MGMT 295: Customer Service: It's All an Act
Syllabus – Spring 2014
Dr. Santo D. Marabella

The following sub-sections are contained in this syllabus: course description, learning objectives, expected outcomes, course expectations, accommodations, required materials, research guidelines, grading policies assignments overview and schedule.

Course Description

As the quality of customer service goes from bad to worse, it is reasonable to re-think the models used for training customer service personnel. One fresh approach is to adapt theater for customer-service training. In this framework, every customer-service job has a character, much like a character in a play. If each customer service employee understands and plays their job character like the consummate actor, they will be more aware of what is really required to do their job.

In other words, great customer service is all an act! Not in an inauthentic way, but the way an actor plays a role in which they have no direct experience, they draw on their personal experience to give their character life. The best actors are authentic, present, trusting and disciplined. These attributes are applicable to understanding the job character of all types of customer service positions. In addition to job descriptions and job specifications, we need a job character profile — a "script" for the job character that describes the goals, context, communication and behaviors of the job character, and provides guidance about how to "act" in the customer-service position. Job character profiles can help customer service personnel not only know how and what to do in their jobs, but how and who to be in their jobs. If developed effectively, this can lead to better overall "performances."

The premise of this course is that theatre principles make a meaningful contribution to management training in the area of customer service. In this course, students will study what comprises each element of the job character profile, and learn how these elements can be taught and developed in customer service positions. Throughout the course, they will create, write, act, and train from what they research and learn. The final project will be a "performance" of the Job Character Profiles, and the accompanying interactive training module, they develop in student teams.

Learning Objectives

1. Provide the student with an enriched course in approaches to creating and managing effective customer service.
2. Integrate theatre principles as a foundation for understanding the "customer service act."
3. Use lecture, discussion, case analysis, technology, readings, presentations, experiential learning and group work to advance the student's understanding of the course material and to promote student participation and class discussion.
4. Demonstrate application of theory to successful customer service practices and behavior in the for-profit, public and not-for-profit (NFP) organization sectors.

Expected Outcomes

1. Knowledge of the most important and relevant terms, concepts, processes and competencies related to customer experience management.
2. Ability to create and apply the Job Character Profile to a variety of customer service categories for the purpose of enhancing and developing excellent customer service.

3. Awareness of emerging trends and theories in customer service.
4. Enhanced ability to conduct research, create and give presentations, and work in peer groups.

Course Expectations

1. PREPARATION:
   a. Read all assigned readings.
   b. Identify a relevant, current business news story, along with its source, for class discussion.
2. CLASS SESSIONS:
   a. Be on time, and stay for the entire class.
   b. Proactively participate in all classes (be emotionally, psychologically and socially present).
   c. All electronic communication, entertainment and information devices such as cell phones, tablets, iPods, laptops and pagers must be turned off or silenced during class (unless there is a family member health issue); refrain from sending/receiving/reading text messages and emails during class sessions
   d. You have a right to use a laptop/tablet to take notes during class. With that right, comes the responsibility to use it appropriately. Students who surf the Internet, IM or engage in activities other than note-taking will lose their right to take notes electronically.
3. ATTENDANCE POLICIES:
   a. Attend all classes (be physically present).
   b. Each student has one Free Pass (one permissible absence) to use at their discretion; notify the professor by email before using a Free Pass; Free Passes may not be used during any scheduled exams or final presentations, or when you have an individual presentation or assignment due.
   c. Excused absences are at the discretion of the professor and are typically granted for serious illness, a medical or family emergency; a scheduled athletic game/match/artistic performance, a professional obligation; notify the professor by email beforehand; or, in the case of emergency, an email or phone call as soon as possible is acceptable; if you need to take an excused absence, it is advisable that you do not also take advantage of your Free Pass.
   d. Any student who misses a class session for any reason is responsible for preparing readings, obtaining discussion notes and handouts and completing and submitting (on time) assignments for the session missed.
4. ASSIGNMENTS:
   a. No assignments – presentations, papers, case studies - will be accepted late. Be sure to confirm when your assignments are due.
   b. Grammar and spelling count – proof your work.
   c. Use APA (revised 6th edition) for citing all research done for written and presentation assignments.
      i. Use only author/year: Author (year) or (Author, year); if multiple sources are cited for the same point: (Author 1, year; Author 2, year)
      ii. No footnotes, no endnotes (no MLA) accepted
      iii. Listing of research cited at the end is called "References" (not Work Cited)
      iv. For a source to be listed, it must be cited in the paper or presentation document; and, If a source is cited in the paper or presentation document, it must be listed under References

       d. Conserve resources as much as possible – no title pages, no binders or fancy covers, 2-sided printing, staples instead of paper clips.

5. EMAIL:
    a. Email is best used to communicate absences, being late, request an appointment or express a concern; questions about course material, tests, or assignments usually are best handled through an in-person meeting or phone call.

6. IMPORTANT NOTES:
    a. It is within the Instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for a course
    b. This syllabus is my best effort at presenting a definitive statement on the course's policies, assignments and schedule; however, circumstances may arise that necessitate changes; if this occurs, students will be given as much advanced notice as possible.
    c. Accommodations: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Required Materials

Required Course Textbook:
Customer Experience Management, by Bernd H. Schmitt, 2003

Required Course Resource:
Great Customer Service: It's All an Act, by Santo D. Marabella, 2012

Required Reference:
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition, 2009 (corrected version of this edition should be referenced and is found in our Blackboard coursesite).   This reference is essential in preparing all written assignments for this course, and should be helpful in preparing assignments for other courses as well.

Quick Guide Link: APA QuickGuide by Reeves Library (15.735 KB)
APA Info Link: http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm
Additional APA Link: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
[Note: You may need to click the above links twice, because of security, to open in a new window]

Research Guidelines

It is important that classroom and textbook learning are augmented by *outside sources*. *Outside sources* are literature, data and information that has been obtained or developed by credible, quality practitioner, professional or academic publication sources AND not already being used in the course (i.e. the textbook are articles assigned for class).

The Internet is an excellent tool for identifying and acquiring research effectively and efficiently. It can save time and connect you with quality sources of literature and information. However, websites sponsored by organizations or individuals normally have little credibility or value in providing literature or information about anything other than the sponsoring individual or organization. The exception is if the website contains data from professional research studies or projects sponsored by the website owner, in which case it will be clear that the information is research rather than opinion or propaganda.

All research that students do needs to be cited according to the 2009 (6th edition) of the APA Publication Manual as revised.

> **Important Note:** The research you consult should be listed as citations for References. Unlike citations for Bibliographies that may permit all consulted sources, References include only those sources you **have actually used**. Citations are listed in a References list at the end of a written work or paper in alphabetical order, with the second line of text indented. Citations listed in the text of your work are listed as (last name and year) e.g. (Smith, 2005) or last name (year) e.g. Ramirez (2005).

> **Sample Citation**
> Sample APA citation format for the articles in the Article Reading sections of this course website, when you cite them in any assignments:

> Osborne, R. (1995). Company with a soul. Industry Week/IW, 244(9), 20-26. Retrieved [insert today's date without brackets], from Business Source Elite database.

Grading Policies

Measurement & Grading:

Sucky Service Presentation (individual, presentation)	25%
Job Character Profile (individual, written)	25%
Customer Service Acts (team, presentation)	30%
Total Quality Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Numerical & Corresponding Letter Grades:

93 and above - A [Distinguished performance]
Exceptional performance in all aspects of the course; highest level of learning, effort and participation are consistently demonstrated

90 - 92 - A-

86 - 89 - B+ [Very Good]
High levels of learning, effort and participation are often demonstrated

80 -85 - B [Good]
Sound performance in all aspects of the course

76 - 79 - C+

70 - 75 - C [Average Performance]
Acceptable level of learning, effort and participation are frequently demonstrated

65 - 69 - D [Marginal Performance]

Low or inconsistent levels of learning for most course topics; however, effort and/or participation is demonstrated consistently

64 and below - F
Little or no evidence of an acceptable level of learning, or effort

Academic Honesty:
Integrity and honesty are qualities considered to be the "norm" among students. However, any students who choose to deviate from that "norm," risk automatic failure in the course.

Assignments Overview
The following Assignments are required for this course:
- Sucky Service Presentation (individual, presentation) – 25%
- Job Character Profile (individual, written) – 25%
- Customer Service Acts – (team, presentation) - 30%
- Total Quality Participation - 20%

Students will select customer service categories as the focus for the three assignments: Sucky Service Presentation, Job Character Profile and Customer Service Acts. At least two different categories should be selected for the three assignments. The category options are:

A. Professions (Lawyers, doctors, accountants)
B. Call Centers
C. Hoteliers
D. Airlines
E. Not-for-Profits (NFPs)
F. Retail Stores
G. Restaurants
H. Government (federal, state, municipal)

Sucky Service Presentation
Each student will select a customer service category prepare a presentation on poor service using the following format:

1. Select a topic within your category that represents a *poor example* of one of the four values of a Job Character: authentic, present, trust, and disciplined.
2. Read at least five (5) articles from at least three different journals (e.g. Academy of Management Review, Harvard Business Review) or selective business periodicals (e. g. US News & World Reports, Business Week); consult with the Instructor for any clarifications) related to the specific topic you selected above (e.g., most appropriate leadership style for managing engineers); articles must be cited in the paper and listed in the "References" according to the APA style.
3. Find a real-life example from the literature or your own experience.
4. Create a visual presentation (e.g. PowerPoint or Prezi)
5. Submit a copy of your presentation to the professor on the date that you present to the class.
6. Grading will be based on:
   a. Content = 10 points
   b. Presentation = 8 points

      c. Research/References = 5 points
      d. Professionalism = 2 points

Job Character Profile

Each student will select a customer service category and prepare a written Job Character Profile for a customer service position within that category.

Follow the steps below:
1. The required elements of the Job Character Profile are:
   a. Customer Service Category
   b. Customer Service Position
   c. Job Character Research
   d. Character Goal
   e. Character Context
   f. Character Communication
   g. Character Behavior
2. Integrate the four values of Job Character – authentic, present, trust and disciplined – throughout the content of "d" through "g".
3. Incorporate outside research needs to be incorporated in "c" – at least 5 scholarly or business articles, books, websites or other literature.
4. Grading for this assignment will be based on:
   a. Research = 4 points
   b. Integration of Job Character Values = 9 points
   c. Potential Effectiveness for Enhancing Customer Service = 10 points
   d. Professionalism = 2 points

Customer Service Acts

Each student will be assigned to a production team that will create and present a customer service act. Follow the steps below:
1. Select a customer service category.
2. Create a scenario of poor customer service in that category.
3. Research the elements of the scenario that includes what constitutes poor service and what would minimize this poor service and create excellent service in this case. A minimum of 10 outside references is required.
4. Develop a Job Character Profile that can be implemented in this scenario.
5. Write a script that contains two acts: Act I – poor service; Act II – excellent service based on implementing the Job Character Profile
6. Submit the Job Character Profile and script to the professor according to the due date in the course schedule.
7. Produce and present the Customer Service Act as scheduled by the Professor (either during the final week of class or exam week).
8. Grading will be based on:
   a. Research = 6 points
   b. Job Character Profile = 7 points
   c. Customer Service Act Script = 10 points
   d. Audience Reviews = 5 points
   e. Professionalism = 2 points

Total Quality Participation

As outlined in the Expectations section of this syllabus, you are expected to attend all classes, come to class prepared and on time and participate as much as possible in all class sessions. All of these factors are considered in calculating your participation grade which is 20% of your final course grade.

Weekly News Update

For each class session, students should be prepared to present a news item relevant to the course. You may use the following sources: NPR Radio; KYW Newsradio; Daily Show, Colbert Report, CNBC, CNN; ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox News; Time, Newsweek and Atlantic Monthly; New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal and The Morning Call. You must cite your source, but no written paper is required. A roster of possible topics can be found on our Blackboard coursesite.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Activities/Deadlines
1	1/16	COURSE OVERVIEW: INTRODUCTIONS: student interest in the course		Select Service Focus from Eight (8) Categories (must select at least two different categories for the three assignments): • Sucky Service Presentation • Job Character Profile • Team Performance
2	1/23	Approaches to Customer Service Marabella Model	Chapter 1	Additional Readings: Great Customer Service: It's All an Act
3	1/30	CEM Framework Acting 101	Chapter 2	Sucky Service Presentations: Professions (Lawyers, doctors, accountants)
4	2/06	Experiential World of the Customer	Chapter 3	Sucky Service Presentations: Call Centers
5	2/13	The Experiential Platform	Chapter 4	Sucky Service Presentations: Hoteliers
6	2/20	Designing the Brand Experience	Chapter 5	Sucky Service Presentations: Airlines
7	2/27	Structuring the Customer Interface	Chapter 6	Sucky Service Presentations: Not-for-Profits (NFPs) CSA #1
8	3/06	SPRING BREAK		
9	3/13	Continuous Innovation	Chapter 7	Sucky Service Presentations: Retail Stores CSA #2, 3
10	3/20	Integrated Customer Experience	Chapter 8	Sucky Service Presentations: Restaurants CSA #4
11	3/27	Customer Experience Management	Chapter 9	Sucky Service Presentations: Government (federal, state, municipal); CSA #5
12	4/03	Customer Service Topic Investigations		
13	4/10	Customer Service Reports		
14	4/17	TEAM REHEARSALS		

MGMT 295 – SPRING 2014 - COURSE SCHEDULE

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Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**Readings**	**Activities/Deadlines**
15	4/23	TEAM PERFORMANCES		
16	4/20	FINAL EXAM		