

Building client-centric culture in the organization

- **Learning objective:** The game is primarily targeted for the fresh recruits in an organization. The game is relevant for an organization that is in the business of making customized products or services based on the client's requirements. Following are the objectives of the game:
 1. To inculcate the culture of "customer orientation" among the participants.
 2. To make the participants aware of communication gaps in client interactions.
 3. To bring to the notice of participants issues like change management, handling customers etc.
- **No. Of Participants:** 4 teams of six persons each. There would be an external member who should act as a customer to the four teams.
- **Playing Time:** Overall time of the game would range from 2 to 3 hours. The time for individual hours is divided as follows:
- **Required Materials:** The materials include plastic boxes of different colors and sizes. The typical colors include red, green and blue. The participants are also provided with markers, papers, glue and pens.
- **To Play:** The game would be played as follows:
 1. Each team would decide a hypothetical construction company name for their team. Throughout the game, the team would be addressed by this name.
 2. The basic objective of each team would be to construct the plastic houses as per the customer requirement and sell them. The price of each house will be determined by how best the house fits to the customer requirements.

3. Each team would elect a customer representative and a team leader. Only the customer representative of the team can contact the customer. The team leader's role would be to co-ordinate activities among the team members.
4. In the initial phase of the game, the customer representative would meet the client and gets the requirements for the house. The typical requirements could include the color, size, width, no of rooms etc.
5. Then the customer representative would convey the requirements to the team members. Accordingly the team leader would distribute the work among the team members.
6. If there are any doubts/issues about the requirements during the construction, the team would bring them to the customer representative's notice. He/she would in turn meet the customer to resolve the issue.
7. To simulate the real life scenario, the person acting as the customer could change the requirements in the middle of the construction. The customer representative would convey the new changes to team. The team leader would try to incorporate the changes with minimal rework. The process would go on till we get a perfect match between client's requirements and the actual house.
8. Typically the team who satisfies the customer the fastest would be declared the winner.

➤ **Summary:**

The game serves to achieve some general goals and other specific ones. First we would highlight the general ones.

Since the game is primarily designed as a training exercise for new recruits it would provide an opportunity for breaking the ice. It would help them familiarize with the organisation culture in general- what is the chain of command, what amount of responsibility is delegated to the team members, how formal or informal are the interactions with seniors

etc. It would help the new people gel with the organization. Since it would require all the participants to contribute the new members quickly become a valued asset to the team. Moreover it would provide a platform for the more reticent members of the organization to come forth and express themselves. These games can also be a means to scout for hidden talent in an organisation.

Specifically the person would be familiarized with the customer handling process followed by the organization. It would help in highlighting the importance of a customer centric work culture. The game would bring into focus the basic customer handling skill a person possesses so that they can be improved. It would cover the art of questioning the customer to assess his requirements. In most situations it is essential to question the customer many times. Thus it would have to be ensured that the person doesn't sound intrusive or irritate the customer. Listening skills would also be assessed. It could be seen whether the person frequently cuts off the customer in mid sentence or listens patiently to him. In the initial phase, the emphasis is on understanding the customer requirements. The role of customer representative involves understanding the customer requirements, conveying the same to the team and handling the changing client needs etc. The role is specifically designed to make participants aware of the need to understand the customer, how the communication gaps will be magnified in a three-layered communication process and how the customer needs changes in a real life situation. The customer representative should also learn to handle unhappy customers and prevent unnecessary escalation of such calls. It is also very important to adapt swiftly to the changing moods of the different customers. It is often observed that an unpleasant conversation with a customer tends to ruin the employee's mood for the rest of the day. It is thus especially important to bounce back quickly after any such encounters.

The role of team and the team leader in particular demonstrates the need to think in the “shoes of the customer”, the need to have flexible and adaptive mindset. Since he/she doesn't have any direct communication with the customer it is imperative that extra precautions are taken to bridge the communication gap. Moreover the directions towards the team members should also be free from any ambiguity. These are the parameters on which the team leader could be judged.

Another parameter to judge would be the consistency of service provided by the different teams. The more the consistency the better the customer experience with organisation in the long run.

In the end rest of the teams could compare themselves with the winning team to assess their own shortcomings. For the company executives monitoring the game it would serve as a yardstick to measure the strength areas of the organisation in general and individual in particular. This would help in future in designing training programs and deciding on team composition.