

Utility Resilience Through Customer Service Integration

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WATER FINANCE
ASSISTANCE

What do you **do** every day?



All of us **serve** customers.

So, we all provide **customer
service.**



Good News!!!

You already know what **is and isn't good** customer service because you have **experienced** it.



To Start Our Discussion

What words come to mind when you think of **excellent customer service**?

What about **bad customer service**?



Customer
service is a
two-way street

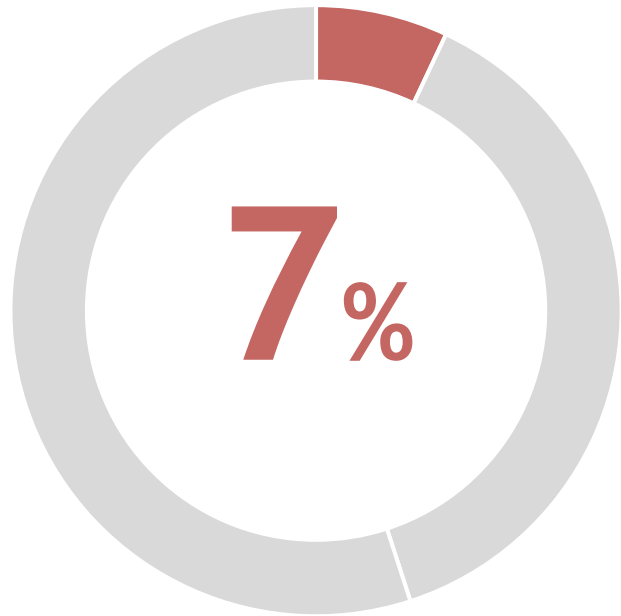


The Basics

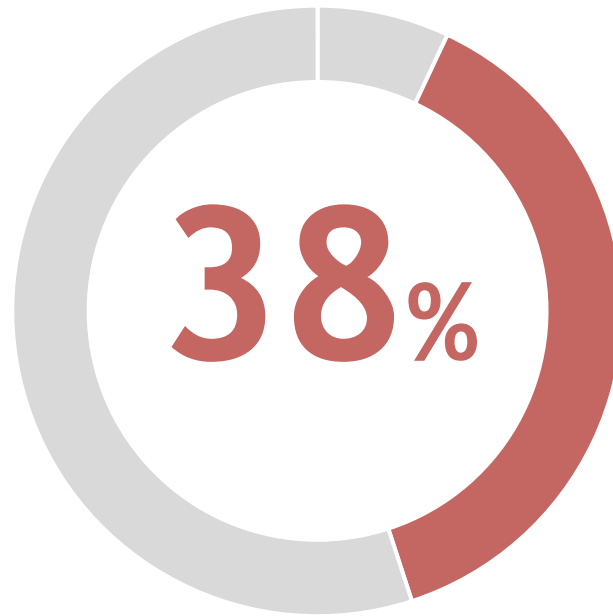
- The **words** we use
- Our **tone** of voice
- Our **body language**



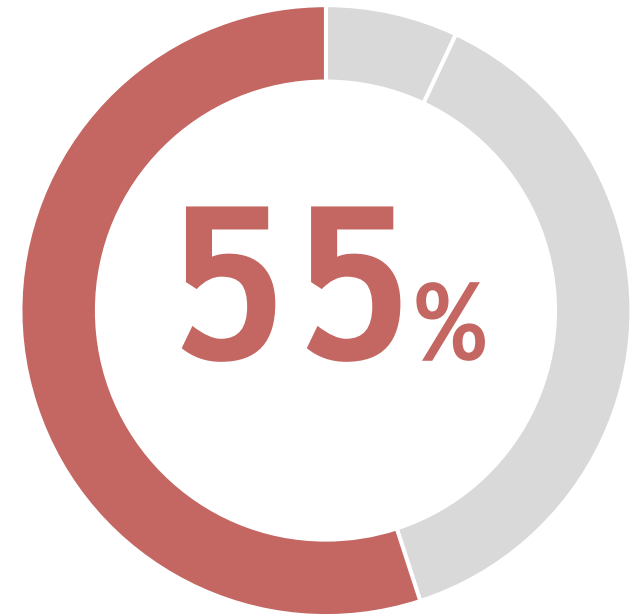
Communication Breakdown



WORDS



TONE



BODY LANGUAGE



The Words We Use

- We have to consider **how much knowledge our customers have** about water and wastewater
- What do they want out of the interaction?
- Goal is to create trust



The Words We Use

- We don't all have the same definition for words



Pre-2020

VS



Since 2020



The Words We Use

What do you think a customer feels when they hear the term “maximum contaminant level”?



The Words We Use

What do you think a customer feels when they hear the term “maximum contaminant level”?



Our Tone of Voice: Volume



Our Tone of Voice: Variety



Our Tone of Voice

- **Context:** Does your tone match the nature of the information you're sharing?
- **Confidence:** Do you sound confident and knowledgeable?



Decoding Body Language

Negative Body Language

- Arms folded in front of the body
- Minimal or tense facial expression
- Body turned away or slumped
- Eyes downcast, maintaining little contact
- Gazing at something else or into space
- Fidgeting, picking, fiddling



Decoding Body Language

Positive Body Language

- Have an open posture
- Maintain good eye contact
- Avoid touching your face
- Use open hand gestures
- Lean forward to look engaged



Advanced Skills

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Self-awareness



Active Listening

1

Stop Talking

2

Give Your Customer Your Undivided Attention

3

Notice Your Customer's Tone of Voice and Body Language

4

Take Detailed Notes

5

Repeat What You Think You've Heard (Paraphrase)

6

Ask Insightful Questions to Understand Your Customer's Needs



Empathy

How to practice empathy:

- Listen carefully
- Avoid assumptions
- Start with a positive statement
- Understand their priorities
- Allow the customer to vent, to “get it all out”
- Be respectful
- Take ownership



Self-Awareness & Understanding Triggers

In your groups:

Discuss what customer situations **frustrate** you the most?

How do you deal with these frustrations?



Self-Awareness & Understanding Triggers

- Understand the situations that frustrate you the most
- Stop your initial reaction
- Listen to your body- increased heart rate, sweating, shaking, etc.
- Guard your body language
- **Remember, it's not you, it's the situation**



Exercise



Exercise



Exercise

The Challenge:

- Create a public announcement to communicate to your customers that a restriction has been placed on washing vehicles due to the ongoing drought.

Considerations:

- How would you present your announcement to your audience?
- What information would you include?
- How long would it be?
- How do you demonstrate good customer service in your announcement?
- What information do you present?



Thank You!



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