



# THE GOLD STANDARD OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS

---

## Activities

We present five activities below that can be used during your Gold Standard workshop. We suggest that you use activities to: 1) loosen up all participants and make them feel involved, early in the workshop; and 2) re-direct attention when participants appear tired or distracted during the workshop.

### ACTIVITY 1: HUMAN WEB

**Time**

30 minutes

**Supplies**

Long ball of yarn or string, pillow (size appropriate for the size of web to be built)

**What to do**

Have the group stand in a circle. Using a ball of yarn or string, hold the end and toss it across the circle. Have the person who catches the ball of yarn toss the yarn across the circle in turn, while taking hold of a piece of yarn. Continue this until everyone is holding onto the yarn. Be sure to remind everyone to keep the yarn tight. This will form a web in the center of the circle. When everyone is holding a piece of the yarn, place a pillow (appropriate for the size of the web) in the center of the web. This illustrates that, if everyone works together, everything is held together and works smoothly.

Then let go of your piece of yarn. Have everyone let go in the order in which the yarn was thrown to them. Slowly, the support for the pillow lessens and the pillow will eventually drop, demonstrating what happens when people start to slack off.

Have a group discussion about what they feel the yarn represents and what the pillow represents. Then have a discussion about the symbolism of the pillow dropping. Ask the group, how can we all prevent the pillow from dropping in the future?

### ACTIVITY 2: WHERE CAN I GET IT?

**Time**

20 minutes

**Supplies**

Laminated cards with items written on them (see below), markers

**What to do**

Begin by having groups make a list of the types of customers they see and what these customers need. Then hand out the laminated cards (see below), one per group. The laminated cards list items (such as fly fishing pole, water toys) that the customer would like to purchase. The group will discuss where in their community would be a good place to send this individual for this item (have them try to come up with locally owned business, if it is possible for that community).



Have each group share their item and where they would send the customer, then have them give the directions to that location.

**Examples for *Where Can I Get It?***

Make a card for each request from the list below.

|  |              |   |
|--|--------------|---|
| Hunting/fishing license                      | Hiking boots | Laundromat                                |
| Alternator                                   | Bicycle tire | Grocery store (local,<br>not large chain) |
| Swim suit                                    | Stocking hat | Send a fax                                |
| Dinner for family of six:<br>short wait time | Art (local)  | Mail drop box                             |

**ACTIVITY 3: FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

**Time**

10-15 minutes

**Supplies**

Note cards for each participant, two photographs of people from magazines or the Internet. The photos should depict two distinctly different people so that participants can have two noticeably different reactions to them.

**What to do**

Post the first photo in front of the group. Have participants write down their first reaction on a note card. Remind them not to filter their reaction, but to be honest. Post the second photo and have the participants write down their first reaction to that picture on the note card.

As a group, have people discuss their first reactions. Then have a discussion about how our first reactions are not always fair, and how they can change the way they treat people.



## **ACTIVITY 4: PARTNER DRAWING**

### **Time**

30 minutes

### **Supplies**

Copies of house and flower pictures for each person, blank paper, and pencil for each participant.

### **What to do**

Have everyone pair up into groups of two. When this is done, explain to the group that even though we may feel we are listening to what someone is saying, we don't always hear them. This activity will focus on how well people listen to each other. Have one person go to the left of the room and the other person to the right. At these locations, hand each person a piece of paper with either a picture of a house or a flower on it. They are to reconnect with their partners at this time but they are not to show each other their pictures.

Have each group decide who will draw first (Player A) and the other person (Player B) will describe what is on their paper to Player A. Player A is to draw what is being described by Player B. This is to be done with their backs to one another.

After 10 minutes have them switch and now Player A will describe what to draw to Player B. Allow 10 minutes to complete their sketch. When time is up, have them compare pictures of what they drew to what was described to them.

Have a discussion about what they learned while doing this. Ask them what was most difficult about the drawing portion and what was the most difficult about the describing portion of the exercise.



## **ACTIVITY 5: THE PROBLEM CUSTOMER**

### **Time**

25 minutes

### **Supplies**

Laminated card for each group with a problem situation/customer description on it (see below), markers

### **What to do**

Have everyone get into small groups. Hand out a problem situation/customer to each group. Allow 15 minutes for groups to discuss how they would deal with this customer. Have each group give a short presentation of what their situation/customer was and what they came up with as a solution(s).

### **Problem customer situations**

Print a card for each situation below.

A customer is upset and yelling at you. He is making a scene in front of other customers.

A customer is unhappy with the service she has been given, and feels you are not helping. She would like to speak with your superior, who is not available.

A customer calls you on the phone. He feels your company has wronged him and would like you to fix it.

You are a pregnant married woman who no longer wears her wedding ring because of swelling. The customer makes a comment about how unmarried women should not have babies.

You can't find a customer's reservation or appointment.

You suspect a customer of stealing.

The customer approaches the employee and asks her to make an exception for a long-standing rule of the company. The employee lacks the authority to make the exception.