

# THE IN-HOUSE TRAINING COMPANY

## Overview

This practical one-day course has a simple objective: to raise customer service and support standards by instructing, equipping and inspiring participants to delight customers through excellent written communication.

Participants will acquire essential writing tools, skills and methods and will identify areas for improvement.

## Training objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Establish the standards and systems that can make every customer (whether external or internal) feel special when they receive the participants' email or letter
- Recognise and meet the needs of the reader
- Produce excellent letters and e-mails with much greater confidence
- Write in a natural, flowing manner, which is accessible to the reader
- Adapt the tone and style of writing to the circumstances
- Express the content more clearly, concisely and correctly
- Identify what information the customer needs and write with empathy, putting themselves in the customers' shoes
- Plan letters and emails systematically and improve the layout, flow and structure
- Use simple, jargon-free English to communicate the information
- Avoid basic spelling, grammar and punctuation errors
- Produce letters and e-mails which are concise, create a positive impression and meets the customer's needs
- Improve the visual layout, format and appearance
- 'Own' all aspects of producing the correspondence
- Correspond with customers in a way which makes the customer feel like an individual who matters to the organisation
- Deal with complex or multi-stage problems more effectively
- Satisfy complainers, calm upset customers and regain confidence and goodwill
- Turn problems into opportunities.

## Audience

This course is ideal for all those who either work at the front line of customer service, working with customers or colleagues face-to-face, especially in retail, hospitality or service environments.

## Format

The training is very practical and objective. Very clear and specific skills, models and techniques are covered. The focus is on improving things that are already working, not going over old ground. Participants will discuss and plan new approaches to real-life examples taken from their own situations.

The sessions will include practice in applying particular skills, exercises in critical analysis, group and tutor review. Participants are asked to send to the trainer before the course, and bring to the workshop, a selection of recent business documents. This is essential, as they will be needed for assignments during the workshop review sessions that are run regularly during the course. In this way, no matter what type of documents a participant produces, the course will be relevant and they will receive specific instruction and feedback.

Each element of the course includes:

- High-quality training presentation
- Group exercises and team activities
- High degree of participation and interaction

The presentations and exercises are tailored to specific situations from participants' work. The style is up-beat and motivational.

## Special features

This course works particularly well when participants bring examples of complaints (whether emails or letters) they have received and the responses they have sent. These can then be used in some of the practical exercise sessions.

## The expert trainer

Graham specialises in providing high-quality consultancy, coaching and training in customer service, sales and personal productivity – including writing skills. Not only does he have a vast range of experience and expertise in all aspects of customer service – from skills, through to standards and ‘systems’ – but he is also a prolific author, a regular contributor to journals and many websites with more than a dozen best-selling books to his credit. This unusual combination of skills makes him the ideal person to design and deliver training on how to give brilliant customer service through written communication.

Over the last fifteen years, he has trained more than 5,000 people in customer service skills alone. His work has taken him all over the world and involved him in working closely with hundreds of different organisations from all business sectors, including Nortel, SaudiAramco, BT, FT Online, Apple Computers, Thomson Financial, Seico Insurance, British Film Institution, GPS UK, Cosmos Travel, Intel, Gateway Computers, Ambius (Rentokil-Initial), Ping Europe, GoNative, De LageLanden, Wincanton, Strutt & Parker, My Family Care, OpenText, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, Skin Health Spa, North Herts Homes and many, many others.

Graham’s client list in other areas includes such organisations as Vodafone, AT&T, Orange, Pfizer, GSK, Boots, Unilever, American Express, Thomas Cook, Sony, ASOS, OpenText, Motorola, Cisco, MFI, Barclays Bank, LIFFE, Abbey National, Prison Service, Home Office, Law Society, BBC, Black & Decker, Daimler-Chrysler, Citroen, Weetabix, Nikon, Shell and many, many others. In addition he has written over a dozen books published in several different countries, including *Companies don’t succeed – people do!*, *90 Brain Teasers for Trainers*, *Customer Service Games for Training*, *Sales Training Games*, *Telephone Tactics* and *Working Smarter*.

Known internationally as both a trainer and a popular motivational speaker, Graham believes that effective learning has to be interactive and challenging. All his learning events are built around practical exercises, role play and case studies. His training style focuses not on just explaining new ideas or developing new skills, but also on motivating people to use them and to develop themselves as individuals. This approach gets results, as the following comments from course participants show:

- ‘Brilliant course, really interesting and very focused to my job role and day to day work.’
- ‘Took away some very good ideas that I can use every day... good examples too.’
- ‘Full of useful hints and tips which I will apply to my job.’
- ‘Extremely well presented and structured’
- ‘A very intensive course and a lot of concrete tools provided.’
- ‘Very good... contained everything we do on a regular basis and problems we have come across... the exercises made it very interesting too.’

## Course outline

### 1 Introduction

- Course objectives
  - To raise customer service and support standards
  - To instruct, equip and inspire participants to delight customers at every contact they have
- Personal objectives – and introducing the ‘Learning Diary’
- Understanding who your customers are – by personality type
- Where are we now? Review of examples of email and written communication from you and others in your organisation

### 2 Making every customer feel SPECIAL

- The main types of service and support offered today – how do you rate?
- The difference that makes a difference – examples of good and bad service situations
- The seven qualities that make customers feel SPECIAL
  - **S**peed and time
  - **P**ersonal / personalise
  - **E**xpectations – manage and exceed
  - **C**ompetence / courtesy
  - **I**nformation
  - **A**ttitude

- **L**ong-term relationship and follow-through
- Applying the SPECIAL qualities to your job and to all your written communications

### **3 Workshop I**

- Participants work in pairs to read sample letters and emails (theirs and given examples) and draft replies
- The replies are then reviewed and improved in a larger group
- Do the replies communicate 'SPECIAL'?

### **4 Rules and standards for effective writing**

- George Orwell's famous maxim
- Why write? – clarifying your aim and objectives
- Understanding what the customer is saying, what they really mean and what outcome or objective they are seeking
- The seven-step method for better preparation
- The three-stage process for writing well
- Different types of response, content and structure – using the 80:20 rule to analyse and simplify your response
- Grouping information for your reader
- The ten most common mistakes when replying to emails or letters
- The good, the bad and the ugly – real life examples

### **5 Proof reading**

- The difference between proof-reading and editing
- Proof-reading methods and strategies
- Proof-reading marks and techniques
- Training your eye for detail
- Knowing what to look for

### **6 Effective editing**

- Grammar and English standards – avoiding cliché and getting your tone right
- Words that create positive reactions
- Sentences – units of thought that make sense and add value
- Paragraphs and headings – structuring themes for easier understanding
- Saying what you mean – active v passive language

### **7 Workshop II**

- Participants work in pairs to read sample difficult, contentious or possibly litigious letters and emails (theirs and given examples) and draft replies
- These are then reviewed in a larger group and further improved if possible
- Do the replies communicate 'SPECIAL'?

### **8 How's your English?**

- Grammar quizzes and punctuation test
- Spotting spelling errors
- Rephrasing jargons and clichés
- Common error's and mistakes

### **9 Pulling it all together**

- Review of individual learning points