

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.

Service Recovery  
*Partner Training Modules*  
Module Eight

### Primary Objective of the Workshop

1. Identify why customers become dissatisfied with service.
2. Apply the STOP method for controlling emotions.
3. Apply the STARS method for service recovery.
4. Effectively deal with irate and demanding 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 Eight of the Partner Training Modules. This module will focus on Service Recovery. The first imperative is to identify why customers become dissatisfied.



**Slide 2 – Imperative 2**

The second imperative is to apply the STOP method for controlling emotions.



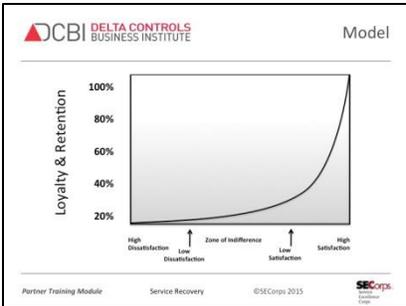
**Slide 3 – Imperative 3**

The third imperative is to apply the STARS method for Service Recovery.



**Slide 4 – Imperatives 4**

The fourth and final imperative is to effectively deal with irate and demanding customers.



**Slide 5 – Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Model**

Customer dissatisfaction (on the left column of the graph) is caused when customer expectations are not met. A first step in avoiding problems is to create realistic expectations. If we over-promise or are overly optimistic going in, it's very easy to fall short of expectations if problems occur that we didn't foresee.

Ask participants if they've ever overpromised and what the result was.



**Slide 6 – Realistic Expectations**

Does this scenario sound familiar? But what happens if a couple of hours later you're still working on the problem and the Customer's occupants are starting to grumble? Ask participants what they could have said to set a more realistic expectation for the Customer. Discuss their answers.

Answers may include:

- "I'll work as quickly as I can. However, sometimes these things get complicated.
- "I'll check back with you in about 15-20 minutes and then I can tell you how long this will take."

A basic rule is to never over-promise or over-commit. By being conservative in your commitments, we set ourselves up for success rather than failure.



**Slide 7 – Customer Expectations**

Let's say that you've received a service call and are on your way. In that time, unbeknownst to you, your customer has been showered with occupant complaints, investigated the problem, gotten hot and dirty in the equipment room, has talked with your receptionist, customer service representative and maybe your manager and has waited (in his or her eyes) too long for your arrival. You arrive and are greeted by a frustrated, difficult and angry customer. Now what do you do?

Looks like we have two problems – an upset customer and a service need. Which do we need to address first?



### Slide 8 – Controlling Your Emotions

You're there to solve a problem, so you need information. To get information, you need to discuss the situation rationally with your customer. In order to discuss the situation rationally, you have to get your customer to calm down. In calming your customer, the first critical step is to gain control over your own emotions.

Ask participants how they tend to react to perceived danger? Do they go into the fight mode? Or the flight (run away) mode? Discuss the implications of each.

Discuss their answers.



### Slide 9 – The STOP Model

We are introducing two models all of us can use with our customers and with each other. The first is The STOP Model.

**SIGNAL** – Look for early warning signs of stress in yourself. Do you sense signs of stress or tension building? We all react a little differently, but are you tightening up your muscles or your jaw? Do you feel adrenaline building?

**TAKE CONTROL** – Once you've identified the signals you can take control. Have you ever mastered a bad habit? How did you take control?

**OPPOSITE** – Do the opposite of your early warning signal. If your jaw is clenched, relax your face muscles. If your pulse is racing, breathe slowly and deeply. How easy is this to do?

**PRACTICE** – Practice these actions whenever you feel tense. By practicing, your calming reaction will become more automatic in a heated situation.

Ask participants to list three situations where the STOP Model could have helped them better handle a customer situation. Discuss their answers.



**Slide 10 – STARS Approach to Recovery**

The second model we want to consider is STARS.

A Washington, DC-based research firm did a study on customer service and found that customers who experience a problem that was resolved favorably will be more loyal than customers who never had a problem.

The true test of any company’s commitment to customer service is when something goes wrong. The acronym STARS can serve as our guideline when we have a service recovery situation.



**Slide 11 – Show Empathy**

“This must be a very aggravating situation for you.”

Avoid sympathy – we’re not necessarily agreeing with the Customer, we’re simply recognizing that they’re experiencing emotions. What happens when we show sympathy instead of empathy?



**Slide 12 – Take Responsibility**

“I will personally ensure that it’s taken care of.”

Do this even if it’s not necessarily your responsibility to fix it. Customers want accountability and follow-up.

What happens when we say, “Well, that’s not my department.”?



**Slide 13 – Apologize for the Situation**

“I’m really sorry about the inconvenience this caused you.”

You’re not necessarily admitting fault, but you are responding in an empathetic way.

What happens when we say, “This had nothing to do with me/us?”



**Slide 14 – Resolve The Problem**

“Here’s what I’m going to do...”

This is the Customer’s bottom line – respond and give options.

What happens when we say, “I’ll have someone who knows what you’re talking about get back to you?”



**Slide 15 – Seek The Customer’s Satisfaction**

“Is that solution acceptable?”

This gives you a chance to confirm and establish the customer expectations.



**Slide 16 – STARS Model Review**

Ask participants if they have any questions regarding the STARS model to make sure they understand the underlying principles discussed.



### Slide 17 – Irate Customer Behaviors

Irate customers come in with a full bucket of emotions and often proceed to dump it all over us. They may even use offensive personal attacks. It’s important to stay cool, listen and never interrupt.

Let them release and vent. After they have a chance to express their emotions, we can begin to deal with them rationally.

Asking open-ended questions about the situation, for instance, gives our customers an opportunity to vent their emotions and encourages them to start thinking rationally about the situation.

Ask participants if they can give examples of open-ended questions that might help.



### Slide 18 – Techniques for Irate Customers

Ask participants to list three techniques that they have found helpful in dealing with angry, emotional customers. Tell them that they will use this list in one of the exercises at the end of the workshop.

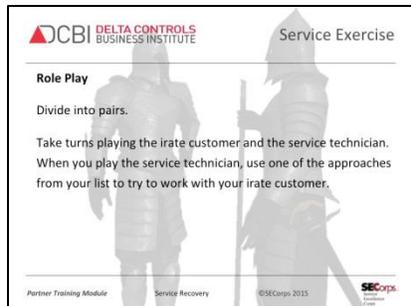


### Slide 19 – Demanding Customer Behaviors

Demanding customers differ from irate customers in that they aren’t usually as explosive and don’t necessarily use personal attacks. They are, however, very clear on what they want. They want action and they want it *now!*

This is a case where we don’t need to elaborate on their feelings. We need to demonstrate urgency. About the only empathy statement we might use with a demanding customer is “I can see that this is an urgent situation.”

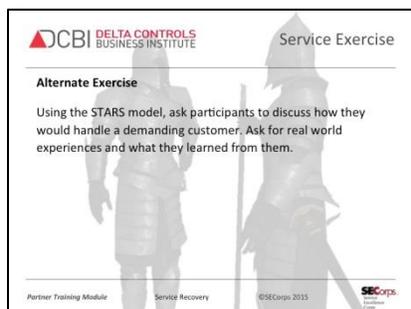
Ask participants to list three ways they might demonstrate urgency with a demanding customer.



### Slide 20 – Role Play

Divide participants into pairs.

Have one participant play the irate customer and the other use STARS (Show empathy, Take responsibility, Apologize for the situation, Resolve the problem, Seek the Customer’s satisfaction) to work with your irate customer.



### Slide 21 – Alternate Exercise

Using the STARS model, ask participants to discuss how they would handle a demanding customer. Ask for real world experiences and what they learned from them.



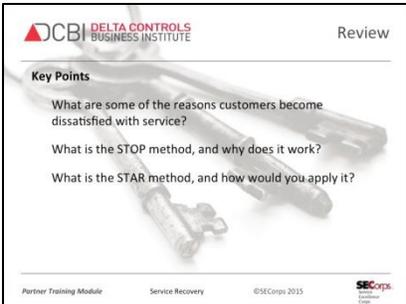
### Slide 22 – Role Play Discussion

Ask participants whether it was easy to use the STARS model to address the irate and demanding customer situation.

What was difficult?

What role did STOP play in their response?

How can we improve our methods of dealing with emotional customers?



### Slide 23 –Review

Discuss three Key Points of the workshop:

1. What are some of the reasons customers become dissatisfied?
2. What is the STOP method, and why does it work?
3. What is the STAR method, and how would you apply it?



### Slide 24 – Questions

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