

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the page, with the fingers interlaced. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white, suggesting an office or professional setting. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the skin and the creases in the hands.

**Building Rapport**  
*Partner Training Modules*  
**Module Seven**

### Primary Objective of the Workshop

1. Reinforcing the importance of establishing and maintaining rapport with customer.
2. Learn and apply techniques for building relationships and communicating more effectively with customers.

### Before you conduct the workshop

1. Verify that the PowerPoint is loaded and ready to run.
2. If the workshop includes video and you are going to use it, verify the proper operation of the video.
3. Verify the printing of the workbooks & the availability of pens/pencils.
4. Check the room set up.

### Facilitation Keys to Remember

1. Review the slides and key points.
2. Talk to the participants, not the screen.
3. When you ask a question, let participants answer.
4. Ask questions early on to get workshop participants immediately engaged.
5. The participants should talk 50% of the time.
6. Try to get most of the participants involved in the conversation.
7. When participants ask a question, repeat the question so that everyone hears it.



**Slide 1 – Imperative 1**

Introduce Module Seven of the Partnership Training Modules.

The first imperative is to establish and maintain rapport with customers.



**Slide 2 – Imperative 2**

This module will also focus on applying techniques for building relationships and communicating with customers.



**Slide 3 – Establishing Rapport 1**

Rapport is a relationship marked by harmony, conformity, accord or affinity. Rapport is a friendly relationship based on trust and an understanding of mutual needs and concerns.



**Slide 4 – Establishing Rapport 2**

Establishing the kind of rapport necessary to provide top quality service begins the moment you make contact with a customer. The first step, making a positive first impression, takes place within the first 30 seconds of the interaction.



**Slide 5 – First Impressions**

You must take every precaution to ensure that the Customer’s first impression of you is positive. In the first 30 seconds it is possible to form a negative first impression that could be impossible to ever make up for.



**Slide 6 – Non-Verbal communication**

Both verbal and non-verbal communication are essential to creating a positive first impression. Ask participants to give examples of ways to create positive first impressions non-verbally.

Discuss their answers. Highlight the following:

- Be enthusiastic
- Look sharp
- Eye contact
- Smile
- Pay attention
- Shake hands
- Keep an open friendly tone
- Friendly body language



**Slide 7 – Verbal Communication**

Ask participants, what are some ways to create a positive first impression verbally?

Discuss participant answers and emphasize the following:

- Introduce yourself
- Never hurts to start
- Use their name
- Warm greeting
- Use polite language
- Speak slowly/clearly
- Ask questions – then listen to their answers



### Slide 8 – Listening (Exercise)

Mutual understanding is a key to customer rapport. Ask participants to answer the following questions aloud as a group. Read questions giving them a pause to answer:

1. What do you call a tree that has acorns? (“oak”)
2. What do you call a funny story? (“joke”)
3. What do you call the sound made by a frog? (“croak”)
4. What do you call the **white** of an egg?

If they answer “yolk” to question 4, correct them. It is an egg white. Not the yolk.



### Slide 9 – Listening Barriers

We think faster (625 words per minute) than people speak (125 wpm) and so we don’t listen carefully. We listen to the first part of what somebody is going to say and then finish the sentence in our minds from our own perspective.

This is just one of the many **barriers** to effective listening. Ask participants to identify some other potential barriers to effective listening.

Discuss their answers. Highlight the following:

- Electronics
- Preoccupied
- Distracted
- Being impatient
- Disinterested
- Noises
- Discomfort
- Biases
- Hearing what we want/expect
- Cultural myths, accents
- “Buzz” words
- “Hot buttons”
- Fatigue/illness
- Hunger

Listening is truly an art. We have to make a concerted effort to be good at it.



**Slide 10 – Active Listening**

Ask participants what are some non-verbal ways that you can show customers that you are listening.

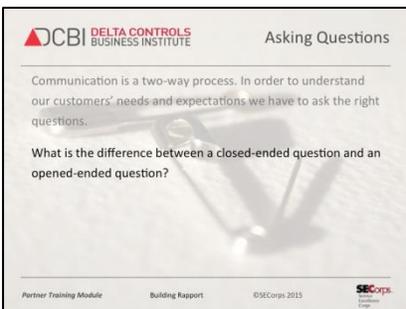
Discuss their answers. Highlight the following:

- Eye contact
- Asking for more details
- Nod
- Asking follow-up questions
- Lean forward
- Take notes



**Slide 11 – Asking Questions**

Communication is a two-way process. In order to understand customers' needs and expectations we have to ask the right questions.



**Slide 12 – Asking Questions**

Ask participants to explain the difference between a closed-ended and an open-ended question. Which provides more information? Discuss their answers. Highlight the following:

**Closed Ended:** The question typically has a “Yes” or “No” and “Either” “or” answer.

Examples:

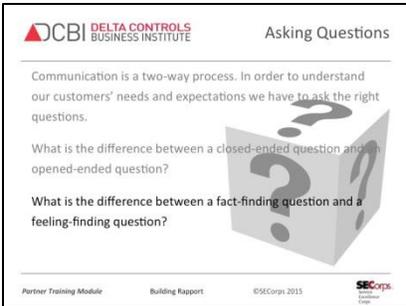
- “Is your office too cold?”
- “Would you like some coffee?”

**Open Ended (Typically start with):** Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Can you please tell me more.

Examples:

- “How’s the temperature in your office?”
- “What would you like to drink?”

Both types of questions are useful and appropriate, but open-ended questions will provide you with more information and create more rapport.



### Slide 13 – Fact-Finding & Feeling-Finding

Ask participants what the difference between a fact-finding question and a feeling-finding question is.

Discuss their answers. Highlight the following:

#### **Fact Finding Questions**

They either open or close or gather more facts.

“Do you want regular or decaf?”

#### **Feeling Finding Questions**

They are rapport-building questions that also uncover needs. Use such words as “think”, “feel”, “like”, “believe.” These words convey that we value their thoughts/opinions.

“Which do you prefer – regular, decaf or something else?”



### Slide 14 – Demonstrating Empathy

Demonstrating empathy means that we put ourselves in the Customer’s shoes. Otherwise, it is impossible to communicate, much less try to help them solve their problems.

One of the biggest difficulties with empathy is that people often mistake it for sympathy. Ask participants what the difference between sympathy and empathy is.

Discuss their answers. Emphasize the following:

*Sympathy* is feeling like the other person. Often times this adds fuel to the fire but doesn’t resolve the problem.

*Empathy* is acknowledging the feelings but not necessarily agreeing. (Example: “I can understand how frustrated you must be...”)

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS BUSINESS INSTITUTE** Demonstrating Empathy

What is the difference between sympathy and empathy?

An empathy statement consists of a *validating statement* ("I can understand...") and a *feeling word* (like "frustrated"). How might you use empathy statements with customers?



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### Slide 15 – Empathy Statements

An empathy statement consists of a *validating statement* ("I can understand...") and a *feeling word* (like "frustrated"). Ask participants how they might use these statements with customers.

Discuss their answers. Emphasize the following examples:

- **You have the right to feel annoyed** when a mess is left in your control room.
- **I can see how you would be upset** by the errors on your monthly statements.
- **I can appreciate how aggravating it must be** when your tenants are complaining about the hot and cold spots in the building.

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS BUSINESS INSTITUTE** Service Exercise

**Role Play**

Write down three customer service complaints that you hear most often.

In pairs, read your complaints to each other and answer back with an empathy statement to address the concern.



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### Slide 16 – Role Play

Ask participants to individually list three customer service complaints they hear most often.

Divide participants into pairs.

Explain that participants will take turns reading their complaints to each other and answering back with an empathy statement to address the concern.

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS BUSINESS INSTITUTE** Service Exercise

**Discussion**

Were you able to come up with effective empathy statements?

How could you improve your empathy statements in the future?



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### Slide 17 – Role Play Review

Ask participants if they were able to come up with effective empathy statements.

How could they improve their empathy statements in the future?

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS** BUSINESS INSTITUTE Alternate Exercise

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**Service Discussion**

Write down three customer service complaints that you hear most often.

Share with the group to determine how many of the complaints are the same or similar.

Which ones are unique to specific participants?

What are some best practices in handling negative service complaints?

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### Slide 18 – Alternate Exercise

As an alternative to the role play, have participants write down the three customer service complaints they hear the most often. Have participants share their answers and determine if there are any unique answers in the group. Discuss best practices for handling service complaints with a focus on showing empathy.

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS** BUSINESS INSTITUTE Review

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**Key Points**

Why are first impressions so critical when building rapport?

What types of questions tend to encourage better discussion?

How does empathy work in establishing rapport with the Customer?

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### Slide 19 – Review

Review three key questions from the workshop:

1. Why are first impressions so critical when building rapport?
2. What types of questions tend to encourage better discussion?
3. How does empathy work in establishing rapport with the Customer?

**DCBI DELTA CONTROLS** BUSINESS INSTITUTE Questions

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### Slide 20 – Questions

Time permitting; give workshop participants the opportunity to raise questions. As much as possible, encourage other participants to answer the questions raised.