

UNIT 2: TRAVEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY CUSTOMERS

OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to use surveys as a way of learning about customer types and their needs and preferences
- Students will understand the kinds of factors which motivate the customer/tourist to travel
- Students will have a clear understanding of the concept of customer service and its importance

Number of Sessions: 4-5.

Note that there is a supplemental module on customer service which can be taught at the end of Unit 2 over two additional sessions.

Activity Worksheets [AW] & Resources Guide [RG]
Materials for Unit 2:

- ✦ Museum Visit (8 activities)[AW]
- ✦ Customer Care [AW]
- ✦ Tourism Attractions Field Research [AW]

- ✦ What is a Customer [AW]
- ✦ Travel Agency Game [AW]
- ✦ First Impressions [AW]
- ✦ Travel & Tourism Industry Process Charts [RG] and Appendix
- ✦ Types of Tourism [AW]
- ✦ Hotelier Survey [AW]
- ✦ Survey of Travelers [AW]
- ✦ A Day in the Life of a Waiter [AW]
- ✦ Gfk Survey of Travelers [AW]

Introduction:

Travel & Tourism is not just about tickets, facilities and attractions provided for visitors. **It is about people and catering to their needs.**

It is especially about the relationship between the customer and the individual providing the service. Hospitality and a warm welcome are an integral part of the travel product.

Everybody employed in Travel & Tourism needs to have knowledge, skills and attitudes to care for customers effectively.



Supplemental Module on Customer Service:

Customer service is a critical part of a successful business. This Unit has a supplemental module that closely examines the elements of good customer services and expands on the introductory material about customer service that is discussed in this Unit. The material was developed with the assistance of customer service experts from the GTTP's Global Partner companies: Amadeus, American Express, Hertz, HRG, and Starwood. It is structured along three chapters and will take two class sessions at the end of this Unit.

- **What Every Customer Wants** — provides a detailed description of travel customer needs.
- **Moments of Truth** — focuses on the importance of first impressions.
- **Customer Interaction Cycle** — helps students understand how attitude is an important part of a service provider's competencies and stresses the importance of good customer service.

1. Prior Preparation:

In Unit 1, students were asked to develop an "inventory" or data base of local businesses and some company reports. Select business that are likely to cooperate with your students. Contact them to inform them that students in your class will be coming to interview them about their customers' preferences and about their views on customer service. The Appendix to

this Manual has suggestions on ways to initially contact companies in your area.

Before students go out into the community to conduct interviews, it is helpful if you prepare a letter of introduction on school letterhead that states the student is participating in a school exercise related to Travel & Tourism in your community. Depending on the age of your students, you may also need to obtain a letter of permission from a student's parents or guardian.



Session 1: What Travelers Want

Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

1. REVIEW CHART 2

of the Industry Process charts to be sure the class understands the categories of service provided by companies.

2. DIVIDE THE CLASS INTO

SMALL GROUPS, Handout the Types of Tourism activity sheet and ask the students to discuss the motives of each type of tourist and how they differ. Ask them to see if they can categorize the kinds of people who would be motivated to choose each category and to suggest what their motivations might

be. Tourists can be classified in many ways, from age and income, to interests, gender, or nationality. The table below has examples of tourist classifications and motivations the different tourists might have for choosing different types of

tourism. Ask the students to develop their own charts to present their findings. See if the class has common perceptions. Later, they can test their perceptions against the views of industry employees and also travelers themselves.



Courtesy Lufthansa

TOURISM CATEGORIES & MOTIVATIONS CHART					
TYPE OF TOURISM	TEENS	NATIONALITY	RETIRED PEOPLE	MEN	WOMEN
Leisure					
Heritage					
Environmental			Concerned about the environment	Concerned about the environment	Concerned about the environment
Cultural					
Genealogical (research about family origins)					
Health					
Religious					
Sports	Want to do something interesting on vacation	Greeks Austrians			
Visiting					

At the end of this exercise, they should see that the different types of tourism appeal to different kinds of people—also that **it is not easy to determine what a traveler will want based just on simple factors like gender or age.**

For example, men and women may like the very same things. People who are concerned about the environment come from all age groups, etc.

However, there are some country-specific differences as indicated by a June 2010 survey of some 16,364 respondents in 16 countries that was conducted by The GfK Group for the *Wall Street Journal*. Some of these survey results are included in the **Fast Facts** included in the student **Resources Guide**.

It is important for the students to begin to understand that the “customers” for this industry

include every possible kind of person and many different motivations – a fact which makes it complicated for companies. Because any person can decide to travel, it is important for companies to understand what motivates various kinds of travelers. Most companies do not try to provide services that will appeal to all business travelers or all tourists because that would imply far too many service offerings.

- ❖ Ask the students to present their company reports on local businesses. These companies will be surveyed by the students to learn what the business people think about their customers – business travelers and tourists.
- ❖ Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3 students and ask each group to develop a questionnaire of 8 – 10 questions that can be used with some of these companies. If there are enough companies to interview and enough students to do the interviewing, organize the class into 8 groups, one for each sector. If the class is small, select one or two of the sectors that have companies operating in your area.

The purpose of this exercise is to develop a questionnaire that will let students collect data on what the companies believe their particular customers want. The results will be discussed in Session 3. During this current session, the students will discuss the kinds of questions they want to ask the companies.

Note: As preparation for Session 4, students will interview tourists, including members of their own families who have traveled, to determine their views of what is important to them as customers of this industry. The answers given by the businesses can then be compared with the answers given by their customers.

A sample questionnaire for an hotelier, **Hotelier Survey**, is included in the **Activity Worksheets**. It is a questionnaire that might be used with hotel operators to determine how they view their customers.

Note: Before interviewing businesses, ask the students to role-play, with one group acting as the business owners and the other as the interviewers. Practice the situation of approaching a business owner in order to set up an interview situation. Have them prepare a “should do” and “should not do” list for the interviewers. Remind the students that they can ask two types of questions:

- **“Closed Questions”** – Questions that ask for a specific answer, such as the number of visitors per day, and
- **“Open Questions”** – Questions that ask for opinions, such as why the hotel manager thinks tourists stay there, or what business travelers want when they come to the hotel.

Both kinds of questions are useful and should be included in their surveys.

The **Resources Guide** has a discussion about different kinds of surveys and questionnaires.

OUTSIDE RESEARCH:

Before the second session, students should begin to start interviewing local companies to learn how the companies decide what their customers might want. Since the surveys have to be scheduled at the convenience of the business owner, not the student, completing the surveys may take several weeks.



Session 2: Understanding Customer Service

1. ASK THE STUDENTS

to discuss the meaning of the following statements:

Good service is giving customers a little more than they expect.

Excellent service is enjoying giving people a little more than they expect.

Ask students to consider the importance of both these statements and the remainder of this class/ classes should concentrate on the ways these may be achieved by employees in the Travel & Tourism industry on a personal level. In other words class work should now focus on aspects of Customer Care – how the industry creates a sense of well being in the traveler: a feeling that their needs are being met, that their business is valued, and that they matter.

2. REVIEW THE CONCEPT of rating systems, as discussed in the student **Resources Guide**. Ask the students to discuss what good customer service might mean in a 5 star hotel and what it might mean in a youth hostel.

3. PASS OUT AND ASK THE STUDENTS TO READ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WAITER

(contained in the **Activity Worksheets**). Then raise the following questions and ask them to consider the scene from the waiter's point of view:

- ✦ What is he trying to sell?
- ✦ What is his attitude to the client?
- ✦ What techniques does he use?
- ✦ Is he successful?
- ✦ Does he enjoy his job?

4. NOW ASK THE STUDENTS

to view the scene from the customer's point of view:

- ✦ What does the customer expect?
- ✦ What type of personality has he?
- ✦ What is his attitude to the employee?
- ✦ Is he happy with the service he receives?

5. FOLLOWING THIS, ASK STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

as customers

and ask them to write answers to the following questions:

- ✦ List five or six positive and negative experiences you had.
- ✦ From this list describe in detail what made the experience positive and what made the experience negative.
- ✦ Based on the above responses ask the class to draw up a checklist of the minimum expectations potential customers have of:
 - The company or establishment: hygienic, clean etc.
 - The staff member: competent, friendly, knowledgeable, able to speak the customer's language, etc.
 - The product or service: value for money, etc.

6. GIVE THE STUDENTS THE HANDOUT, First Impressions, and ask them to respond to the scenarios described.



Session 3: Understanding Travelers' Motivations

Surveys are often used as are “comment cards” which many businesses use in order to solicit customers’ opinions of the services they received. Businesses that sell over the Internet often survey individual customers after they receive their purchase in order to gauge their satisfaction with the product.

However, for a survey designed to understand motivations or attitudes, useful many people need to be interviewed in order to get meaningful results. For example, a recent survey conducted for National Geographic Traveler and the Travel Industry Association of America used a sample of 8,000 adults selected to be a representative sample of American adults. As noted above, another survey involved 16,364 travelers. Because good surveys are complicated and expensive to conduct, many Travel & Tourism companies belong to associations that conduct surveys on behalf of their members. Some companies purchase survey results from global survey organizations.

Whether the survey is large or small, though, the intent is the same: to determine what customers want.

Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

1. ONE PERSON FROM EACH STUDENT GROUP should present the group’s survey findings. They should address such issues as:

- ❖ What were the most surprising results?
- ❖ Were there any common answers?
- ❖ Was there a “typical” customer for the business? If so, what are the characteristics of the typical customer or customers of the business they interviewed? If not, why not?
- ❖ Were there more business travelers or tourists using the business they interviewed?

2. THE STUDENTS SHOULD NEXT DEVELOP THE QUESTIONNAIRE they will use to interview travelers in their region.

It is useful if they role-play the interview process before going out to interview travelers. A sample questionnaire, **Survey of Travelers**, is included in the **Activity Worksheets**.

Note that the purpose of this exercise is not to determine precisely what business people in your area think, but to stimulate students’ thinking about how a business can determine what it is that customers want.

The next survey – of travelers to your region – will let students compare what the businesses think with what their customers think. It is also a way for students to begin to see that their





preconceptions about what travelers think and want may not match reality.

As noted earlier, **many businesses fail because they try to sell what they have instead of selling what their customers want to buy.** In the Travel & Tourism industry, understanding what customers want is critical, especially as this is a very competitive industry.



Sessions 4-5: Customer Service

Discussion:

One thing that all travelers have strong opinions about is customer service: how they are treated by the hotel, restaurant, travel agent or other service provider.

Not all travelers want the same kind of service, and the level of service provided by a business is one of the ways in which Travel & Tourism companies are differentiated from each other.

Discussing the student surveys will likely take one session, depending on how many travelers were interviewed. If more time is needed, the discussion can continue

to Session 5. Following this discussion, you can move on to the supplemental module on customer service to examine the topic in more depth.

Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

- 1. ASK THE STUDENTS** to discuss what they learned from surveying travelers. Did travelers' motivations seem to match what the business people thought were their motivations?
- 2. WHAT WAS THE RANGE** of motivations travelers expressed? What were the prime motivators for business travelers? For different ages and nationalities of tourists?
- 3. HOW WOULD THE STUDENTS** suggest local businesses could find out what travelers—corporate/business travelers and tourists—want?



OUTSIDE RESEARCH:

The student teams should begin to conduct their surveys of travelers and record their findings.

Before the next session, students should research the rating systems used for

hotels, and they should visit some of the web sites where travelers give their opinions about various destinations. The **Resources Guide** has a number of interesting sites that can be explored.

4. STUDENTS SHOULD NOW BE READY to participate in an important element of this lesson – The Customer Care Role-Play Activities as detailed in **Customer Care**. Each case represents typical experiences that travelers have. The characters should be played by students willing to improvise and get into the spirit of the exercise. The rest of the class, as audience, should observe the factors that result in either a good or bad experience for the customer.

For these activities to operate successfully it is vital that students:

- ✦ Are provided with all the necessary props
 - ✦ Are prepared to participate in and observe the customer /employee interaction established by the role play description
 - ✦ Are prepared to discuss and evaluate the resulting interactions.
- One of the lessons that should emerge from the role-play is the importance of listening in order to understand the other person's point of view.
- ✦ Are clearly briefed on the objectives of each activity. You may want to suggest that the employee acts rudely, for example, or that the customer acts shy and uncertain. The point is that the situations should be acted out in a variety of ways.
 - ✦ Are prepared and willing to play the roles of tourists
 - ✦ Are prepared and willing to play the roles of tourism employees
 - ✦ Are provided with a working space which is clearly visible to all their student group



Nile River Valley. Jacques Descloitres, MODIS Land Rapid Response Team, NASA/GSFC

Supplemental Module on Customer Service:

The student **Resources Guide** includes additional information on this topic and each of the three chapters can be followed up by activities (shown below) that contribute to better understanding and provide a base for experiential learning. Some of the activities are designed to be completed prior to covering the material in the text: they need no prior knowledge, but do require personal experiences or feelings. These activities could be a good start to a class and a free-wheeling discussion that leads to a structured knowledge with the help of the teacher (learning in this sense is organizing information into knowledge). Such activities are for example numbers 2, 3, and 4 of the "What Every Customer Wants" chapter.

Other activities require some structured information (presentation) on the theme. In this case learning involves practicing how to use the information provided in the text. An example of this type of learning is the first activity in the chapter "What Every Customer Wants" where students have to identify elements in a realistic situation (an excerpt from a movie).

The instructor is free to go either way: to develop knowledge from experience or to produce experience from taught knowledge. Actually, if time permits, both approaches can be used in one class session.

The students' personal experience is very important in this module because so much of customer care is about attitude and communication. Students can read about attitude and communication, but as the text advises, there comes the moment of truth...

Attitudes and communication skills can be developed but it is unrealistic to expect that students will change their attitudes and develop new skills, or even unlearn old attitudes and skills, in a couple of classes. The desired outcomes of these classes are to help students and teachers gain an overview of the expectations employers and customers have about employees working in the service industry and to give an opportunity for students to test their own attitudes and skills.

ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES:

What Every Customer Wants

This chapter discussed that customers want to feel like an individual. This means the customer must feel that he or she is treated fairly, informed, valued, respected, recognized, safe and secure, and supported.

Activities:

For this exercise any visual aid (film, video, video clip) could be used where a visitor is set in situations and places that are unfamiliar to him. E.T. or scenes from Harry Potter arriving at his school, or *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* could be used as well. The part selected must not be longer than 5 minutes otherwise focusing is too difficult.

This activity makes sense only if some the group have traveled. Try to call for anecdotes, stories and point your questions along the lines described in this chapter: e.g., Why did you feel bad? What made you satisfied? List the keywords on a flipchart or on the board and at the end group them by using the numbered

and bold set titles in the chapter.

Ask all students to produce their own list on little pieces of paper or on post-it stickers in order to have all students work on this. When done, ask groups of 4-6 to produce a common list by phasing out duplicates. Finally write a list based on all the groups on the board or flipchart without duplications. Ask if anything is missing, or point out what you would like to know that is not listed. This exercise is to point out that there are subconscious motivations that influence our choice. The menu is partly imaginary - main courses (or *mén coozes*) gives the impression of being somewhere in a very exotic country. Some of the meals listed are real: *Paprikás csirke nokedlivel* - Hungarian, chicken stew with noodles; *Kuku Paka* is an East African chicken curry; *Wiener Schnitzel* is a traditional Austrian pork chop deep fried. Some are not: *Hushmush Platte* - there is no such a thing. There is one which calls for something that we all know: *Pizzaz 4 cheesie*



is the Pizza Quattroformaggi. The discussion could be about the reasons why students choose or do not choose certain foods: familiar or not, safe or unsafe, reminds one of good things or not, or just sounds weird.

Moments of Truth

This is the time when a customer decides whether or not their expectations have been met.

Activities:

During the discussion try to pick out concrete behaviors or communication elements (facial expression, good sentences, gestures, etc.). Try to help students to be specific. They should try to translate general answers such as, "Oh, we were treated





MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Experts in the service industry call the event when the service provider meets the customer the 'moment of truth'. These are moments when the customer makes a decision as to whether or not their expectations have been met. These are the points when no further professional argument helps. You may seek countless excuses why things went wrong but it

happened. Nothing helps a china plate if you drop it. That was the moment of truth.

Why is it important to analyze what happened if you cannot repair it? Because there are always new 'moments of truth,' and you should not make the same mistake again. If you don't analyze it, you are apt to repeat it.

wonderfully!" into specific behaviors. It is important to save the answers (key words) on a big piece of wrapping paper or flipchart because these may be used later in the following chapter. Have the students write their keywords

on the flipchart with thick felt pen so that they can recognize their handwriting - otherwise in two weeks nobody will remember who said and wrote what.

The same with the second activity. If there is not enough time you may choose not to do this second part.

Customer Interaction Cycle

The Customer Interaction Cycle is depicted in the graphic to the right:

Activities:

This is an activity in which students must know the customer interaction cycle, so you have to explain it to them first. The smaller the business they pick is the better. With a complex operation like a five star hotel it is very difficult for students to analyze its activities. With a vendor on the street corner this is much simpler.

This is the exercise when you can use the lists produced in the chapter **Moments of Truth**. Identify the elements of the list along the interaction cycle. It is best if you give this task to groups of 4-6 and allow 20 minutes for preparation. Depending on your relationship to the group of students and on the culture of the school this activity can develop into a role play in which students actually have to show their newly learned skills. 4., 5., and 6.



**The big question for the industry:
Just how can we ensure a good
first impression? Here are some hints:**

Be ready – it all starts inside!

To make a good first impression you have to have in mind what the customer wants (see above). You have to show that you will be able to live up to his or her expectations. There are three key elements in preparing yourself for a scenario:

How you feel What you know How you look

The customer wants to see a person similar to what he or she wants to be: satisfied, worry free, and confident.

Therefore you should put aside any worries about your private life or even problems at your workplace. Nobody wants to be served by a frustrated, unhappy person. This, of course, does not mean that you cannot have your bad days. But it sure is a rule that this should not show in a professional situation. The professional agent has a positive, 'can do' attitude even with seemingly hopeless cases, and is enthusiastic about his work. How we behave will affect how our customer behaves because people mirror the behavior of others – **Behavior Breeds Behavior.**