

Delight Your Customers

7 Simple Ways to Raise Your Customer Service
from Ordinary to Extraordinary

A large crowd of people, seen from above, is arranged in a heart shape. The people are wearing various colored clothing, creating a vibrant, multi-colored heart. The heart is centered on the right side of the cover, with its top point near the top right and its bottom point near the bottom right. The background is white, and the heart shape is formed by the collective presence of the individuals.

**Companion
Guide**

Steve Curtin
Brian O'Neill

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How to Use This Companion Guide



**Companion
Guide**



How to Use This Companion Guide

Within this Companion Guide there are 10 self-contained modules, each one designed to be 15-20 minutes long. They will flow well in the order they are published here, and they align with the chapters and insights presented in the *Delight Your Customers* book.

We have designed the modules so that you can deliver them in sequence or out of sequence. For instance, you may want to immediately target a critical aspect of customer service in your own business and pinpoint the specific one or two modules you want to deliver first, with others coming later.

One note about the Companion Guide: It truly is a Companion Guide! It is meant to be used in tandem with the *Delight Your Customers* book. Using the Companion Guide without the book is like driving a car without an engine: There are still some interesting dials and knobs to twist and pull, but you won't move forward.

Components of the Modules

Each module is set up in the same way, although you will discover there are a wide variety of activities, discussions, and exercises that give each module its own unique energy. Be sure to thoroughly review the entire module to become comfortable with all of the content well before you actually present.

- The **Before You Start** section contains instructions for you as the presenter and also for participants. This section includes most of the preparation steps you will need to take, and the prework excerpt assignments for participants. Depending on how you deliver the modules (in one fell swoop in sequence, in chunks, or individually), your preparation will vary a bit. More on this later.
- Part of the preparation for each module includes a set of **Objectives and Outcomes**. Essentially, it's important to be clear ahead of time on what you want your participants to know, do, and think as a result of the session. We have included key objectives, but have also left room for you to note any specific outcomes that you want to target based on the unique needs of your business.
- The **Resources Needed** section includes anything in the way of materials you will need to gather, and the logistics of the space you will need for the session(s). A few of the sessions require a little more space to run properly. If you are combining multiple modules into a single session, be sure you reserve space corresponding to the module that requires the most space!



Presenter's Tips

- *Ideas and additional guidance.* The pineapple icon, symbolizing hospitality and warm welcome, alerts you to one or more **Presenter's Tips**. These will advise you of any special instructions, and will invite and encourage you to customize the content for your unique business situation.

- Once you have successfully reviewed and prepared for the module, the **Presenting the Topic** section will give you an outline of things to say and do for introduction and review purposes. Each module has a different approach, so you will find the content varies greatly from module to module.
- **Discussion and Practice** helps to activate the concepts and knowledge from the previous section. Here you will find a variety of exercises, activities, and large and small group discussions to help "lock in" the learning in each module.
- The **Review** section allows you to summarize and wrap up an individual module, and transition to the next module if you are presenting multiple modules in one session.
- In the days and weeks after each module, we have provided some guidelines for you to help embed and habitize the behavior of your participants in the section called **Afterwards: Maintaining and Sustaining**. Generally, there are coaching tips for you in the days after a module or session, and a reminder to follow up in the weeks after the module or session to ensure that the new behaviors have become mainstream within your unique business setting.

Using the Modules: All at Once? Chunks? One at a Time?

Here are just a few of the possible ways you might use the modules in this Guide to embed the Truths and Behaviors into the customer service culture of your organization:

Individual Modules (In Sequence or Targeted)

- Each module as an individual session will run about 20 minutes.
- This method works well when you want to incorporate a module into an already existing weekly team meeting, or when you are only able to schedule participants for short sessions across many weeks.
- You may choose to present all 10 modules in sequence, or target specific modules first, with other modules following later. We have written the modules so that the order in which they are presented is not critical.
- When using this method, we recommend that you follow the “Before You Start” instructions for each module and give participants a day or two to re-read the excerpts noted.

3-4-3 Method

- Three individual sessions of 60 minutes, 90 minutes, and 60 minutes, with one or two weeks between sessions.
- This method works well when you want to “chunk” the learning across several days or weeks. It allows participants to try out and practice some skills and then return for more. It also allows you to incorporate review into the beginning of the second and third sessions.
- The first session includes all three Truths of Exceptional Customer Service. The second session includes the first four Behaviors. The third session includes the final three Behaviors.
- When using this method, we recommend that you combine the suggested “Before You Start” pre-session readings into a prework request you make of participants 2-3 days before each session.

All 10 Truths and Behaviors in Sequence

- Total time: about three and a half hours.
- A good choice only if you have the available time and space to use the 10 modules as a review and commitment to the lessons contained in the book.
- When using this method, we recommend that you direct all participants to read the *Delight Your Customers* book prior to the session and bring the book with them to the session.
- When using this method, you will want to review all of the “Before You Start” and “Resources Needed” sections from all of the modules to ensure you have all the materials, handouts, posters, and other resources ready to go before you begin.
- We recommend that when using this method, you provide a short break for participants after module 3, and again after module 7.

Share Unique Knowledge



Companion
Guide



Share Unique Knowledge

Before You Start...

- Thoroughly review Chapter 4, “Share Unique Knowledge,” in the *Delight Your Customers* book.
- Determine which of the several ways to share unique knowledge are most critical for your own business situations, and note them below.
- Have all participants bring one example of unique knowledge (product or service, competition, or customer knowledge) to the session for discussion.
 - *If you are presenting this topic in sequence with others or as a complete training session, you will need to allow a minute or two for participants to think of an example of unique knowledge to share during the session.*

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Objectives/Outcomes

(Optional: Add your custom/specific outcomes in the spaces provided)

What you'll want participants to KNOW:

- That sharing unique knowledge is one of the Seven Simple Ways to Delight Your Customers.
- That of the various ways to share unique knowledge noted in the book, the most critical for your group's customer delight are _____ and _____.

What you'll want participants to DO:

- Begin or continue to share unique knowledge using the specific ideas and methods discussed in this session.
- Inform coworkers of at least three specific nuggets of unique knowledge they can use in specific customer situations.
- _____

What you'll want participants to THINK:

- That the team and the company are committed to sharing unique knowledge with customers as a gateway to enhanced loyalty.
- That sharing unique knowledge is situational, dependent upon the context of each and every individual customer interaction.
- _____

Resources Needed

- Every participant should have a copy of the *Delight Your Customers* book for reference.
- Try to hold your session where there is a large dry-erase area, a blank flipchart, or a large, uncluttered table with lots of clear space.
- Use the grid template at the end of this session to draw up a Unique Knowledge Grid on a dry-erase board, flipchart, or as a large poster on an uncluttered table where all participants can see and contribute to the grid.

◦ For groups larger than 6-8, consider making multiple copies of the Unique Knowledge Grid and breaking into smaller groups during the session.

Presenting the Topic

1. If presenting this module as part of a series, briefly summarize the progress of the series so far (The Three Truths of Exceptional Customer Service; Express Genuine Interest; and Offer Sincere and Specific Compliments).
2. Introduce the next of the Seven Simple Ways: Share Unique Knowledge.
 - a. Ask participants if they remember the stories and examples from the book, and allow a minute or two to discuss them. Among the stories are John Barclay and the Odets meeting room, the radio DJ, the O'Hare airport and flight attendant, neighborhood butchers, the Starbucks coffee mug, the Wine Experience Café wine maps, and the Tumi luggage salespeople.
 - b. As the discussion continues, informally interject the **types** of examples (product or service, competition, customer) and the benefits of the **examples** (captivating the customer, creating sales, providing an insider perspective).
3. Remind participants of the situational nature of sharing unique knowledge. This is similar to the situational nature of offering sincere and specific compliments in that the opportunity to share unique knowledge may not present itself with each and every customer.
4. Ask participants if they were able to think of examples of unique knowledge that apply directly to your specific business.
 - a. If you are presenting this topic in sequence with others or as a complete training session, allow a minute or two for participants to think of an example of unique knowledge.
 - b. Ask for one or two volunteers to share their unique knowledge ideas.
 - c. As the ideas are described, refer again to the types of unique knowledge (product or service, competition, customer) and the benefit(s) of the unique knowledge (captivating the customer, creating sales, providing an insider perspective).
5. Disclose to the group that you would like to map everyone's unique knowledge examples to these two critical elements of sharing unique knowledge.



Presenter's Tips

- *Be ready with your favorites.* Some participants might not remember the examples from Chapter 4, or they may not find the examples relevant to your specific business. Be sure to pick out one or two of the examples and be ready to assist participants in the discussion by describing the relationships between those stories and the ways in which your own business can encourage employees to share unique knowledge.
- *What does "captivate" mean?* When an item of unique knowledge is captivating to a customer, they tend to focus and listen intently. Unique knowledge perceived as captivating often forms the kernel of delightful stories that customers will share with others.

Discussion and Practice

1. Reveal the Unique Knowledge Grid (the dry-erase board, flipchart, or poster you previously created using the template at the end of this module).
2. Guide the group through the completion of the Unique Knowledge Grid for each participant's example of unique knowledge (specific to your own business).



Presenter's Tips

- *Look for balance.* As much as feasible, and in keeping with your specific business needs, seek out examples from participants that demonstrate all of the different types and benefits of sharing unique knowledge.
- *Job knowledge nuggets can become unique knowledge.* Some (perhaps most) of the examples participants provide might appear to be expected job knowledge. As Steve notes on p. 84 of the book, the manner, timing, and combination of job knowledge nuggets becomes unique knowledge when it exceeds that which might reasonably be expected by the customer.

- a. Fill out the unique knowledge example in the first column.
 - b. Place an X or check mark into each area of the grid that applies to the unique knowledge example.
 - c. During the activity, note that an example of sharing unique knowledge should fill out the grid in two ways: It should be an example of both the **type** of unique knowledge shared, and the **benefit(s)** of sharing unique knowledge.
 - d. If participants do not surface examples that fit the ways to share unique knowledge you deemed most critical in the “Before You Start...” step, be sure to include those critical items on the grid, and inform participants of the critical nature of the examples.
 - e. Be sure to leave several blank rows on the grid for completion later.
3. Review the Unique Knowledge Grid and the examples provided by participants.
 - a. Check with the group to ensure that there are no obstacles or impediments to their being able to situationally use the examples with customers. If there are significant obstacles or pushback from participants, consider removing that example from the grid for now.

4. For the remaining blank spots on the grid, ask the group if they can commit to discovering additional unique knowledge in the next three weeks to fill the grid completely. Ask participants to check with you first; if the unique knowledge example has both the right type and benefit(s) to enhance customer loyalty, you will add it to the grid.

5. Ask participants if they can use any of the ideas on the grid starting today. Advise participants that you will commit to “catch” participants sharing unique knowledge during the coming weeks and months.

Review

1. Quickly review the topic of “Share Unique Knowledge.”
 - a. Job knowledge alone will meet expectations. Unique knowledge will exceed expectations and delight customers.
 - b. Sharing unique knowledge reflects job essence: the highest priority at work.
 - c. Sharing unique knowledge is a situational activity. You can voluntarily acquire unique knowledge, and then choose the situations in which you share this unique knowledge.
 - d. Sharing unique knowledge costs nothing to do.
2. Ask participants where the Unique Knowledge Grid should be placed, and remind participants about the process of filling in the remaining blank spaces in the next three weeks.
3. End with energy and optimism; or transition to the next session if you are presenting multiple topics.

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Afterwards: Maintaining and Sustaining

Within the next three days: Post the Unique Knowledge Grid in the agreed-upon, prominent place. Observe and catch as many participants as possible as they Share Unique Knowledge with a customer. As much as possible, provide quick asides with “I noticed you shared unique knowledge during that interaction. How did that feel?” or similar mini-conversations. Most of these conversations should take 30 seconds or less.

Within the next three weeks: Follow up with participants to complete the Unique Knowledge Grid. Observe and check to see if the new behaviors have become mainstream in your world of work.

- If so, gather participants for a five-minute stand-up meeting to congratulate them and allow them to talk about the positive differences they’ve seen, heard, and felt.
- If not, gather participants for a five-minute follow-up meeting to find out what obstacles still remain, and discuss how to overcome them.

Activity Poster: Unique Knowledge Grid

Reproduce the grid on the next page and display it on a dry-erase board, on a flipchart, or as a poster on an uncluttered table within easy view of all participants.

If your group is larger than 6-8, consider making multiple grids and splitting into smaller groups of 4-8 to complete the grid.

After the session, transfer the information from the Unique Knowledge Grid to a poster you can display in a prominent place decided upon by the participants. Allow for some blank spaces on the grid to be filled out as participants discover additional examples of unique knowledge in the three weeks following the session.

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Unique Knowledge Grid

Unique Knowledge Example	Type			Benefit(s)		
	Product or Service	Competition	Customer	Captivating the Customer	Sales	Insider Perspective

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If *Delight Your Customers* has renewed your commitment to exceptional customer service, then the *Delight Your Customers Companion Guide* provides an effective road map to embed the key learnings into the culture of your organization.

Many of Steve's clients, having embraced the core truths and behaviors outlined in the book, have asked for a way to cascade these lessons to divisions, teams, and workgroups. To address this need, Steve has collaborated with former colleague and service training expert Brian O'Neill to create the new *Delight Your Customers Companion Guide* containing a variety of active learning agendas that organizations can select and customize for maximum impact.

When your organization is ready to delight its customers, the *Delight Your Customers Companion Guide* provides ten customizable, actionable, and experiential learning sessions to help reignite and sustain your company's commitment to extraordinary customer service.



STEVE CURTIN was rated #4 by Global Guru on its 2015 listing of the Top 30 experts in the world on the topic of customer service. He is the author of *Delight Your Customers: 7 Simple Ways to Raise Your Customer Service from Ordinary to Extraordinary* (AMACOM Books, New York, NY), currently in its fifth printing. After a 20-year career with Marriott International, Steve now devotes his time to speaking, consulting, and writing on the topic of extraordinary customer service. He lives in Denver, Colorado with his wife, four children, and a Goldendoodle named Nugget.



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