Attention: Focus on the Customer
(60 minutes)

Reemphasize that in this program you may use the terms customers, clients, visitor, and guests to mean the same person. Also, point out again that each customer is judging his or her own service experience, and good service must be given to each customer to create positive moments of truth.

Developing a service attitude will put you in a perfect position to focus on the second “A” of service: Attention.

Earlier, when you discussed your own service experiences or experiences of customers you have encountered in your job, it was clear that customers want to be noticed and made to feel important. Customers want to feel important to you.

Learning a bit about cultural diversity will help give you knowledge and skills for more effective understanding and communication in intercultural situations.

The first step is to know your own culture and to know yourself. This includes understanding how you perceive things and how you act on those perceptions.

Second, the more sensitive you are to the different cultural beliefs, values and attitudes of your customers, the better prepared you will be to recognize and to accommodate the differences in their cultural behaviors.
An awareness of cultural differences and recognizing how you respond to those differences can help you to focus on the customer and avoid hidden biases or stereotypes that are barriers to good communication and excellent service.


DISPLAY SLIDE

“Attention: Focus on the Customer”

Paying attention and focusing on the customer begins by considering the following questions.

- What does the customer **WANT**?
- What does the customer **NEED**?
- What does the customer **THINK**?
- What does the customer **FEEL**?

DISPLAY SLIDE:

“Culture Shapes our”

This is important because what customers want, need, think and feel are shaped by their culture.
Knowing this we can go beyond these basics by beginning to think about questions such as:

- What is important to my customer?
- What are they trying to accomplish?
- What are their goals?

Do customers understand you? Are both your language and your intentions being communicated effectively?

**DISPLAY SLIDE:**
“Perception”

Perception is an important aspect of providing service across cultures. Remember, our experiences as well as the hidden or “under the waterline” dimensions of culture influence our perceptions.

**DISPLAY SLIDE:**
Who do you see? Perception Exercise “Old Woman/Young Woman”

Many of you are familiar with this picture. What do you see?

*Expect answers: “old woman” or “young woman.”*

How many of you see the old woman? How many see the young woman? How many see both?

You might want to point out both figures. The old woman is facing left with her chin tucked down into a fur collar and a white scarf over her hair. She is looking toward the lower left corner. The young woman appears to be from the 1890s. She is also facing left, but is in profile looking away. The old woman’s nose is her jaw. She has a feather in her dark, upswept hair.

This exercise suggests that we see with our minds, not with our eyes. Our own “below the waterline” experiences and cultural dimensions affect how we see things.

As a service provider, the important thing is to understand what your customer sees in a service situation.

Perception is also important when getting (and giving) information from customers. You need to recognize that some words may mean different things to different people. They may have a different perception (understanding) than you.

Let’s try a perception exercise to illustrate this.

I’ll read four phrases. Answer the question in your mind, and the write down your response to each phrase. Responses should be a number, and there is no right or wrong answer.