

The Language Barrier

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Abstract

This critical incident describes a discrimination issue between an employee at a retail store and an angry customer. The incident illustrates the issue of language discrimination in the workplace. An employee did not understand what the customer needed because the customer was not clear with her request. Then, she began to ridicule the employee because English was not her primary language. The primary purpose of this critical incident is to learn basic undergraduate organizational behavior concepts to demonstrate the ways an individual can cope with language discrimination in the workplace.

Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Determine a response that will exercise emotional intelligence.
2. Evaluate situations in the workplace where language discrimination takes place.
3. Determine a model of self-management that could assist in coping with this issue.
4. Evaluate different ways to exercise stress-management strategies that will ease tensions in the workplace.

Application

This incident can primarily be used for illustrating how to handle discrimination in the workplace and is useful for management, organizational behavior, and sales courses. These courses can benefit from this critical incident because it demonstrates skills that individuals can use. This critical incident was developed for use in and was tested by students in an undergraduate Organizational Behavior class.

Key Words

self-management, discrimination, hostile work environment, English as a second language, immigrant issues, stress management

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