G.R.E.A.T. Customer Engagement
Course 1: Personalized Service & First Impressions

A Training Series for Supermarket Deli, Bakery, and Cheese Department Associates
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Bakery, and Cheese Department Associates

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First Edition

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

This series will help supermarket deli, bakery, and cheese department associates and managers learn how to personalize the customer service experience. You’ll learn the importance of really listening to your customers, finding out what their needs are, and being their guide — an advocate — for the products you sell every day.

Customers choose to shop where the service stands out: where they trust the products and feel valued. Shopping is an emotional experience. Customer satisfaction increases when you create a positive emotional response with every customer, every time they shop. This high level of engagement gives your store a sense of community where people will enjoy shopping. And it always rewards your store, your department, your customers, and YOU.

This series has three courses and a final quiz:

- Course 1: Personalized Service & First Impressions
- Course 2: Great Expectations of You
- Course 3: Handling Multiple and Upset Customers
- Final Quiz

Course 1: Personalized Service & First Impressions

This section explains what personalized service is and how it influences customer loyalty. You’ll learn how to offer superior service to give your business a competitive edge. And, these new skills will give you a sense of accomplishment that motivates you to give your personal best every day on the job. You will learn:

- What personalized service is
- Why personalized service is an asset to your business

What You’ll Learn:

- What personalized service is and how it can increase customer satisfaction
- Customers’ most important reasons for buying service department products
- What suggestive selling is and how to use it when offering meal solutions
- How to improve customer engagement using the G.R.E.A.T. approach
- The C.A.L.M. way to handle customer problems tactfully
You’ll also learn the value of a good first impression and what impresses customers in service departments:

- Department cleanliness
- Availability of fresh, high-quality products
- Winning employee ways
- Appealing products and displays

**Course 2: Great Expectations of You**

Customers have great expectations of you. They trust you’ll put together their order with the utmost care, accuracy, and speed. They expect a cheerful, friendly attitude and product advocacy that’s second to none. This establishes trust and ensures new business. You’ll see how simple and engaging it is to meet and surpass customers’ expectations when you:

- **G**reet
- **R**ecognize needs
- **E**xplore preferences
- **A**dvocate products
- **T**hank the customer

**Course 3: Handling Multiple and Upset Customers**

You’ll face some challenges working in service departments. In this section, you’ll learn how to effectively handle more specific customer situations including:

- Handling multiple customers
- Using the C.A.L.M. way when a customer is upset

*G.R.E.A.T. Customer Engagement* includes this series of three courses, a Final Quiz, A Final Quiz Answer Key, and an Associate Tracking Tool.
As you work through this series, you’ll find:

- Exercises
- Answer Keys
- Links to FREE
  IDDBA Job
  Guides at
  IDDBA’s Web site

How To Get The Best Results

Our *G.R.E.A.T. Customer Engagement* training course is a workbook series. To get the full instructional benefit, we recommend that you take this series in two sessions: Course 1 in one session and Courses 2 & 3 and the Final Quiz in a second session. All three courses should take a total of about two hours. However, you or your supervisor can customize this based on your available training time, what works best for you, and the needs of your business.

**IDDBA Job Guides for Department Associates**

Use our free, downloadable *IDDBA Job Guides* as part of your training experience. Print them from iddba.org/jobguides.aspx and use them as helpful guides as you work.

**Progress Report**

Use this Progress Record to keep track of your course and quiz completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Job Guides Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course 1: Personalized Service &amp; First Impressions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Safety: FIFO Product Rotation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Food Safety: Proper Cooking, Holding, &amp; Reheating</td>
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<td>Food Safety: How to Wash Hands</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Food Safety: When to Wash Hands</td>
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<td>Customer Service: Body Language</td>
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<td>Department Success: Sign Management and Effective Communication</td>
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<td>Customer Service: Building Sales</td>
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<td>Customer Service: Building Customer Loyalty</td>
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<td>Course 3: Handling Multiple and Upset Customers</td>
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<td>Customer Service: Dealing with Upset Customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Quiz</td>
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</table>
What is Personalized Service?

Personalized service leaves customers feeling that they received “something extra” — something done especially for them. Sometimes it’s tasting a new product, learning something new, receiving an unexpected level of assistance, or service that meets their most immediate needs. When you listen to customers’ needs and respond appropriately, you establish trust on a very personal level. Personalization brings sincerity to the sale and differentiates the experience. Customers who feel they’ve been heard will reward you with sales and repeat visits.

Personalized service is not a “one size fits all.” It means different things to different customers. It’s important to listen and to learn how to treat customers as they want to be treated.

Personalized Service is an Asset

To My Customers

Your customers look to the service deli, bakery, and cheese departments for more than just fresh, high-quality foods. Some days they’ll want a memorable shopping experience, some days they’ll want to just get in and get out, and some days they’ll want to linger in your department, sharing conversation with you about new meal ideas and tasting new foods. On different shopping occasions they’ll want different levels of service. Your ability to connect with customers is essential to building a successful, long-standing relationship.

What You’ll Learn:

- What personalized service is
- Why personalized service is an asset to your business
- What influences customers’ positive impressions of service departments
- Cleanliness practices that keep your department’s products and customers safe
- Winning employee ways that improve sales

72% of customers cited the shopping experience as the biggest driver for encouraging greater spending; 85% would be willing to pay 25% more for a superior customer experience.

– Achieve Global 2011 Study
To My Department

When you treat customers as your most important asset, they’ll shop with you. *Service is a total package.* It’s your department. It’s your products. It’s you and the department team. It’s your store. It’s a total shopping experience. Understand why customers choose you. How do customers define the “something extra” elements of your business? Is your department recognized for outstanding cleanliness or “top-notch” customer service? What do you do to really differentiate the shopping experience for your customers? Talk to your manager about this. On average, about 20% of supermarket customers visit and shop in-store bakeries and delis. Supermarket bakeries, on average, generate 3% and delis 5% of store sales. So there’s lots of growth potential!

To My Store

Customers will choose to shop where the service stands out — where they trust the products and feel valued. *Shopping is an emotional experience.* Every purchase is filled with emotion. Your goal is to create a positive emotional response with every customer every time they shop. Without this, you’re opening up the door to losing their patronage. There are lots of stores to shop today: other supermarkets, supercenters, warehouse clubs, convenience stores, natural food stores, drug stores, and dollar stores, to name a few. Restaurants take their fair share, too. Almost 50% of food purchased away from home is eaten at restaurants. The other 50% is spent on food to be eaten at home. Competition is fierce.

Friendly, personalized service and a tasty lineup of fresh-made meal solutions really sets the tone for your company.

To Me

Service at its finest is when you step into your customers’ shoes and treat them as they would expect to be treated. This high engagement shows incredible commitment to your customers and your company. Know your department, its products, and your shoppers. Work toward individual and team goals. Be engaged. Customers see it and appreciate it. This shows your boss that you are committed to your company, not just involved. And, you walk away from customer experiences feeling personally uplifted because you’ve pleased your customers and found meaning in your work.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
– Maya Angelou

“Are you fully committed to your company or are you just involved?”
First Impressions

Customers’ impressions start to form within seconds of entering your department. What engages their senses?

**Department cleanliness** — Customers want to shop in a clean environment where they know that proper sanitation, safety procedures, and personal hygiene are top priority for all staff.

**Availability of fresh, high-quality products** — Many stores sell fresh, high-quality products so your consistent, strict use of standards like First-In/First-Out (FIFO) rotation, proper time and temperature, and control of cross contamination assures shoppers of your seriousness about quality and food safety.

**Your winning personal presence** — A winning personal presence exudes good personal hygiene, a friendly attitude, helpful knowledge, positive body language, and speedy service. Winning personal presence includes awareness of your surroundings. Be alert and acknowledge customers who enter the department.

**Appealing products and displays** — You’re attracted to products that are appealing, well-merchandised, and well-communicated, right? Ignite all human senses with your merchandising.

You know from your own experience as a customer that some kinds of service are better than others. You probably rate service depending on how much it *stands out* in your mind. Customers today have high standards. To most people, an average shopping trip is one where there are no problems — with the department, with the products, or with the staff. But an exceptional shopping trip always offers *more than the customer expects*. This level of service is a total store concept — of freshness, high-quality products, and attentive, delightful service — and always lets customers know they are important and valued.

What more than meets customer expectations in your store? Find out in this exercise as you step into your customers’ shoes and see your store, your department, and your service as they do.
Exercise 1: Impressions Your Business Makes

Directions: Do a walk-through of your store and look at what the customer sees. Begin in the parking lot and end in your department using the checklist to note your impressions. Think about how your thoughts probably match your customers! All these observations contribute to an overall freshness and business image of the store and your department. After you complete this exercise, discuss your responses with your department manager, supervisor, or with the group, if you’re doing the training with a group of employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECKLIST ITEMS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Store Appearance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Exterior of store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Parking lot is clean, inviting, and safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Lighting is sufficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Fresh events like outdoor markets or food demos are featured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Signs (marquee, window signs, etc.) are accurate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Lighted signs work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Building exterior is maintained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Lampposts look good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Parking is clearly marked and painted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Windows are clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Carts aren’t scattered throughout parking lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Interior of store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Aisles are clear of debris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Floors are mopped and dry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Store entrance/cart corrals clean and organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Restrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Area is clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Supplies (toilet paper, soap, towels) are adequate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Baby changing station is available and clean in both the women’s and men’s restrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHECKLIST ITEMS</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Appearance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ General appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Floors and equipment are clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Glass on cases and fixtures is clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ There are no flies or bugs in service cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ There are no spills or drips in service cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Supply dispensers (napkins, bags, etc.) are filled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Associate appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Associates have clean personal appearances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Hair is restrained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Uniforms/aprons are clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Gloves are used according to food safety guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Jewelry and watches have been removed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Associates are wearing name tags</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Food displays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ FIFO stock rotation is being executed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Items are code dated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Case thermometers at proper temperatures are used to maintain the quality and safety of food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Products look fresh, appealing, and well garnished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Associates talk about freshness during conversations with customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Signs and product information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Signs and packaging clearly indicate when a product was made</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Signs and packaging indicate special dietary features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Signs are clean, nicely lettered, show accurate price per pound or serving, and describe products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ &quot;Back of house&quot; signs (i.e., “Hairnet Area” or “Handwashing Guidelines”) are visible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Appealing packaging and displays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Regular PA announcements convey freshness messages to customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Live product preparation is visible to customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Active and passive sampling stations are clean and well stocked with fresh product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Food demonstrations are conducted to expose customers to new, fresh items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Product prep areas look inviting and are well maintained</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Department Cleanliness

Shoppers rate *cleanliness* as the most important factor when deciding which supermarket to shop. As a deli, bakery or cheese associate, your daily responsibilities include:

**Cleaning and sanitizing** — Make sure floors, cases, fixtures, and equipment are cleaned and sanitized.

**Department maintenance** — Check for damaged or malfunctioning display units, broken or missing floor tiles, or lights out, and report them to management.

**Reporting unpleasant odors** — Be aware of any unpleasant odors (such as cleaning products or garbage) and deal with it according to store guidelines.
Availability of Fresh, High-Quality Products

A close second to cleanliness is selling *fresh* products. Customers judge the quality of deli and bakery foods and cheeses by how fresh they look and taste. Every day you’ll:

- **Do First-In, First-Out (FIFO) product rotation** — Product rotation protects product quality and freshness. Rotate products so the first products received or prepared (IN) are the first products sold (OUT). FIFO helps ensure customer satisfaction.

- **Keep food safe** — To keep food safe, it must be kept out of the Danger Zone, 41°F – 135°F (5°C – 57°C).

Your **Winning Personal Presence**

Remember, before one word is spoken, your customers begin to form their impressions of you and the department team. Winning employee ways — good personal hygiene, a friendly attitude, helpful knowledge, positive body language, and speedy service — encourage sales. Every day you must be vigilant about:

- **Your hygiene** — It’s your first step to good health. And, as a food handler, proper cleanliness practices help keep your department’s products and customers safer when you:
  
  - maintain clean hands and fingernails
  - wear gloves according to store guidelines
  - keep hair clean and restrained
  - wear no jewelry when handling food
• wear a clean apron daily and change it as necessary between handling raw and cooked foods and emptying the garbage

• make sure your clothes are clean and presentable.

• **Being pleasant and friendly when serving customers** — Next to cleanliness and freshness, friendly service is most important to customers in fresh departments. Acknowledge customers within a few seconds of their arrival in your department, and never continue a conversation with a coworker when customers are present. A spotless department with high-quality, fresh food may bring shoppers into your department. However, without friendly, helpful service, they won’t return.

• **Offering helpful information to customers about the products you sell** — In a service department, helpfulness is as much a part of providing good service as is friendliness. It is your ability to work well with people that cements your customers’ loyalty.

• **Being fast when serving customers** — To most shoppers, how fast you wait on customers is not as important as the kind of service you give. Because the deli and bakery are service departments, many customers want to spend time talking with you about the products. They expect more time and attention than in other parts of the store. The only exception is when the department is swamped with customers. In those instances, you can be most helpful to customers by giving them fast service.

In Course 2, we’ll discuss four common types of customers you’ll encounter and ways you can respond to their needs.

• **Expressing positive body language** — Body language is the nonverbal cues that we give others without speaking — gestures, body movements, and facial expressions, posture, etc. Research shows that it takes just one-tenth of a second, literally the blink of an eye, for a person to gather an impression of you. It takes just a bit longer for people to decide if they consider you likeable.

Positive body language includes:

• smiling

• maintaining good posture

• facing customers directly with your feet and shoulders toward them

• maintaining eye contact.
Body language is gestures, movements, facial expressions, and other non-verbal behaviors that reflect your attitude. As much as 90% of every conversation is interpreted through body language. Here’s how to convey a feeling of approachability, trustworthiness, and confidence to every customer.

**Make eye contact.** It makes the customer feel respected and valued.

**Good posture** — straight spine, raised chin and chest — shows energy, confidence, and approachability.

**Direct with an open hand.** It’s more inviting and polite than pointing. Engage in conversation with upward-facing palms and uncrossed arms.

**Nod affirmatively** during a conversation to show that you understand what the customer is saying. If you don’t understand, ask questions after the customer is done speaking.

**Face customers directly** with your feet and shoulders toward them. Good posture portrays confidence.

**Smile genuinely** to convey warmth. A genuine smile includes your eyes and the rest of your face, not just your mouth.

**Acknowledge waiting customers.** Smile and make eye contact with customers who enter your department, even when you are helping another customer.

**Just be yourself.** Relax. Steep your hands together in a prayer position at chest level to show confidence.

**Leaning forward with a slight head tilt** shows interest.
Appealing Products and Displays

You want products to appeal to and win over customers. Attractive packaging and displays and product sampling are two ways to engage shoppers. As a bakery, deli, or cheese associate, you play a key role in:

- **Packaging and displaying products attractively** — Follow guidelines for using the right sized packaging and attractively label all items. Stock shelves and cases based on the plan-o-grams or directions provided.

- **Maintaining inventory levels** — Keeping displays full and neat and making sure products are properly signed increases the likelihood that customers will notice your products. Pay particular attention to popular, fast-turning items and items on special.

- **Code-dating and rotating stock** — Use the First In-First Out rotation practice (discussed previously).
Following stocking procedures — To do the best stocking job, learn the location of every product in your showcases and on your sales floor so you can help your customers find items and stock products in the correct locations. Some departments reposition each week. Stay alert to floor display changes. Always arrange products for the best visual appeal.

Making sure products are properly signed — Work with your team to make sure all department items are properly priced and signed.
Review of Course 1

Directions: Answer the questions below by filling in the blank with the appropriate word or words.

- needs and responding appropriately
- secrets
- treat them as they would expect to be treated
- total package
- something extra
- listen

1. Personalized service leaves customers feeling that they received __________________—— something done especially for them.

2. When you __________________—— to customers’ needs and respond appropriately it establishes trust on a very personal level.

3. Service at its finest is when you step into your customers’ shoes and __________________——.

4. Service is a __________________——. It’s your department. It’s your products. It’s you and the department team. It’s the total shopping experience.

Pick the best answer to the questions about the bakery and deli departments from the choices below:

5. Almost 50% of food purchased away-from-home is eaten at restaurants. The other 50% is spent on:
   a. Movies and entertainment
   b. Food to be eaten at home
   c. Laundry and dry cleaning
   d. Gasoline and oil changes

6. Which percent of customers visit in-store bakeries and delis?
   a. 85%
   b. 45%
   c. 20%
   d. 16%

7. Bakery and Deli department sales account on average for what percent of overall supermarket sales?
   a. 16.5% and 18%
   b. 7% and 9%
   c. 4.8% and 6%
   d. 3% and 5%
Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences below.

- product sampling
- First-In, First-Out (FIFO)
- maintaining eye contact
- body language
- winning
- cleanliness
- facing customers
- safer
- attitude
- more than the customer expects
- attractive packaging and displays
- smiling
- maintaining good posture

8. An exceptional shopping trip always offers _______________________.

9. Shoppers rate ______________________ as the most important factor when deciding where to shop.

10. ______________________ product rotation protects product quality and freshness.

11. ______________________ and ______________________ are two ways to engage shoppers.

12. ______________________ ways — good personal hygiene, helpful knowledge, and a friendly attitude — will make or break sales.

13. As a food handler, proper cleanliness practices help keep your department’s products and customers _______________________.

14. Positive body language includes ______________________, ______________________, and ______________________.

15. ______________________ is gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors that reflect your _______________________.

Answer Key page 1.18
Review of Course 1

**Answer Key**

1. Personalized service leaves customers feeling that they received *something extra* — something done especially for them.

2. When you *listen* to customers’ needs and respond appropriately it establishes trust on a very personal level.

3. Service at its finest is when you step into your customers’ shoes and *treat them as they would expect to be treated*.

4. Service is a *total package*. It’s your department. It’s your products. It’s you and the department team. It’s the total shopping experience.

5. Almost 50% of food purchased away-from-home is eaten at foodservice establishments. The other 50% is spent on:
   - b. Food to be eaten at home

6. Which percent of customers visit in-store bakeries and delis?
   - c. 20%

7. Bakery and Deli department sales account on average for what percent of overall supermarket sales?
   - d. 3% and 5%

8. An exceptional shopping trip always offers *more than the customer expects*.

9. Shoppers rate *cleanliness* as the most important factor when deciding where to shop.

10. *First-In, First-Out (FIFO)* product rotation protects product quality and freshness.

11. *Attractive packaging and displays* and *product sampling* are two ways to engage shoppers.
12. Winning ways — good personal hygiene, helpful knowledge, and a friendly attitude — will make or break sales.

13. As a food handler, proper cleanliness practices help keep your department's products and customers safer.

14. Positive body language includes smiling, maintaining good posture, facing customers, and maintaining eye contact.

15. Body language is gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors that reflect your attitude.
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