



INTENTIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Teamwork, Collaboration & Customer Service-Minded

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED



75 minutes

OVERVIEW

This session highlights the value of developing skills related to teamwork, collaboration and customer-service minded as necessary skills in preparing for post-service education and career opportunities. In this session, your service year corps members will explore ways to foster team dynamics, collaboration, while also building their competency as a customer service-minded approach during and after service.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



By the end of this session, your corps members will be able to:

- Define teamwork & collaboration
- Understand objectives of customer service
- Recognize the importance of collaboration and teamwork
- Apply customer service-minded solutions to various scenarios

TRAINING SESSION RESOURCES

Before getting started with this training session, you should review the Preparation section below as well as familiarize yourself with this guide's Session Script. This session should be presented directly to corps members using this downloadable presentation:

- **Downloadable Presentation:** [S6: Training Session: Teamwork, Collaboration, and Customer Service Minded](#)

The downloadable presentation includes speaker notes for program staff who are facilitating this session directly to corps members, making it easy for staff to walk through the presentations efficiently and effectively.

PREPARATION

Trainer Expectations

Throughout this training session, trainers will be asked to facilitate the group through small group discussions and full group discussions. Some of the topics may feel challenging for your corps members to engage with, and they may not want to engage in conversations on these topics at first. Part of fostering a belonging environment is making the space equal with corps members and program staff. Therefore, we recommend you, as the facilitator, prepare responses to the questions posed to the corps members throughout the session as a strategy to help spark conversation if needed. Before beginning this session, review the Session Outline & Script below and ensure familiarity with the content to be prepared to facilitate activities and answer potential questions from corps members. You'll notice in the Session Outline there are resources linked to provide background on the subject matters included in this training.

Necessary Materials

- Prepare to have note cards, blank paper, and writing utensils.
- Hand out one note card to each participant before beginning the session.
- Your corps members should bring their journal to this session
- One printed copy for each corps member:
 - [S6: Resource: Lost At Sea Activity](#)
 - The Employability Skills Inventory: [S3: Resource: Employability Skills Inventory](#)
 - [S6: Resource: Customer Service-Minded](#)
 - [S6: Resource: Teamwork and Collaboration](#)
 - [S0: Resource: Glossary](#)

Virtual Modifications



If you plan to facilitate the training session in a virtual environment, we recommend the following modifications:

- Use a whiteboard that can be displayed on camera or share your screen and work in a word or google document
- If you have group break out sessions, set up the groups in advance via your video conferencing software
- Don't forget to send an email with any necessary handouts (see printed materials above) in advance of your remote session

	TIME ESTIMATE
	LEARNING OUTCOMES
	VIRTUAL MODIFICATION
	ACTIVITY
	HELPFUL TIP

HELPFUL TIP

Your service year corps members will use their Employability Skills Inventory for this session and throughout the rest of the program year. Encourage them to keep it in a safe place or collect it each time they use it.

SESSION OUTLINE

The following outline walks you through what to expect throughout this session and how to prepare.

I. Activity: Teamwork & Collaboration Definitions - small group

II. Activity: Lost at Sea - small group

Prep needed: The corps members will be ranking what items are most important if they are lost at sea individually and then in a small group. You may need to define some of the items on the list so be sure to have some familiarity with them in advance. Review the instructions in Slide #7 for more details on the activity.

Necessary materials: S6: Resource: Lost At Sea Activity should be provided to corps members.

III. Activity: Different Customers - full group

Prep needed: you will present the group with three scenarios and ask them how they might want to respond vs. how they should respond. Familiarize yourself with the scenarios so you can start the discussion if you aren't getting much participation. The scenarios were adapted from here, if there are others that might better suit your corps members, feel free to swap them out.

IV. Customer Service Objectives

You will introduce the importance of positive language and the three customer service objectives - empathize, explain, and solution.

V. Debrief and Wrap Up

You will wrap up this session by facilitating a group discussion on their thoughts about what they learned today.

SESSION SCRIPT

The following script should be used for presenting this session directly to your corps members. It is recommended that you review this script before beginning the session. Italicized prompts are intended to be guidance for you as the trainer rather than part of the script you will communicate to your corps members.

Slide #1

Hi everyone! Welcome!

Today we are going to take a closer look at the employability skills: Teamwork & Collaboration and Customer Service-Minded. What are they and why are they important to your career development?

Slide #2

Before we begin, we are going to take a quick temperature check. I'll give you a moment to think about how you're showing up to today's session. Then, we'll go around the room and each of you can share if you are feeling red, yellow, or green.

Allow 30 seconds for corps members to think, then go around the room to each individual for their 1 word response. Start with yourself. Acknowledge the results of the temperature check, for example say, "Looks like we have a lot of folks with low energy today. Let's see if we can change that!" or, "Wow! Look at how many people have high energy today! Let's channel that into a great session!" If there are any that need elaboration, encourage the participant to share why they feel that way. How much detail they divulge to others is up to them. It should be enough context so that other team members know how that person is showing up to today's session.



In the chat, let us know if you are red, yellow or green.

After the temperature activity is complete:

I have a few housekeeping notes before we move on: This session is very interactive, so please try to turn off any other distractions. We have some fun things planned, so I think you'll find that it goes by very quickly, and hopefully you will get something useful out of it! You should have some paper and a pen or pencil to work with today. If you are keeping a paper journal, that will work fine, but just make sure you have something to write on and with because we will be doing a few exercises where you will need them, and it is also always a good idea to take notes.



Give corps members a few minutes to grab pen and paper. Ask them to have their cameras on so we can all get to know each other a little better. Sessions are always more fun when we can actually see each other!

Slide #3

In today's session we are going to go over the definitions of teamwork and collaboration. We will engage in 2 group activities to learn more about these topics. Then, we'll discuss the basics of being customer service-minded where we will do a couple of role playing activities. At the end of the session, we'll take a moment to wrap up and do a quick exit ticket activity. So let's get started!

Slide #4

Let's start today's session by discussing the similarities and differences between teamwork and collaboration.

Slide #5

We have started all of your skills sessions with definitions of what we were focusing on in that session.

Today, I want you to come up with the definitions yourself! Your first job is to individually take a minute to, in your own words, first define teamwork, and then define collaboration. Don't overthink it, just take a shot and write down what you think these two words mean. It doesn't have to be perfect, but I would like you to write them down.

Give them 4 minutes to write down the definitions.

Okay, I'm going to stop you there - has everybody written something down so you each have something to work with? Good. I would like you all to pair up into groups of 2 for the next part of this activity.

Slide #6

For each of the terms you will read your individual definitions to your partner. Discuss similarities between your definitions and finally, work together to rewrite a definition that combines both of your ideas and determine what differences or similarities you see between the two words. I'm going to give you 10 minutes to do this! Any questions, comments, or concerns before you begin? Let's get started.

Give corps members 10 minutes with their partners to complete the activity. You may want to let them know once 5 minutes has passed. Bring the group back together and call on pairs to: Share their definitions and tell us about how it felt to do this activity. Depending on how many people you have, you can have 2 or 3 pairs share both points above, or if you have a lot of pairs, you can ask a few groups for definitions, and few others for their experience with the activity. The hope is to get as many voices in the room speaking up as possible. Keep an eye on your time.

One last question for the group: Other than coming up with a definition, what did this activity have to do with teamwork and collaboration?

Hopefully they will say something like, "We had to use both teamwork and collaboration to complete the activity! If not, you can point this out.



Use breakout rooms to put the corps members into pairs for this activity.

Slide #7

Great job everyone! We are now going to take on a new challenge and play a game called Lost at Sea! I'll put you all into groups for this next activity.

Separate corps members into even (or close to even) groups of 3 or more (depending on how many people you have).

Here is the situation: You are adrift on a private yacht in the South Pacific. As a consequence of a fire of unknown origin, much of the yacht and its contents have been destroyed. The yacht is now slowly sinking.

Your location is unclear because of the destruction of critical navigational equipment and because you and the crew were distracted trying to bring the fire under control. Your best estimate is that you are approximately one thousand miles south-southwest of the nearest land.

On the sheet in front of you is a list of fifteen items that are intact and undamaged after the fire. In addition to these articles, you have a serviceable, rubber life raft with oars large enough to carry yourself, the crew, and all the items listed below. The total contents of all survivors' pockets are a package of cigarettes, several books of matches, and five one-dollar bills.

Your task is to rank the fifteen items in terms of their importance to your survival. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important, and so on through number 15, the least important. You will do this twice: once alone and once as a group. I will give you 5 minutes to complete this activity by yourself and then 10 minutes with the group.

Before we start, let's go through each item and make sure everyone knows what it is. No judgment if any of the items are unfamiliar to you – some of them were new to me too!

Go through each item and make sure everyone knows what each means.

Okay, any remaining questions? Let's get started!

Allow 5 minutes for individual ranking. Inform corps members of the time and then allow for 10 minutes of group work.



Use breakout rooms to put the corps members into small groups.

Slide #8

After 15 minutes stop corps members.

Great job everyone. Now everyone should have 2 sets of rankings. One set of rankings that were determined individually and one set from your group rankings. Now I will show you the rankings from the experts – The US Coast Guard. You will add those numbers from the slide to column 3. Then compare your columns 1 & 2 to column 3 to tally your individual and team scores. The lower the score, the stronger your survival chances are.

According to the “experts,” the basic supplies needed when a person is stranded in mid-ocean are articles to attract attention and articles to aid survival until rescue arrives. Articles for navigation are of little importance since even if a small life raft were capable of reaching land, it would be impossible to store enough food and water to survive for that amount of time. Without signaling devices, there is almost no chance of being spotted and rescued.

If there are any controversial rankings, be sure to share the reasoning from the expert analysis page in the toolkit.

Slide #9

How did your team do? I’ll give you a few minutes to look over the scores together and see how you scored.

Allow 3 minutes for group discussion. After 3 minutes check in with the teams and ask the following debriefing questions from volunteers or selected corps members:

How did it feel to do this exercise?

What was the difference between doing it individually and doing it with your team?

HELPFUL TIP

Typically, the teams scores are lower, which reiterates the importance of collaboration and team work.



Use chat or ask participants to get off of mute to share their thoughts.

Slide #10

Awesome work everyone! We are now going to turn our attention to the skill, customer service-minded. How you show up and get work done in teams, collaboratively, and in the community are tied to having a basic understanding of customer service.

Slide #11

Let’s start with a definition of what we mean by “customer.” Would anyone like to share what they think a “customer” is?

Encourage and allow 1-3 volunteers to share their definition of a customer. Once corps members have shared their definition, share the toolkit definition.

For our purposes, a customer is anyone that we are “serving” or attending to in a professional setting or public-facing role. So this could be a client, student, community member, volunteer, beneficiary, project sponsor, and so on.

As we discussed in orientation, oftentimes when we hear the words “customer service” we think of the old saying, “the customer is always right.” This saying is often misunderstood to literally mean that the customer is really always correct.

What this employability skill actually means is that even if a customer is behaving badly, it is often the responsibility of the person representing the business or organization to be the bigger person and remain steadfastly patient and polite. Staying calm in the face of an angry customer is an important skill to have. Often, when one is kind and patient in the face of aggression, the aggressor has no choice but to settle down because there is nothing to fight against if nobody is fighting back. Being customer service-minded is not just about resolving conflict. People who are great at customer service love to make people feel welcome, and like they belong. They are focused on making the customer experience fun and efficient.

Most of all, they are able to see the big picture and know it is not just about them, but instead about reflecting the best version of the business or organization they represent. It's helpful to think of it, not as, "the customer is always right," but instead as, "treat others as you would want to be treated."

Slide #12

That said, it sometimes takes practice to know exactly what to do when faced with difficult customers. So that is exactly what we are going to do now! I am going to give you a few scenarios of difficult customers, and your job is to think about what you would like to say if you were not going to adjust your response to be customer service-minded (no cursing please!). And then, think about a better answer that uses your best customer service-mindedness. So, first – what you want to say! And then – what you should say.

Ready? Here we go.

Slide #13

Scenario #1 The Impatient Customer

You are managing a group of volunteers. One volunteer is getting impatient because they haven't been assigned tasks and are eager to get going. They have already come to you three times to ask for an assignment, but you are still getting organized for the day. The fourth time they come to you they show their irritation. Take a minute to think about how you would respond. Write down your thoughts if you need to.

Allow 1 minute for corps members to think about the scenario.

Alright, now I want to hear what you want to say. Would anyone like to volunteer what you want to say to this customer?

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

Now, I want to hear what you **SHOULD** say!

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

Good. Remember the volunteer is eager to get started, which isn't bad. What they might not understand is that there are things you need to do to get ready for the day that they are not seeing. Make your process transparent. Explain what you are waiting on and assure them they will get started soon. Apologize, but ask them politely to hold tight. You will come to them as soon as you are ready.



Use chat or ask corps members to get off of mute to share.

Slide #14



Scenario #2 The Moody Customer

One of your colleagues is inconsistent in their behavior. Some days they are talkative and collaborative and other days they put their headphones on and ignore everyone around them. This inconsistent behavior is frustrating to you especially since you need to collaborate on projects with them. What do you do?

Allow 1 minute for corps members to think about the scenario.

Alright, now I want to hear what you want to say. Would anyone like to volunteer what you want to say to this customer?

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

Now, I want to hear what you SHOULD say!

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

Good. Try your best not to take this moody behavior personally. Your customer's inconsistent behavior has more to do with them than you, so give them space. If you need to work with them on something, politely interrupt them, and ask your questions or alert them to a deadline that needs their input. If they seem irritated by the interruption then you might want to talk to them about how challenging it is to work with them if they seem bothered or talk to your supervisor or other program staff for support on how to address this moody customer.



Use chat or ask participants to get off of mute to share.

Slide #15



Scenario #3 When You Don't Know the Answer

A community member has asked you something specific about a program they are participating in. If you say, I don't know, they may leave and not participate in this important program. What do you do?

Allow 1 minute for corps members to think about the scenario. Alright, now I want to hear what you want to say. Would anyone like to volunteer what you want to say to this customer?

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

Now, I want to hear what you SHOULD say!

Allow 2-3 volunteers to respond to the question. If no volunteers or additional responses are needed, call on unique corps members to respond.

The best thing to do here is to assure them that you'll get back to them with an answer. And before they potentially decide to leave, describe what you do know and tell them very specifically when you can get that information to them. Get their contact information and make sure to follow-up!



Use chat or ask participants to get off of mute to share.

Slide #16

One of the most important skills in interacting with customers is the use of positive language to help avoid accidental knee-jerk reactions.

Here's an example: Let's say a customer contacts you with interest in a particular product, but that product happens to be backordered until next month.

Without positive language: "I can't get you that product until next month; it is backordered and unavailable at this time."

With positive language: "That product will actually be available next month. I can place the order for you right now and make sure that it is sent to you as soon as it reaches our warehouse!" Positive language replaces negative phrases like "I can't..." and instead places emphasis on the solution, which is what the customer actually cares about.

Slide #17

The bottom line is summed up in these three important customer service objectives:

- Empathize - with the customer's frustrating experience
- Explain - what the problem might be, instead of having a customer assume you make bad products
- Solution - make clear an immediate to the problem

Slide #18

Let's wrap up our discussion with this question: How might the helpful tips and tricks for being customer service-minded apply to how you approach your service year?

We talked a lot about what comes to mind when we speak of a typical customer, but what about the "customers" you interact with everyday?

Allow this time to be an open discussion.

Thank you so much for your time and attention today! Before we go, I would like to hear your thoughts about what you learned today or if there is any advice you would like to share.

Take a few minutes to allow for group discussion about the scenarios, definitions, and overview information. Allow each corps member to share advice or what stuck with them from the session. Share any anecdotes about your own customer service experiences as they relate to the session.



Use the chat or ask corps members to get off of mute.