

# New approach to customer service

Good customer service means repeat business – the easiest kind of business to get – and yet organisations are finding there's much more to this than simply answering the phone in three rings or always using the customer's name.

Customers are more sophisticated, complex and demanding than ever before and much less likely to accept second best. They have an unparalleled range of choices and will quickly look elsewhere if not satisfied first time.

With these factors in mind **kmp Training** has devised a

new approach to customer service based on understanding and acknowledging customers as individuals. Using their interpersonal skills training and experience, **Karen** and **Martin Price** lead delegates through a carefully constructed programme of structured learning, exercises and discussions which equip them with a better understanding of their internal and external customers. Programmes are flexible and can be tailored to the individual needs of any organisation.

## Delighted with their results - the Government News Network

The London region of the Government News Network asked kmp Training to help improve customer service and director Emma Thwaites was delighted with the results.

"We had already done some work on a client service charter and the kmp programme helped us focus on what was really important," she said.

The twelve information officers who attended the programme worked on the interpersonal skills necessary for excellent client service, and looked at the quality of current client service.

During a second session they considered the effectiveness of their team, beliefs and values, dealing with conflict and setting standards. The team left with a comprehensive action plan.

The success of the programme led to a decision to roll it out across the other eight regional offices of the Government News Network.

## Skills which make all the difference

A typical programme focuses on the key interpersonal skills needed in dealing with internal and external customers.

These are combined with best practice to help delegates build the confidence to become proactive with their customers.

- Importance of excellent service
- Communicating effectively with customers
- Key interpersonal skills
- Assertiveness and other behaviours
- Four cornerstones of assertiveness
- Importance of beliefs about ourselves and others
- Dealing with "difficult" customers
- Handling anger and resolving conflict
- Building rapport
- Creating a positive image
- Clear outcomes
- Setting performance standards
- Practical exercise and group discussions

# A real passion for people skills



Ten years at senior management level in a major publishing plc, have given kmp partners Karen and Martin Price a strong belief in the importance of customer service.

As managing director of four different businesses during his career, Martin developed his own leadership skills in a demanding and highly competitive commercial environment.

Karen took control of management training for the whole division after a successful career as a finance director. She was responsible for designing training and managing the delivery of programmes to develop more than 300 managers.



## Flexible approach to individual needs

The kmp customer service programmes are always adapted to meet the specific needs of our clients, whether in the public or private sectors.

We work hard to understand the different issues - commercial and cultural - in the organisations for which we provide training.

For maximum benefit we recommend a two day programme but this can be split into single days with a short interval between if necessary.

If time is a crucial issue, the training can be delivered as a series of short sessions - usually half days - over a longer period of time.

However the training is delivered, maximum benefit is achieved if a thorough post-course follow-up is implemented. Sessions between delegates and their managers, reviewing the learning points and action plans are essential to the process.

Making a difference is at the heart of our training values. Delegates are asked for personal objectives at the start of the programme and will be expected to take away a set of action plans.

The programme is highly participative and practical, combining the workplace experiences of the delegates with the theory of the subject.

## A WIDE RANGE OF CLIENTS

A number of very different organisations have benefited from kmp's customer service programmes:

### Darlington College:

- Two day programme for all customer facing staff
- Half day briefings for teaching staff
- Half-day advanced sessions for customer service staff

### Yorkshire Coast College, Scarborough:

- One day programmes for customer service staff

### Central Office of Information:

- Two day programme for staff from a variety of departments

### TLM Trading (Trading arm of The Leprosy Mission):

- Two day programme for customer facing staff

## College sees real benefits

When Bradford College wanted to improve customer service skills of its Leaner Service staff, the college turned to kmp.

The brief was to run two two-day programmes for groups of up to ten staff from reception, admissions, financial support and other teams, with a one day follow-up session.

Deputy Director of Learner Services Nick Byrne was clear he wanted staff to improve their skills to cope better with the demand of students, parents and other departments.

He wasn't disappointed as delegates returned to work enthusing about what they had learned.

"The feedback was the best I've ever seen from my staff and is beginning to bring real benefits," he said.

His next step was to book more sessions to cover other areas .

Typical comments from the Bradford College staff who attended were:

"Both trainers were really impressive and responded well to questions.

The rapport between the group and trainers was excellent"

"This course was really worthwhile and I have learnt valuable skills which I will use at work."

"Excellent. Both listened and gave us time to take in the training."

Asked what they would do differently, they all mentioned being more understanding of different communication styles and more self aware.

The importance of good relationships with other staff, as well as customers, also made a big impression on delegates.

Go to [www.kmptraining.co.uk](http://www.kmptraining.co.uk) for more information on all our programmes