



HUMOR

in the Help Desk

CRAIG HARRISON



WHAT ONE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT can increase productivity, enhance team building, encourage creativity and improve esprit de corps in your Call or Service Center? You guessed it... HUMOR!

Humor has physiological, psychological and practical benefits. It helps us clear our heads, stimulate mentation, and entertain ourselves and our co-workers. It makes difficult customers palatable and actually creates an environment conducive to success. Just as an apple a day keeps the doctor away, so too does a fun environment keep a support staff happy and healthy. It's no coincidence that when the humor quotient rises the absentee rate declines.

HUMOR IN THE CALL CENTER shows you how to introduce fun, laughter, relaxation and appropriate humor into your support department. It helps us recognize and value our own humorous side, while also facilitating teamwork and the appreciation of others. Learn from the *Jest Practices* of other successful organizations too.



Learning Objectives

- ▶ Discover 5 ways to enliven your work environment
- ▶ Learn six methods for invigorating meetings with humor
- ▶ Develop daily practices for loosening up and techniques for 'busting' ruts at work
- ▶ Create your own daily humor routine



How The Presentation is Delivered

Stories, worksheets, role plays and paired activities, and safe movement activities all help attendees appreciate ways of utilizing humor to help them relieve stress, relate better to co-workers and maintain their equilibrium with difficult customers in pressure support situations.



About Your Presenter

Since the age of eleven when he went door-to-door selling "used jokes," Craig has been employing humor to entertain and elucidate his audiences while break down barriers to success. Craig's articles on humor have appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner*, (www.craigspeaks.com/humor_Viewpoint.html), Amer. Soc. for Training & Development's *Perspectives* (www.craigspeaks.com/jest_practices.htm). In 2003 Craig founded LaughLovers, a monthly humor association for humorists, humor writers, comedians and professional speakers in the San Francisco Bay Area.



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ARE YOU A CUSTOMER SERVICE ACE?

Take The Quiz and See!

By Craig Harrison

Test your customer service knowledge and learn how to be a service ace by picking the correct answer to each of these 10 questions.

1. A complaining customer is:

- A. Always right
- B. Almost right
- C. Often lying
- D. Always the customer

2. Customers who complain:

- A. Had unhappy childhoods
- B. Are genetically predisposed to be sourpusses
- C. Have trouble in their primary relationships
- D. Are doing *you* a service in identifying what isn't working in your business or organization

3. The best reward for your customer service representatives is:

- A. Earplugs and punching bags
- B. Valium or other mind-numbing drugs
- C. Recognition and appreciation on your part
- D. Anger management seminars

4. CRM stands for:

- A. Customers Rarely Matter
- B. Can't Remember Much
- C. Communicating Random Meaning
- D. Customers Rudimentarily Managed
- E. Customer Relationship Management

5. Customers who complain want . . .

- A. Something for nothing
- B. To be heard and have their experience validated
- C. To vent for the sport of it
- D. To be made majority shareholders in the company

6. Customer Service departments:

- A. Are the afterthought that cleans up messes other departments cause
- B. Build customer loyalty
- C. Are leaders in understanding customer behavior patterns and market research

7. For a company to be considered service-oriented:

- A. It must mention customer service in its mission statement
- B. At least 18.3% of its employees must work in the customer service department
- C. Its managers must at one time have been CSRs
- D. Customer service must be addressed by all departments

8. A Call Center is defined as:

- A. The midpoint in duration of a telephone call
- B. A revenue sink hole
- C. A place where middle-of-the-road calls coexist with liberal and arch-conservative calls
- D. A location where complaints and problems are converted into successful saves for your customers and your company

9. Customer Care is:

- A. A managed care medical program for customers
- B. A nifty alliterative phrase that looks good in company brochures
- C. A new program where customers care for themselves
- D. A philosophy wherein the customer is wrapped in service even before a problem arises

10. Customer Service Culture is

- A. A new form of yogurt where the lid removes itself for you
- B. Behavior being analyzed in a Petrie dish for contagions
- C. A mythical civilization in which everyone smiles and welcomes you when they meet
- D. An environment where customer service permeates the thinking of the entire company

KEY

1. D. Customers are often wrong but they never stop being the customer. Right or wrong they are to be accorded respect and cared for. Focus on the insights their complaint offers.
2. D. Complaining customers alert you to systemic problems before they drive off more customers. Their complaints represent many more customers who may not spend the time to tell you about problems, instead just leaving you for your competitors.
3. C. Your staff deserves and thrive on recognition and appreciation. Take the time to celebrate them collectively and individually. Whether through cards, gifts, surprises, outings and acknowledgements at company functions, let them know how important, valued and appreciated they are to you and the company.
4. E. CRM refers to systems designed to track and cater to each customer's whims and preferences over a lifetime. CRM is about managing customer relationships over the long haul by attending to their individual needs.
5. B. Complaining customers have several needs. Implicit in their actual complaint is also a need to be heard and their unhappiness acknowledged. Fixing the problem is important. So is letting them know you understand their displeasure and feel for them. One without the other is an incomplete remedy for customer complaints. Don't forget the emotional component in complaints.
6. B and C. When you solve a problem for a customer you actually build confidence and allegiance. You've proven you stand behind your products or service, giving customers a warm and fuzzy feeling of safety and protection. As well, you tap the pulse of the customers. Their complaints and feedback give valuable insight into how well your products are assembled, documented, sold and hold up. Listening to customers tells you a great deal about your company's products and services (and your competitors' too) from real life customers. That's invaluable!
7. D. A Customer Service orientation must transcend the service department. All departments must understand and model good customer service for the company to be considered strong in service. Many problems can be avoided outright by attending to customer service. Why should the customer service department carry the weight of service for the entire company. Don't operate under the adage "never enough time to do it right but always enough time to do it over." Get it right at the source, in all departments.
8. D. Make your call center is a shining example of your company's commitment to its customers. Your center is a visible symbol of your company's commitment to customer success.

9. D. Customer Care is a philosophy wherein customers are cared for by a company – the entire time they’re customers. Care isn’t just to be administered as a salve for problems. Demonstrate care from the start and your customers will flock to your products and services.
10. D. Customer Service Culture is the infusion of service ideals into every department, from sales, shipping and receiving to legal, human resources and beyond.

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How did you do? If you scored 100% you may write the next article!

If you scored 80% or better you’re a service ace.

60-80% you understand customer service.

If you scored below 60% don’t fret. Make improving your customer service orientation a priority. Ask others what it means to them, take a class, read books and columns on service, subscribe to customer service e-zines, including Craig’s (by e-mailing subscribe@craigspeaks.com) and consider attending a customer service conference. Then you’ll be a Service Ace!

Craig Harrison is a speaker, trainer and communication consultant who builds clear and confident communicators, and strong sales and service cultures. Contact him at (888) 450-0664 or through service@craigspeaks.com for help in improving your communication skills and customer service orientation. Visit his website at www.craigspeaks.com.

Sign up for his free customer service e-zine, AT YOUR SERVICE, by sending e-mail to subscribe@craigspeaks.com.

About Your Author



CRAIG HARRISON has been profiled in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week*, interviewed by 60 MINUTES, quoted by *Selling Power* magazine, his columns and articles run regularly in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *California Job Journal*, *Executive Excellence*, *Customer Service Newsletter*, *Customer Communicator*, *Transaction World*, *The Professional Caterer* and *The Toastmaster Magazine*.

Craig is on the faculty of UC SANTA CRUZ EXTENSION, and teaches classes for THE LEARNING ANNEX . Isn't it time you hear him speak?

Craig combines humor, wisdom and practical sense to help you communicate with confidence and clarity. Let him help you experience the sweet taste of success.

Background

Craig is 2004-05 president of the NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION (NSA) for Northern California the 2003-04 national chairman of the SALES TRAINERS PROFESSIONAL EMPHASIS GROUP (PEG) of NSA, and a board member of the STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION FOR ALTA CALIFORNIA.

As a manager, consultant, publisher and curriculum developer in Silicon Valley Craig developed his digital dexterity, helping the technical world train and communicate more effectively. His work with a database company, publishing houses and a consulting firm also helped Craig develop his strong customer service orientation.

As a director of communications with the non-profit PROS FOR KIDS, Craig coached with Olympians and Hall of Fame athletes, helping young people enhance their self esteem, become confident communicators and recognize the importance of healthy living.

As a youth basketball coach Craig has led teams domestically and internationally for such non-profits as SPORTS FOR UNDERSTANDING and MACCABI YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS, and such academies as Oakland's HEAD-ROYCE and COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOLS.

- Keynotes
- Break-Outs
- Workshops
- Retreats
- Training Courses

Dynamic presentations covering a variety of performance topics:

Communication	Leadership	Customer Service
Humor in the Workplace	Sales Training	Excellence

“The skilled and confident communicator opens doors, builds new relationships, serves others effectively and enhances one’s own leadership.”

—Craig Harrison



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