Why is emotional intelligence important in customer service?

Emotional intelligence helps us deliver great customer experiences. Let me tell you why.

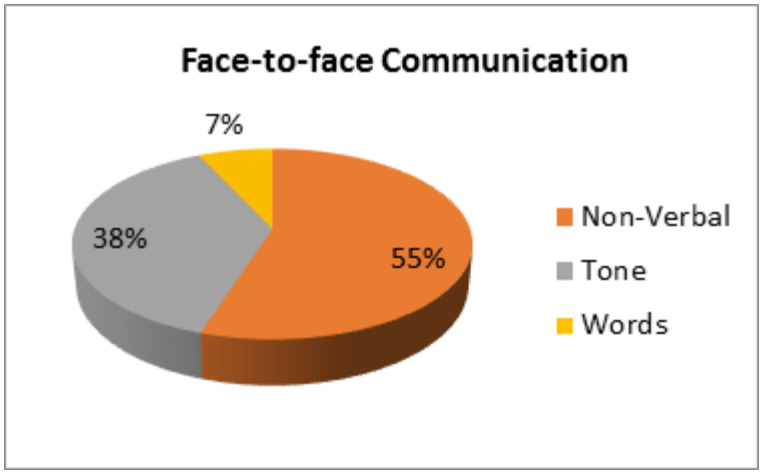
We all remember the major communication skills we learned about in ONE Centennial Service Training such as verbal, non-verbal, tone of voice, and listening. We also discussed steps for handling customer complaints. Yet, despite the training people still struggle dealing with customers who are angry or very frustrated which makes sense because most people typically tend to avoid conflict. By avoiding our own emotions we may be obstructing our ability to effectively handle difficult customers.

Emotional intelligence helps us recognize emotions in both ourselves and others and ultimately improve customer service.

Combing these skills with the traditional tools taught on how to manage complaints will enable us to improve and deliver the best customer experience.

Here are six strategies to improve your emotional intelligence:

1. **Monitor your emotions on a daily basis** – Be more aware of your emotions by identifying them and understanding why they are present.
2. **Improve social perception** – Body language, or non-verbal's, represent 55% of our communication (55% non-verbal, 38% tone, and 7% words), so changing your body language and being more sensitive to others will help create communication that better reflects your intentions.



3. **Empathize** – Empathy is about trying to understand why someone feels or behaves in a certain way, and people know genuine empathy when they *feel* it. So, do your best to see the world through the eyes of the other person.
4. **Respond rather than react** – Make a conscious choice to respond rather than react. Reacting is when we unconsciously experience an emotional trigger and our behavior reflects our emotion.

While, responding allows us to notice how we feel and consciously choose the best way to respond.

5. **Smile more often** – University studies have shown that smiling releases endorphins that make us feel less stressed and more relaxed. Also, smiling is contagious, so sharing a smile encourages others to smile back and also feel less stressed.
6. **Sharpen your social skills** – The purpose of human interaction is to connect, and we can't avoid being around others at work. So, make the most of every interaction by listening, having meaningful and engaging conversations, collaborating and being courteous.

Use these strategies to help increase your emotion intelligence, and hopefully you will receive the desired outcome.

Thanks for everything you do to make service at Centennial great for our customers!