

1. Review of Establishing Clear Accountability

Say: Last month we looked at ways to establish clear accountability in your teams. In one exercise we discussed the essential components of accountability & you scored yourself on those components. **What are some of these essential components?**

Guide answers toward: having a clear team plan, using SMART goals, navigating change, having candid conversations with associates, measuring progress two ways, & modeling accountability before your teams.

Discuss: As a reminder, true accountability is...

- helping your associates succeed
- more than critiquing
- assigning responsibility with realistic goals
- evaluating progress toward goals
- making positive course corrections at milestones
- removing obstacles
- coaching for success
- closing the loop by celebrating wins & honestly evaluating misses

Say: Accountability is more than just hitting the numbers. It's about helping your associates succeed every day. To do this the right way, accountability must flow in both directions between leaders and associates.

Discuss: After last month's call you were asked to complete a self-evaluation to see how your team is doing with accountability.

Ask: Would anyone like to share ways you've found to set an expectation of accountability within your team?

2. Chapter Discussion

Say: You were asked to read Chapter 5 (pages 88-104).

What do the authors suggest could have saved General Motors from an embarrassing bankruptcy?

Guide answers toward: Listening to their customer in the 1980s - customers who wanted a better sales & ownership experience

Ask: What are some dangers of ignoring negative feedback from customers? Guide answers toward: You could miss out on new directions that could avoid failing or becoming obsolete in the market

Ask: According to the research firm TARP, what happens for every one customer who complains?

Guide answers toward: 25 customers don't complain - they just drop you, never to consider OfficeMax again

Ask: What is meant by confirmation bias & how can it be overcome? Guide answers toward: It is the human tendency to filter out things that don't align with our own preconceived notions. It can be overcome by creating a culture of rigorous customer focus that encourages associates at all levels to report customer issues they are seeing on the job.

Ask: According to the leader of Avis Budget Group, what does a customer-focused organization value more than processes? Why? Guide answers toward:

It values associates/people more than processes, because high performers at all levels are the ones who are generally most connected to the customers. They know how to provide value & creativity to building a customer focus.

3. Bridging the Gap

Ask for a volunteer to describe the graphic. Then discuss: According to a cofounder of Netscape & powerful venture capitalist, the gap continues to widen between average performers (the maintainers) and high performers (the relationship builders).

Ask: Do you give your relationship builders the leeway to challenge the status quo in order to drive an intense customer focus?



How can you help bridge the gap between maintainers & relationship builders in your store? Guide answers toward: Look for relationship builder behaviors when hiring new associates. Develop existing maintainers into relationship builders when they have the potential & take appropriate actions when they do not.

4. Key Points

Ask for a different participant to read each point, then discuss briefly.

- Great companies not only listen to feedback from their customers, but actively ask for it (both good & bad) & take a serious look even at seemingly far-fetched comments
- A strong customer focus is about culture, not tactics
- A customer-centric culture must reward associates who
 - spot customer problems or trends
 - find these challenges energizing
- Empower relationship builders to respond eagerly & creatively to customer concerns & issues - these are the associates who can push the entire organization forward
- A hard focus on processes & rules can stifle ingenuity & limits associates' ability to respond to constantly changing demands
- For a genuine customer focus, we must connect with our customers in a unique way that sets us apart from the competition & builds lasting relationships
- *Good* companies focus on what they do & *how*; *Great* companies focus on *why* they do what they do

6. Avoiding the Traps

Say: The book discusses three potential traps that successful organizations can fall into over time. *Discuss each point and ask participants for ways OfficeMax can prevent falling into each trap.*

- **Physical** - A constant focus on current investments can prevent pursuit of something new and disruptive.

OfficeMax Solution: Guide discussion toward: [This is why our company continues to look for growth opportunities in various services and adjacencies.](#)
- **Strategic** - Failure to anticipate the future can limit growth and innovation. We have to understand today's

7. Does your team have a customer focus?

Say: After the call, complete this self-check to see how you're doing. We'll discuss the results on next month's call.

1. Answer these questions:

	Agree	Disagree
We seek to recognize our customers as Growth-Minded Gail, Productive Paul, Engaged Ellen, or Back-to-School Beth		
We tailor each customer experience based on the customer's type & unique needs		
We regularly seek chances to discuss customer concerns & suggestions in person		
We take customer feedback seriously & honestly work to address customer issues		
We thank customers for their input		
We listen carefully to input & perceptions of associates who work directly with customers		
We track trends & intensity of customer satisfaction scores, customer comments, etc.		
Our team is expected to exhibit relationship-builder behaviors		

2. Total the number of **Agree's** & then see where you stand:

0-3: Needs work

4-6: Not too bad
but could be better

7-8: You have a strong
customer focus!

5. Developing a Customer Focus

Discuss:

- **Give customers more face time** - actively listen to their needs, complaints, or suggestions
- **Prioritize requests** - what are the deal breakers? What key areas will drive toward CSAT scores of 5 & 5+?
- **Thank customers** - let them know you appreciate their input & update them about their requested changes
- **Listen to the front line** - customers evaluate each shopping experience. Encourage & empower associates to understand & document what their customers value & what can be done to better the customer experience. Use this info to build stronger customer connections.
- **Track trends** - monitor CSAT scores & other trends to see how things are going; report key trends or issues upwards
- **Create the ultimate experience** - how do we provide such an outstanding customer experience that customers become loyal to OfficeMax and will always come back to us?

marketplace while preparing for tomorrow.

OfficeMax Solution: Guide discussion toward: [This is why we spend time understanding & recognizing our customer types.](#)

- **Psychological** - Focusing only on what made the organization successful while not seeing something new displacing it can erode a company's relevance.

OfficeMax Solution: Guide discussion toward: [This is one reason we have shifted attention from a products supplier to an integrated services & solutions provider.](#)