



Laboratory Management of a Quality System

Module 9: Customer Service





Learning Objectives

- Define the internal and external customers of the laboratory
- Define the expectations of patient and clinician customers
- Describe various customer service expectations for laboratory staff





Learning Objectives (Continued)



- Describe effective communications skills that are used with customers
- Explain how to handle an angry customer
- Describe the importance of treating your employees as customers





Today's Agenda

- **The Quality System**
- Who is a Customer?
- Customer Service Expectations
- Communication Skills
- The Angry Customer
- Internal Customer Relations
- Module Summary





The Quality System





The Laboratory Customer

- Quality patient care is the expectation of everyone who utilizes the services of the laboratory.
- The laboratory customer is not an interruption, he or she is why we exist.





Customer Service: Map To Success



- Define who your internal and external customers are
- Talk with customers to determine their needs, expectations, and desires
- Set customer service expectations
- Observe behavior; coach and counsel staff
- Train staff and management on customer service and customer expectations





Customer Service: Map To Success (Continued)



- Use process improvement to address service issues related to process
- Measure customer satisfaction (clinician and patient satisfaction surveys)
- Reward good customer service and celebrate successes





Any questions
so far?





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Who is a Customer?

- Anyone who receives products or services from a supplier of the products or services

So...

- An employee receives work from the boss so the employee is the boss's customer
- The ward receives lab results from the lab so the ward is the lab's customer
- The patient receives phlebotomy service from the phlebotomist so the patient is the phlebotomist's customer





Exercise - Who Are Your Customers?

- Describe 3 internal customers within the organization
- Describe 3 external customers from outside the organization





Who Are Your Customers?

- The 2 primary customers are the patient and the clinician because the patient is the focus of everything we do!
- But in reality, everyone but you is your customer!
 - Internal - clinician, nurses, lab staff, other hospital departments.
 - External - patients, families, suppliers





**What questions do
you have about
the customers of
your laboratory?**





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What Do Lab Customers Want?

- A high quality test result provided in a courteous and timely manner on a report that is readable and easy to interpret.





What Do Lab Customers Want?

(Continued)



- In addition, patients want lab professional:
 - Be informed and competent
 - Be well groomed and clean
 - Adhere to safety precautions
 - Be courteous, friendly, and calm
 - Ask good questions and listen to their concerns/feelings
 - Follow-up on promises made





Role Play Demonstration

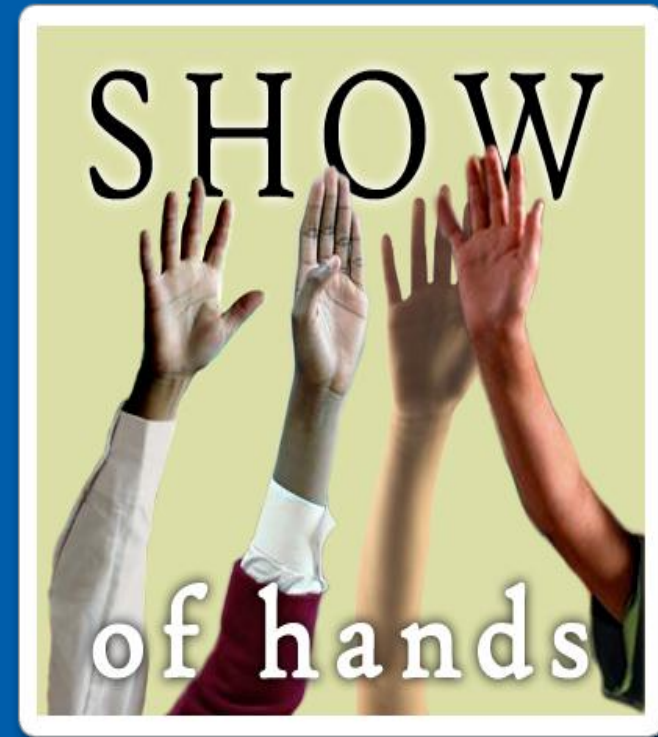
- Ms. Masanja comes in for her monthly laboratory tests.
- Theo the phlebotomist will be drawing her blood.





What did you observe during the role play?

What good customer service skills did you observe?





Customer Service Expectations

- It is critical to set customer service expectations for all staff and to hold staff accountable for the expectations
- Define customer service expectations; incorporate into job descriptions
- Supervisors and leaders must role model the behaviors they expect, or staff will not display them





**What did you observe during
the role play?**

**What good customer service
skills did you observe?**





Customer Service Expectations



(Continued)

- Train all staff members on customer service and expectations
- Coach and counsel staff to improve skill; assess customer service on performance appraisal





Examples of External Customer Service Expectations



- Puts patient and customer needs first in all daily activities by responding to customer needs before continuing with other routine work
- Listens with empathy and concern to a customer and identifies clearly the customer's needs
- Takes personal responsibility for correcting customer service problems





Examples of Internal Customer Service Expectations



- Uses common courtesies such as please, thank you, and excuse me
- Volunteers to assist coworkers without being asked
- Displays a helpful and caring attitude in each interaction with coworkers
- Treats all individuals with respect and kindness





Role Play Exercise

- Nurse Ocheng comes into the lab to check on the test result of a specimen.
- Joel, the technician, is working on other tests





What did you observe during the role play?

What good customer service skills did you observe?





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Customer Communication

- Raise the level of customer service excellence through the use of excellent customer communication
 - Make your customers feel important and appreciated
 - Remain calm in the most demanding situations
 - Transform complaints into valuable customer feedback
 - Become a master in the art of listening
 - Be successful with the most difficult people





Customer Communications



- Good oral communications skills
 - Speak clearly; provide to-the-point instructions
 - Maintain eye contact
 - Explain procedures clearly
 - Exhibit confidence
 - Answer questions completely but if you do not know, say so and state you will find out and get back to them





Customer Communications

(Continued)



- Empathic listening:
 - Listen for facts
 - Let them complete sentences without interruption
 - Restate what you think they said
 - Listen for feelings
 - Listen with non-verbals like nodding, leaning forward
 - Listen for non-verbals - what is not said





Role Play Exercise

- Michele the technologist receives a specimen that is not labelled according to the lab's criteria for acceptability.
- She needs to communicate the situation to the nurse who collected the specimen





How did your role play go?
What did you do really well?
How could you improve?





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Ways to Make Customers Angry

- Tell them “It is just our policy”
- Make them wait while you chat or complete routine work
- Never have lab reports ready on time
- Losing specimens
- Don’t deliver on what you promise
- Tell them something that is not true/correct
- Violate their privacy
- Tell them “I am too busy” or “We are short-staffed”

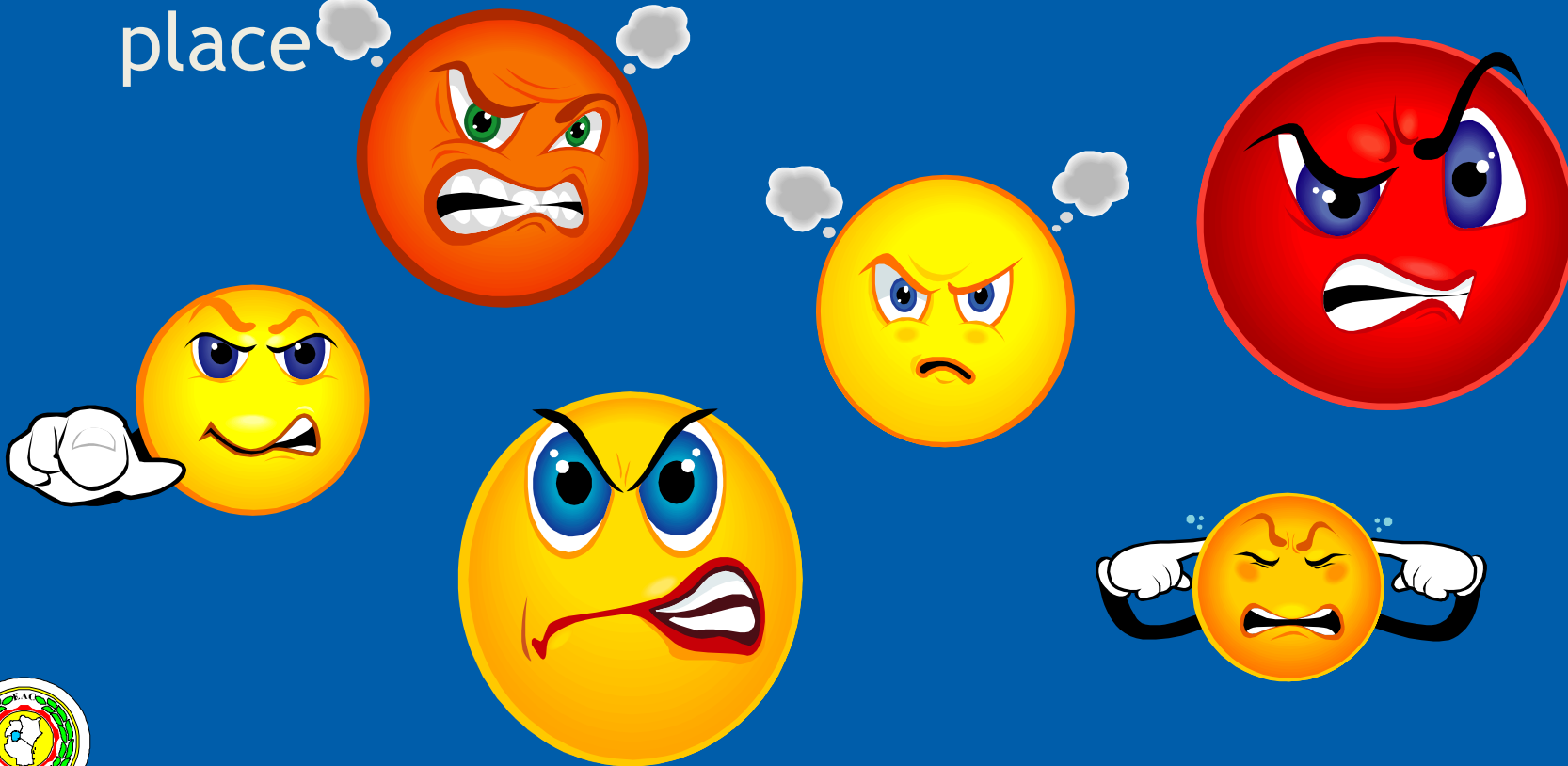




So.....



- Don't do or say anything that would cause the customer to become angry in the first place





Mission of Good Customer Service



- Turn an unhappy customer



- Into a happy customer





Managing the Angry Customer

- Take them into private area
- Remain calm and do not take it personally
- Do not interrupt while he/she vents
- Listen carefully for the real complaint
- Provide a blameless apology “I am sorry you had that experience”
- State “What can I do to help you?”





Managing the Angry Customer

(Continued)



- Show empathy and concern
- Propose solutions; resolve the problem if you can or refer to a supervisor
- Perceive all complaints as positive - as opportunities to improve service
 - Remember to document the occurrence (occurrence report form in Module 7)





Role Play Exercise

- Doctor Juma comes to the laboratory very upset that the results of the HIV test performed on his patient were incorrect.
- How will you communicate with him?
- What steps will you take to resolve the problem?





How did your role play go?
What did you do really well?
How could you improve?





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Employees as Customers

- Happy employees make patients and other customers happy!
- Be sensitive and address employee concerns and needs
- Provide a positive work environment for employees - the job of management





Reward and Recognition

- You promote behaviors that you recognize
- Develop strategies for recognition of good customer service behaviors
- Recognition is not expensive - often a simple thank you is enough
- Formal customer service recognition





Group Work: Service Recognition



- Work in pairs and discuss ways you could recognize good service behaviors in your lab.





What questions do you have about internal customer relations and ways to reinforce exceptional customer service?





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Summary: Map To Success

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Summary: Measuring Your Success



- Ask your customers how you are doing
- Invite customer comments and complaints (complaint, suggestion box)
- Survey key clinician customers
- Assess patient satisfaction with phlebotomy service
- Assess employee satisfaction





Thank you

