

The Customer is King, or so they used to be!

Competition for the Client is greater than ever before on the Channel Islands so Client Relationships are Key.

With Jersey and Guernsey being a financial hub and host to many financial services trust companies and banks it is fair to assume the staffs people's skills need to be second to none.

With so much restricted competition on the island client relationships to all businesses are of paramount importance.

Mark Shields Explains.

There are a number of interpersonal skills that will be fundamental to your success when dealing with clients at all levels and I begin today by introducing you to in my opinion the most important of all of these skills.

Just to remind you recent research suggests people continue to buy people and the basic dynamics of a normal business relationship hasn't changed.

What has changed and is constantly flagged is the amount of customer service we are getting at the moment, or should I say lack of it.

What happened with that old saying the customer is always right? I think that disappeared ten years ago and sadly no one cares very much for the customer any more if at all.

Having said that I am a huge believer when all is failing around you somehow somewhere there is an opportunity awaiting to be discovered.

It would have to start in my opinion with an unprecedented customer care policy never before seen on the Channel Islands. Just think how many new clients you would potentially attract. Scary isn't it.

This in my opinion drives the need for real and meaningful training when it comes to interpersonal skills if you want to get one step ahead of the competition.

These skills have a proven track record in helping managers and staff not only dramatically improve the performance of their business but also assist with their own levels of confidence and motivation as well.

The Top Three Skills to Enhance Client Service and Sales Skills

1. The Art of Building Rapport

Rapport is the ability to join someone at their 'reality' or 'map of the world' and to make them feel comfortable, that you have a strong common bond and that you understand them. These are the things that put people at ease, make them more responsive to you, let down their guard and trust, like and befriend you.

Essentially rapport is the most important skill that you can develop when dealing with customers and for that matter in your everyday life.

Rapport is the ability to communicate successfully. Rapport is the ability make someone understand that you can fulfill their needs as well as allowing you to get the insights that you need from them to fulfill your own.

The saying goes 'people like people who are like themselves'. The old cliché of 'opposites attract' is actually just a misunderstanding of the depth and subtlety that rapport goes to. When 'opposites attract' it must be that the so called opposites both have the commonality of being excited by the new and different, the sense of specialness and uniqueness of being 'opposites', in fact you will inevitably see in so called 'opposites' that the underlying similarities, value systems etc will be very alike.

How is rapport created? First and foremost by finding things in common.

The most effective ways of doing this are by mirroring and matching - two concepts that originated in NLP.

Mirroring and matching are essentially the ability to pay close attention to someone's language, beliefs, values and physiology and copy them either overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously.

7% of communication is transmitted through the words themselves.

38% via how the words are said (tone of voice).

55% through nonverbal -unconscious communication (body language).

2. What is Mirroring & Matching

Mirroring is essentially copying without causing offense and without being obvious, essentially reflecting back the physical patterns of behavior. Matching is almost identical as a concept but normally includes the person's personal perception, language, beliefs etc as well as the physical mannerisms.

Matching enables a high degree of control and influence over the individual that you are matching, in that it can make them feel totally at ease and fully responsive to what you have to say. This happens every day in our lives anyway.

3. Pacing and Leading

Once rapport is created we then use it to 'pace and lead' the client in the direction that we want (what is most beneficial to them). It is also a barometer to let us know when rapport has been broken. Pacing and leading is the process in which we pace (continually match) the client and lead them to more resourceful, constructive and beneficial states, behaviors and beliefs etc.

Summary

In my opinion building effective and meaningful rapport is the most important skill you can master when working in the sales and service industry. It will help you in all areas of your practice. NLP skills are excellent for learning how to improve client relationships through building better rapport and developing stronger and more meaningful client relationships.

Article written by Mark Shields, CEO Life Practice Group
www.lifepractice.co.uk
Head Office Tel: Direct Line 01462 431112

