

Facilitator's Discussion Guide to the E-learning Module "Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service"

Welcome to the Facilitator's Guide for "Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service." This guide can help facilitators, trainers, and managers in planning and facilitating a learning session on serving customers with disabilities, and be useful in working with the e-learning module.

Note that this guide is a part of the course "Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service." The End User Agreement and copyright rules apply to any documents, resources, and materials that form part of the course, including this guide. See the End-User Agreement for more information.

Customer service standard

The customer service standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force January 1, 2008. The standard applies to all organizations, both public and private, which provide goods or services in Ontario and have one or more employees.

The customer service standard requires service providers to train staff on customer service for people with disabilities. This training must be given to everyone in an organization who deals with members of the public and other third parties.

Training must also be given to everyone who develops policies, procedures and practices about the provision of goods or services to the public or other third parties. This includes management and senior leaders of an organization even though they may not be directly involved in providing goods or services to people with disabilities. Other staff members to be trained include employees, volunteers, agents or contactors and others who could reasonably be expected to interact with the public on your behalf or influence the development of policies, practices and procedures.

Customization

To make this learning more meaningful, it is recommended that you customize this content to your particular service. For example, create customer service scenarios unique to your service sector. Think of how your service areas may not be accommodating customers with disabilities. Ask if there is any public and customer feedback that you can review to draw upon in your preparations.

Preparation Checklist

1. As the facilitator, ensure that you have reviewed and completed the course yourself. There are a number of compliance assistance resources that would be useful to review. These can be downloaded from www.AccessON.ca or from the Resources Section of Serve-Ability.

2. It is recommended that you print out and review any additional material mentioned in the module, such as the tip sheets on welcoming customers with disabilities that are available on www.AccessON.ca.
3. Your preparations should aim to create an event that is a model of accessibility. Check the training room you are going to use ahead of time to ensure it is fully accessible and check if employees taking your session need any accommodation. This webpage provides a guide on how to hold accessible meetings: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/how/howto_meeting.htm
4. Ensure that accommodations for participants with disabilities have been arranged ahead.
5. Print and organize your handouts for distribution at your session.

Sample agenda for the facilitated session

Activity	Outcome	Timing
“Break the Ice” and “Test your Awareness”	Welcome participants, creating a relaxed atmosphere	Five minutes
“Test your awareness”	Participants conduct a self-evaluation of attitudes and awareness of the experiences of people with disabilities using the awareness quizzes contained in the Resources Section of this e-learning course	10 minutes
Facilitated discussion	Discussion and learning based on the Serve-Ability course	One hour
Provide handouts	Distribute any handouts	Five minutes
Closing	Participants evaluate their learning	Five minutes
Total Time		1.25 hours

Points to convey

Removing barriers

- A major barrier for people with disabilities is attitudes.
- Removing physical barriers is a start, and can be the easiest barrier to remove.
- Building accessibility into the life and operation of an organization can help avoid costly accessibility mistakes or the creation of unintentional barriers.

Statistics

- About one in seven (1.85 million) Ontarians has a disability
- Over 47 per cent of people over the age of 65 have disabilities
- As the general population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase

Spending Power

- Customers with disabilities form a significant consumer group with a spending power of \$21-25 billion a year, according to the Royal Bank of Canada.
- People with disabilities like to eat out, travel, work and enjoy retirement
- 75 per cent of people with disabilities in Canada, Europe and the United States are physically and financially able to travel
- Seniors and people with disabilities will represent 20-25 per cent of the Canadian recreation, retail, entertainment, work place and housing marketplaces in the next 10 years and beyond

Employment opportunities

- People with disabilities are an untapped labour market potential
(Source: Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2001)

Tips for facilitators

- A facilitator's role is not to comment on the input received from others, or to judge, but to set a context where people communicate candidly.
- Work to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, and where people feel comfortable discussing and sharing. Many people may have had ideas or questions about people with disabilities, and this is an opportunity to raise them, and get clarification. In this way, you, the facilitator, are helping to build the way to a more inclusive society.
- People learn in different ways, and some participants may have disabilities that need to be accommodated in their learning. Some people think in pictures, for example, and need visual aids and demonstrations. Others prefer listening closely and writing. Still others need to experience and know what "it feels like" to absorb new learning.
- Remind participants that attitudes towards people with disabilities can be based on what some people believe the human experience should be like. Everyone is unique and life experiences and lessons are not based on stereotypes. It is important to break down barriers, physical or otherwise, to give everyone an equal opportunity for living their potential.
- Evaluate your group's knowledge and understanding of customers with disabilities.
 - How much do they know about disabilities?
 - How much do they know about serving customers with disabilities?
 - What would be some common perceptions about people with disabilities?
 - How knowledgeable are they on the rights of people with disabilities?

Build on strengths and understanding

- Pose questions that generate and stimulate discussions. This will help people examine attitudes that they or others around them may have about customers with disabilities.
- Acknowledge and value the different experiences and values of each person at the session, and respond accordingly.

Set ground rules

- To keep the facilitated session on track and on time you might want to establish some “ground rules.” Sample guidelines:
 - Ensure cell phones, pagers and blackberry devices are turned off
 - One person speaks at a time
 - Inform the group that everyone is to have an opportunity to share experiences and information—no one individual should dominate the session
 - State: “If there are questions—please ask. I may not have the answer immediately, but I can try and find it for you.”
 - Also remind participants to respect confidentiality and privacy. “What is said in this room, stays in this room.”

Content for discussion and learning

The following scenario was mentioned in the Decision Maker's Section of "Serve-Ability." The scenario can be used as a test, and for discussion and learning.

Daphne met her friend Justin for lunch at a small neighbourhood restaurant. When the waitress noticed Justin's guide dog, she said: "I'm sorry but because we serve food, your dog will have to stay outside."

Which of the following statements is true:

- a) The waitress was right, service animals are not allowed anywhere where food is prepared or served.
- b) The waitress must let Justin keep his guide dog with him in the restaurant. Although another law prevents animals from going where food is prepared, it makes an exception for service dogs in areas where food is served or sold.
- c) The waitress was just following her restaurant's policy that dogs are not permitted – it doesn't matter what the law says.

"B" is correct! And there are a few more points to remember about serving a customer with a service animal:

- ▶ Speak directly to your customer and don't treat the animal as a pet.
- ▶ Avoid touching or talking to service animals – they're working and have to stay focused.
- ▶ Avoid making assumptions about the animal. Not all service animals wear special collars or harnesses. If you're not sure whether the animal is a pet or a service animal, just ask your customer. You can ask for a letter verifying that it is a service animal. Normally, you can tell.

Encourage discussion and learning

- Here are some sample questions based on the module to encourage discussion and learning about how to serve customers with disabilities and to change behaviours:
 - What points stood out to you the most?
 - How can you improve service for customers with disabilities?
 - What are some examples of customer service delivered with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity?
- You may want to use the questions posed in the course under the section "Serving Customers with Disabilities" as a basis for discussion. The "Serving Customers with Disabilities" section deals with major disabilities. As information about each disability is conveyed in that section, questions are posed to the e-learner.
- You can use those questions for group discussion, either by going through the course together, or posing them after everyone has taken "Serve-Ability" individually.

Summary of Training Requirements under the Standard

- Review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Review of the requirements of the customer service standard
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities
- Instruction on how to interact with people with various types of disabilities who use assistive devices
- Instruction on how to use equipment or assistive devices available on your premises or that you otherwise provide that may help with the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities
- Instruction about how to interact with people with disabilities who have a guide dog or other service animal
- Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person when you are providing service to them
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services
- Training on your policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

