

# Understanding Customer Diversity

## Trainer's Manual

© 2000 OurBizniss

Manual written by Tracy Riddiford & Cathy Beitz  
Video written by Tracy Riddiford & Cathy Beitz

Proudly sponsored by



## COPYRIGHT WAIVER

Thank you for choosing to train with the OurBizniss *Understanding Customer Diversity* training program.

In order to provide you with cost effective training, Our Bizniss Productions has waived copyright on this trainer's manual.

This waiver, however, is limited to organisations that have purchased the video based training program *Understanding Customer Diversity*.

You may make as many duplicates of the material within as you like. However, these duplicates may not be resold. They are only to be used in conjunction with this program.

Consultants training on a freelance basis are not permitted to sell copies of this material to participants. However, they can duplicate whatever portions are necessary, provided these are free of charge.

Our one request is that you leave our acknowledgements on the overheads and handouts.

## COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The video *Understanding Customer Diversity* is protected by copyright. No unauthorised viewing of this program is allowed. We must ask that you not copy, edit, add to or reproduce the program in any way, without the express prior written permission of OurBizniss Productions.

We price our videos so that they are easily affordable and can be widely used. Their purchase price is our only source of income and enables us to make further videos to add to your training resources.

Legal action will be taken if any conditions of purchase are breached.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword	3
Preparation	3
Synopsis	4
Course Structure & Running Time	5
Welcome & Introduction	6
Objectives & Agenda	6
Introductory Notes	7
Video & Discussion	10
Activity 1 – Stereotypes	11
Activity 2 – True or False	13
Activity 3 – Diversity & Culture	15
Activity 4 – Your Culture	16
Summary & Debrief	17
Participant Handout Masters	18
Overhead Transparency Masters	22

## FOREWARD

This program is designed as a half-day group training session on understanding diversity in your customers over the telephone.

Just as the organisations that use this program are wide and varied, so are the desired outcomes of the participants attending. As a result, we have tried to make *Understanding Customer Diversity* as generic and flexible as possible.

This manual will provide you with some background notes, along with practical activities and suggested running times. Feel free to add to or adapt the structure of this training session to suit your needs.

You do not need to complete all exercises provided unless they suit the specific requirements of your organisation. Of course, the time schedule we have provided is only a guide. The time spent on each activity is entirely dependant on the objectives of the trainer/facilitator and the progression rate of participants.

## PREPARATION

In order to maximise the benefits of this training session, we recommend that the trainers/facilitators familiarise themselves with the topic at hand. You should be comfortable with the material in both this manual and the video.

You have been supplied with master copies of OHT's and participant handouts. Make sure that sufficient copies of each have been prepared prior to the training session.

In the training room you will need the following: -

Overhead projector or computer projection system

Monitor and VCR player

A whiteboard with markers and eraser

Note paper and pens or pencils for participants

**SYNOPSIS****Understanding Customer Diversity**

Taylor works in a busy international freight company. One of her customers is a charming woman called Ruzita who is trying to send an urgent parcel to her Mother in Malaysia.

Ruzita is new to this country and English is her second language. Taylor is also frantically trying to organise travel arrangements for her own Mother to fly to the remote Kenpu Province for the birth of her first grandchild.

Our story follows Taylor's experience as she grapples with the challenge of being both a service giver and a customer, when you're dealing with people who are different to you. She complains bitterly about the treatment she receives at the hands of the foreign visa department. However, when faced with a similar situation in her own work environment her reactions are not dissimilar.

Nevertheless, after learning some valuable practical skills and the importance of stretching your comfort zone, Taylor has a pleasant, productive exchange with Ruzita and the urgent parcel is immediately winging its way to Malaysia.

As for whether Taylor's Mother makes it to the birth – well that all depends on how the visa department in Kenpu Province handles their own diverse customers.

**Featuring**

**Cheryl Watson** as Taylor

**Ruzita Shariff** as Ruzita

**Michaela Cantwell** as 1<sup>st</sup> Customer

**Eric Muli** as Sanjay

**Marion Tropeano** as Taylor's Friend

**Andrew Martin** as Voice Over

## COURSE STRUCTURE AND RUNNING TIME

This course has been designed to run as a half-day training session. If you do all of the course work within the allocated running time, your training session should run for approximately 3 hours and 41 minutes.

### COURSE WORK

### RUNNING TIME

Welcome & Introduction	15 minutes
Objectives & Agenda	10 minutes
Introduction	25 minutes
Video & Discussion	36 minutes
Activity 1 –	20 minutes
Activity 2 –	20 minutes
Activity 3 –	15 minutes
Break	20 minutes
Activity 4 –	15 minutes
Summary & Debrief	45 minutes

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

## PART 1

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

15 minutes

- Welcome all participants to the *Understanding Customer Diversity* training session.
- Introduce yourself and tell the group something about your training background.
- Explain how the training session is to be structured, how long it will run for, when the video will be shown, when breaks will be taken, what refreshments are available and where the phone and rest rooms are located.

### OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

10 minutes

- Discuss the objectives and agenda of this training course with the group.

#### OHT # 1

After completing the training session on *Understanding Customer Diversity*, participants will understand the following: -

- What makes customers different
- That all customers are worthy of your time and respect
- The need to recognise the differences and respond to them in a positive manner
- The dangers of stereotyping
- The importance of stretching your comfort zone
- Personal bias and prejudice have no place in the work place

**INTRODUCTION****25 minutes**

- Using your own research and the brief notes provided below, give participants an overview of some diversity issues.
- Invite questions and discussion from the group as you go.

OHT # 2      Have you ever wondered why people travel?  
To experience different cultures and lifestyles?

Have you ever wondered why people travel? I guess there are a million answers to that question. However, wouldn't one of them be to experience different cultures and lifestyles?

If this is the case, then why are so many people so resistant to these experiences in their own country or work environment?

We may very well be at the dawn of a new millennium but there are many individuals who still believe that when immigrants land on our soil they should instantly do away with what may be thousands of years of cultural history, tradition and language.

We need to overhaul the way we think about such issues because in this day and age, ignorance is no longer an excuse.

OHT # 3      Cultural diversity is a gift

Would it not be better to think of cultural diversity in your environment as a gift? After all, many people spend a fortune traveling the world to enrich themselves culturally – and all you have to do is go to work, or perhaps talk to your next door neighbor whilst watering the garden one evening.

Of course, let's not forget to take stock of what these cultures actually bring to our country, which we now proudly support as part of our own culture. What would Australia be without its wonderful array of Italian and Thai restaurants? Or the United States without the Taco – and let's not even imagine the United Kingdom without Indian food - it's too painful a thought to even contemplate.



Now, this may all sound good in theory but we know that in practice there are still people out there who are saying, "if they come to our country, they should speak our language" or "go back to where you come from if you don't want to do things our way".

At the recent Adelaide Fringe Festival, comedian Will Anderson, did a stand up comedy piece in which he talked about the absurdity of stereotypes. In his sarcastic comic style he suggested that the next time you hear somebody make some ridiculous wide sweeping statement such as "all Asians are bad drivers" that you respond with something equally as absurd like "yes, but if you lick them, they taste like strawberry". I guess the suggestion is that sometimes there is just no arguing with these people. However, is this in itself a good enough excuse not to do so? Perhaps we should be arguing until we are blue in the face?

Jane Elliot is an American educator best known for her blue eyed/brown eyed experiments in which simulates the experience of racism. A documentary entitled "Blue Eyed" has been made on her. In this film she quotes the following from a survivor of a World War 2 concentration camp.

OHT # 4

"When they came for the mentally ill, I wasn't ill, so I did nothing. When they came for the Gypsy's, I wasn't a Gypsy, so I did nothing. When they came for the Jews, I wasn't a Jew so I did nothing. When they came for me, I looked around but there was nobody left to do anything".

If you were a religious person this type of behaviour would be referred to as "sins of omission". How often have you seen or heard somebody behaving in an inappropriate manner towards someone from a different culture – and although you didn't support their behavior – you did nothing to stop it either? Most people would be guilty of just such a sin at some stage in their lives.

Diversity in the workplace has been an important issue for many organisations for a very long time. What about diversity in our customers? Perhaps for too long now we have left this area unscrutinised. As the world becomes more global by the day, no organisation can afford to ignore the diversity in their customers any longer. The impact of culture on a customer's needs and wants has always been a significant issue but is more so today. It is something that must be recognised and embraced if the organisation is to grow and remain viable.

Of course we're not denying that life would be easier (albeit extremely boring) if we only ever had to deal with customers who were the same as us. People who understood our culture, spoke the same language and had life experiences that were not unlike own. However, easier is not always best. Basically we need to

treat our customers as individuals and respect the fact that, just like most of us, they are different too.

A story was told to me recently about a customer service agent by the name of Julie, who worked for a health insurance fund in Brisbane. We won't tell you her last name on the grounds that it will incriminate the organisation she worked for and the people she worked with. This particular branch where she worked was in an area that had a large Asian population. Whenever an Asian customer walked through the door, the other customer service agents would duck for cover. Not Julie though. She would all but accost them as they walked through the door, saying a silent mantra to herself that went something like "don't go over there to them, you won't have a very nice time - you'll have a much nicer time if you come over here to me". Now it has to be said that Julie really does just love customers. She honestly couldn't believe she got paid to go to work everyday and make new friends and help people. Any suggestions on how we clone this woman? Julie, you know who you are!

OHT # 5 Cultural diversity makes our world 3 dimensional

Take a moment to think about what life would be like if you removed all that was not native to you? Life suddenly appears quite dull and 2 dimensional - doesn't it? Cultural diversity is what helps make our country, our friends, our families and our work environments 3 dimensional and interesting.

OHT # 6 All customers are worthy of your time

Just because people are different from you doesn't make them any less worthy of your time and tolerance. Being a customer with a difference, whether that difference is cultural, linguistic, social, physical or sexual is not easy in today's "ism" tainted world (that is racism, sexism, ageism and any other ism you can think of).

Of course, how different your customers are, depends on where you come from and what your life experiences consist of. However, the same principles apply to any customers, over the telephone or face to face, who are a minority in your working environment.

Remember to never be condescending to your culturally diverse customers or treat them as if they are any less intelligent than you. It's quite common to be an expert in an extremely complex field, yet struggle with a language that isn't your native tongue.

Depending on your background, your diverse customers may be from any one of the five continents, belong to one of any number of religions, they may have some physical impairment making them different, or they simply may be the opposite sex to you. Whatever the diversity, never allow your personal prejudice and bias to factor into your dealings with them.

OHT # 7      Stretch your comfort zone

Stretch your comfort zone and never lose sight of the fact that they are stretching theirs in order to do your organisation the favour of doing business with them.

We've all heard that old saying "Do unto others as you would have done unto you". Now, let's not forget it. After all, you never know, one day you might be the customer with a difference!

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

## PART 2

### THE VIDEO

**Play the video** "Understanding Customer Diversity"

16 minutes

**Lead a short discussion around the video**  
minutes

20

Facilitator suggestion:-

- What were the differences between the way Taylor dealt with her first caller of the day and the way she dealt with Ruzita?
- What do you think Ruzita's first impressions of ADL Freight Services were?
- Do you think Taylor is a good person or a bad person? We often assume that the people who are getting it right are the good people and the people who are getting it wrong are bad and horrible. This in fact is not the case. The majority of people who are getting it wrong are still good people – they are just untrained.
- Do you think Taylor saw the parallels between the way she was making Ruzita feel and the way she felt dealing with the foreign office in Kenpu Province?

**Activity 1**

20 minutes

**Stereotypes**

- Ask participants to complete Handout #1 on their own. Make sure they do not share their answers with anybody else in the room.

H/O # 1

- Go through the responses on the whiteboard and discuss why people have reached the conclusions they have.

Facilitator's copy:-

**STEREOTYPES**

A Father and son are on their way to a football match when they are involved in a bad road accident. The Paramedics arrive but despite their best efforts the Father dies at the scene. The son, who is still unconscious and in a critical condition is then rushed to the nearest hospital for emergency, life saving surgery.

The surgeon arrives to treat the boy, takes one look at him and says "I cannot operate on this boy for he is my son".

How can this be?

ANSWER: The surgeon was the boy's Mother.

---

---

---

- Lead a discussion around the pitfalls of stereotyping people and how misleading those stereotypes can be.

Facilitator suggestions: -

- Stereotypes unfairly pigeonhole people.
- By pigeonholing people we often taint a whole group of people based on the bad behaviour of a select few. Yet this very rarely works in reverse. We don't often embrace a group of people based on the good behaviour of a select few.
- You should never assume anything about people you don't know well.
- People often stereotype to make them feel more comfortable with a situation or group of people.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

**ACTIVITY 2**

20 minutes

True or False

- Ask participants to complete the True or False handout.

H/O # 2

- Go through the handout and discuss the answers. Address any queries the group may have.

Facilitator's copy: -

**TRUE OR FALSE TEST**

Decide whether or not the following statements are true or false.

Statement	True/False
All customers are equal.	True
The Muslim religion prevents woman from getting a tertiary education.	False
Western customers are more affluent therefore should receive more attention from the service giver.	False
Any personal bias and prejudice you may have should be left at the front door when you come to work.	True

Generally people who are struggling with our language are less intelligent than us.	False
Immigrants are taking all our jobs.	False
All Asians are bad drivers.	False
It's part of a service giver's job to go out of their way to understand the special needs of their diverse customers.	True
There is little difference between an American and a Canadian, so it is safe to treat them as the same.	False
If they are customers – they are worth our time and effort.	True

FOR PREVIEW ONLY



**Activity 3**

15 minutes

**Diversity & Culture**

- Divide participants into groups of six to eight and ask them to list some examples of differences amongst their customers?
- Go through the responses on the whiteboard and discuss.

Facilitator suggestions: -

- Culture/Ethnic Background
- Gender
- Age
- Education & Training
- Health (physical & mental)
- Religion
- Language

- What is a sub-culture? Give examples. Do you have any subcultures within the groups you've just been broken in to?

A subculture is a smaller culture within a dominant culture. They usually share many similarities with the dominant culture but in addition have their own set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that are different from the dominant culture or other sub cultures.

- Financial Status
- Personality
- Occupational
- Regional (North, South, East & West)

**Activity 4****15 minutes****Your Culture**

- Divide participants into the same groups of six to eight and ask them to come up with a list of 5 Do's and Don'ts of handling customer diversity.
- Go through the responses on the whiteboard and discuss.

Facilitator suggestions:-

- Do treat your diverse customers with respect
- Do be prepared to repeat yourself without sounding annoyed
- Do be patient
- Do show understanding and sensitivity
- Do give instructions in a clear and logical order
- Do monitor conversation for understanding
- Don't be condescending
- Don't treat the customer as if they are less intelligent than you are
- Don't use Jargon
- Don't speak loudly
- Don't speak too quickly
- Don't expect customers to understand the intricate workings of your organisation

**PART 3****SUMMARY & DEBRIEF****50 minutes**

- Play the Video again.
- Go through some of the training points highlighted in the video and this training session using the OHT's.
- Ask for and answer any questions that participants may have.
- Let participants know if and when any follow up training is to be conducted.
- Give participants a copy of Hand Out # 3 Summary Sheet.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

# PARTICIPANT HANDOUT MASTERS

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

---

Proudly sponsored by



**Activity 1**

A Father and son are on their way to a football match when they are involved in a bad road accident. The Paramedics arrive but despite their best efforts the Father dies at the scene. The son, who is still unconscious and in a critical condition is then rushed to the nearest hospital for emergency, life saving surgery.

The surgeon arrives to treat the boy, takes one look at him and says, "I cannot operate on this boy for he is my son".

How can this be?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

Activity 2

**TRUE OR FALSE TEST**

Decide whether or not the following statements are true or false.

Statement	True/False
All customers are equal.	
The Muslim religion prevents woman from getting a tertiary education.	
Western customers are more affluent therefore should receive more attention from the service giver.	
Any personal bias and prejudice you may have should be left at the front door when you come to work.	
Generally people who are struggling with our language are less intelligent than us.	
Immigrants are taking all our jobs.	
All Asians are bad drivers	
It's part of a service givers job to go out of their way to understand the special needs of their diverse customers.	
There is little difference between an American and a Canadian, so it is safe to treat them as the same.	
If they are customers – they are worth our time and effort.	

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

---

Proudly sponsored by



## SUMMARY SHEET

All customers are worthy of your time.

You need to recognise the differences and respond to them in a positive manner.

Don't speak loudly as a raised voice can sometimes be mis-interpreted as anger.

Speak clearly, using short sentences and slow down a little if customer is still having difficulty understanding you.

Don't be condescending or treat the customer as though they are less intelligent than you.

Be prepared to repeat yourself without sounding annoyed but try not to paraphrase as may sound like you are giving new instructions.

Remember to be patient as some cultures may not have the same concerns about time as you do.

Show sensitivity and understanding and do not allow the customer to lose face.

Give instructions in a logical order and clearly signal when you are moving from one subject to the next.

Do not expect customers to understand the processes of your organisation. Simplify your language and avoid tag questions, complex negatives, jargon, jokes and plays on words.

Monitor the conversation for understanding and if it becomes apparent the customer hasn't fully understood, go back to the last point you received confirmation they did and begin again in smaller, slower steps.

And finally remember to stretch your comfort zone. Think of it as a way of thanking the customer for doing business with your organization.



# OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

---

Proudly sponsored by



# OBJECTIVES & AGENDA

After completing this training course you will understand: -

- What makes customers different
- That all customers are worthy of your time and respect
- The need to recognise the differences and respond to them in a positive manner
- The dangers of stereotyping
- The importance of stretching your comfort zone

- Personal bias and prejudice have no place in the workplace

OHT # 2

Have you ever wondered  
why people travel?

To experience  
different cultures and lifestyles?

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

Cultural diversity  
is "a gift"

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

When they came for the mentally ill,  
I wasn't ill, so I did nothing.

When they came for the Gypsies, I  
wasn't a Gypsy, so I did nothing.

When they came for the Jews, I  
wasn't a Jew, so I did nothing.

When they came for me, I looked  
around but there was nobody left to  
do anything.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

Cultural diversity  
makes our world  
3 dimensional

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

**All customers are  
worthy of your time**

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

# STRETCH

your comfort zone

FOR PREVIEW ONLY