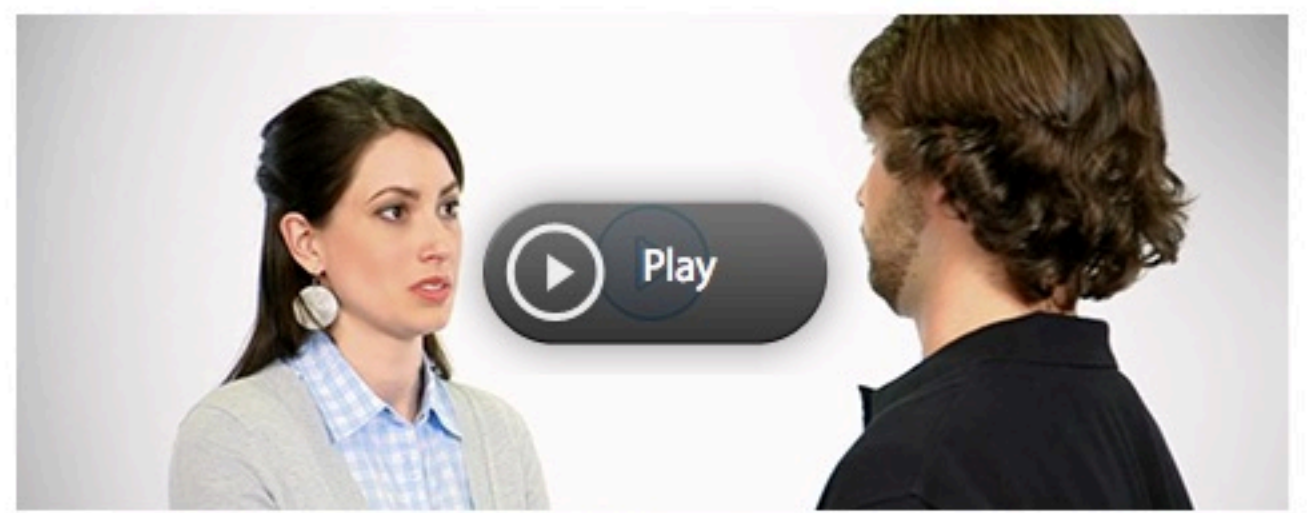|	
get a grip	calm down
no	not my job
can't	not authorised
won't	it doesn't work that way

Use a 5-step approach

1. Try to find a way to say, "You're right" and so endorse the customer.
2. Show genuine empathy
3. Stay calm
4. (If necessary) Describe how the specific behavior is affecting your ability to continue the conversation.
5. Propose an approach that refocuses the discussion.

For example: You're right, Mary; this is a serious issue. I'm sorry you're going to miss your deadline and I want to help, though I'm having trouble focusing when you shout. If tell you me what you were doing when your iPad shut down unexpectedly, I'll try to figure out what the issue is. OK? Thanks!

What are some good ways to say, you're right? Click below to find out.

▸ Good Ways to Say, "You're Right!"

Conflict Resolution

Click the center dot to go to the exercise on the next page.

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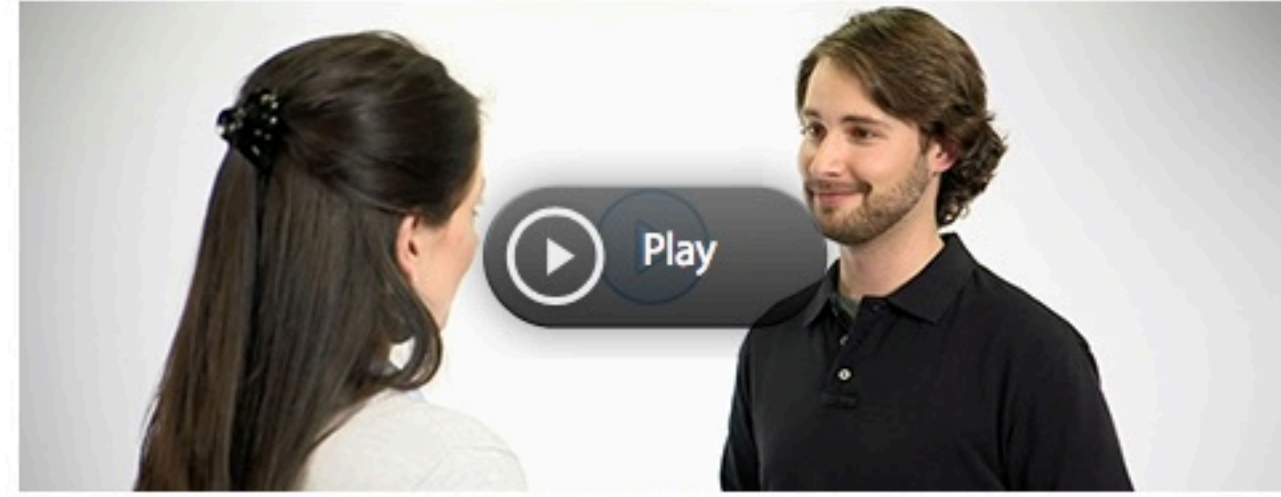| Managing Customer Interactions	
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The Fond Farewell

Build good customer relations and loyalty with a "Fond Farewell", i.e. a positive wrap-up and an invitation to return.

- Thank the customer for choosing your business.
- Try to customize the farewell with a detail about the issue.

For example: "Thanks for stopping by, Joe. Please come back if you have another iPad question or if there's anything else we can do for you."


The Fond Farewell

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Applying CES to Phone Conversations
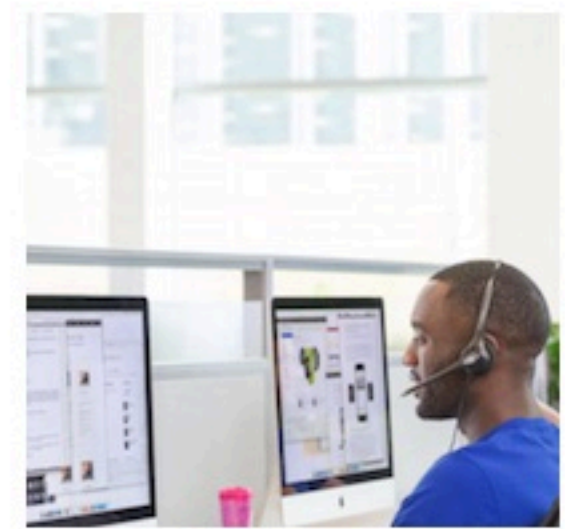
Phone conversations cut out the chance to understand through body language. This makes voice, tone and speed especially important. Click here to see the key skills needed for excellent telephone communications.

▸ **Key Skills**

These common assumptions act as barriers to listening and are to be avoided.

- You're right and the other person is wrong
- You have to provide help right away
- You prefer to talk rather than listen
- You're waiting for gaps or pauses to jump in with your response

> In this exercise you'll practical adjusting your rate of speech. Click the arrow below to find information about Apple's environmental policy. Practice reading the information until you can finish the passage in about 30 seconds. Give or take 5 seconds, across all cultures this is the ideal pace for effective listener comprehension.

▸ **Read Me in Less Than A Minute!**