

# Communication and Customer Service in Healthcare Technology Management

## **Presenters**

Lisa Gonzales, Vice President of Student Services  
Lesley Harrington, Director of Career Services

# Why is Effective Communication Important in the HTM Industry?

- **Bridges the Gap** – Strong communication helps HTM professionals connect with clinical staff, ensuring better collaboration and understanding.
- **Enhances Customer Service** – Clear and professional communication improves relationships, leading to higher customer satisfaction and trust.
- **Reduces Misunderstandings and Conflict** – Effective communication minimizes errors, misinterpretations, and service delays.
- **Improves Service Quality** – Technicians who communicate well can better anticipate needs, provide timely solutions, and elevate overall patient care and customer service.



# Why is Customer Service Important in the HTM Industry?

- Bad customer experiences could cost organizations throughout the world **\$3.7 trillion annually.**
- **88% of customers** think customer service is more important than ever.
- **75% of consumers** say customer service worsened during the pandemic.
- In 2024, **64% of customers** stated no matter how much they enjoyed the product, if the company did not provide **good customer service**, they will go to another company that does.

# The Foundation for Effective Communication Starts with You

## What is the difference between *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* skills?

**Interpersonal Skills:** are the abilities and techniques used to effectively interact, communicate, and build relationships with others through any means of communication .

*Examples: Active listening, empathy, clear verbal and nonverbal communication, leadership, dependability*

- Builds trust and rapport with patients, coworkers and customers
- Enhances teamwork and collaboration
- Improves conflict resolution and problem-solving

**Intrapersonal Skills:** the internal abilities and thought processes you use to understand, manage, and improve yourself.

*Examples: Self-awareness, self-regulation, resilience, confidence, self-esteem, stress management skills*

- Enhances personal growth and self-improvement
- Aids in managing emotions and maintaining a professional demeanor
- Supports effective decision-making and resilience under pressure



# Building Confident, Customer Service Focused Technicians

- Discuss importance of being prepared, arriving on time and dressing professionally
- Ensure technicians clearly understand their role, the products they service and points of contact
- Explain the unique challenges and time constraints of different departments, and how to adapt
- Include technicians in challenging conversations
- Emphasize the importance of relationship building with clinical staff, customers and other departments
- Focus on importance of clear communication and timely follow-ups
- Remind technicians not to take things personally, “It’s not always about you”
- Be visible, friendly and approachable –*Don’t be the “magician” behind the scenes!*



# Client and the Environment

## Discussion Prompt:

*When servicing different departments or environments (OR, Emergency Department vs Lab) what do you take into consideration before entering?*

# Client and the Environment

*Understanding the environment and the different types of departments in a healthcare setting is crucial for technicians to ensure patient safety, minimize disruptions to clinical staff and patient care and to ensure efficiency.*

- Understand the differences in department environments and stressors
- Know your contact(s) at each site
- Build strong relationships of trust with key staff in the organization
- Instill confidence in the service you provide
- Appreciate time constraints of each department/facility
- Become part of the clinical team, if possible

***“Don’t be the magician operating behind the scenes.”***

# Patient Interactions



## 1. Check with Clinical Staff First

- Always check with the nurse before entering a patient room
- Ask about isolation precautions, special instructions, or patient concerns

## 2. Approach the Room Professionally

- Knock on the door and wait before entering
- Introduce yourself: ***“Hi, I’m [Your Name], and I’m from Biomed...”***

## 3. Set Clear Expectations

- Confirm you are not clinical staff: ***“I’m here to work on the equipment, not for patient care.”***
- Clarify your task, such as preventive maintenance, inventory, or repairs

## 4. Understand Boundaries

- Be friendly, but know when it’s appropriate to assist the patient (e.g., handing them the TV remote)
- For any requests involving touching the patient, food or drink or changing their surroundings, get the nurse

## 5. Respect and Sensitivity

- Maintain a calm and friendly demeanor
- Be mindful of patient privacy and comfort

## 6. Communicate Clearly

- Let the patient know what you’re doing, and reassure them if necessary
- Keep your actions efficient to minimize disruption
- Return later if not convenient for patient

# Communication Barriers

## Discussion Prompt:

*What are some common communication barriers you have encountered in your role?*

*How do these barriers impact effective communication?*



# Common Communication Barriers

- **Information Overload** – Too much information at once can overwhelm
- **Work-Specific Jargon** – Using industry-specific language, overly technical terms or acronyms can create confusion
- **Communication Styles** – Different preferences such as face-to-face vs. written (email vs text); generational differences
- **Cultural Differences** – Differences in cultural norms, language, and customs
- **Environment/Setting** – Noisy or distracting environments, lack of privacy, or poor technology
- **Trust Issues** – Lack of trust between coworkers, departments (IT), customers can lead to skepticism about the messages being conveyed
- **Emotional Barriers** – Stress, fatigue, and anxiety can impact how messages are received and interpreted
- **Nonverbal Communication** – Misinterpreting body language, facial expressions, or tone of voice
- **Assumptions and Biases** – Assuming others understand or share the same perspective/expectations/interest



# Active Listening

## Discussion Prompt:

*What is active listening?*

*How do you demonstrate active listening?*

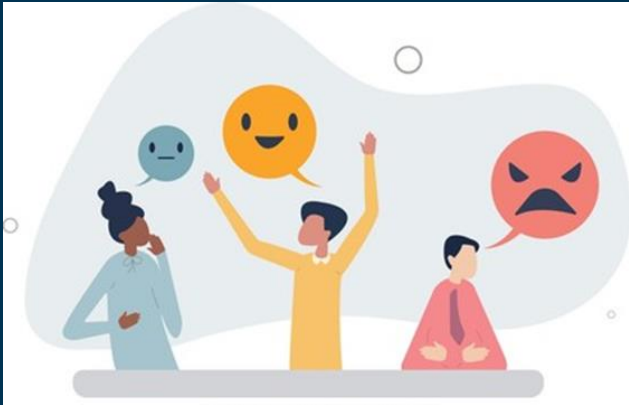


# 8 Tips for Active Listening

## The Power of Active Listening in the HTM Industry



# Conflict Resolution



## Discussion Prompt:

*What causes conflict?*

*Think about situations you've experienced or observed while communicating with clinical staff, IT, or within your own team.*

# Conflict Resolution Scenario 1: *Resolving Conflict Between HTM & IT*

## Group Discussion:

You're tasked with setting up new imaging equipment that requires network access. The IT department is **delaying the connection due to cybersecurity** concerns that were not communicated in advance.

This delay is **affecting patient scheduling and causing tension** between departments.

*As a technician, how would you approach IT professionally to resolve the issue?*

*As a supervisor, how would you handle the situation and support your team and encourage IT collaboration?*

# Conflict Resolution Scenario 2: *Communicating Down Time Issues*

## Group Discussion:

You are the HTM Manager at a hospital, and a critical **anesthesia machine in the OR has been down** for repairs. Initially, the estimated repair time was 24 hours, but due to a delayed part shipment and a key technician being unavailable, the repair will now take an additional four days.

The **surgical team is frustrated** and has escalated concerns to hospital administration, stating that this **downtime is impacting patient care**.

*How do you **communicate the delay clearly and professionally** to the clinical team and leadership?*

*What steps can you take to **manage expectations while maintaining trust** between departments?*

# Three Conflict Resolution Strategies

## 1. Prepare for Conflict Before it Happens

- Gather relevant facts and information
- Be patient, empathetic, and professional
- Anticipate common questions or concerns
- Always have a backup plan
- Know when to walk away or pause the conversation
- Involve a supervisor when appropriate

## 2. Separate the Person from the Problem

- Use a calm and neutral tone
- Manage your emotions and de-escalate others
- Listen actively and show empathy
- Focus on maintaining professional relationships
- Avoid taking things personally
- Monitor resolution and follow up, as needed

## 3. Focus on the Issues, Not the Intent

- Identify the cause(s) of the conflict
- Address behavior or process, not personality
- Use appropriate humor to ease tension
- Take responsibility and apologize when necessary



# The Impact of Effective Internal Communication in HTM Organizations

“A study of 100 organizations found that at each level through which information is filtered, much of the meaning is filtered out. In fact, only 20% of the original message is left after 5 levels.

Imagine how much smoother things would run if there were less loss or distortion as information passes from one person or level to another.”

—Dr. Wesley E. Donahue, *“Improving Interpersonal Communication Skills”*

# 5 Ways to Improve Internal Communication in HTM

## **1. Empower Technicians to Understand “A Day in the Life”**

Equip technicians with a deeper understanding of not only the equipment but also the challenges and environments they’ll encounter. Cover challenges, conflicts, nurse terminology, environmental nuances, and key contacts

## **2. Define Clear Escalation Processes for Customer Service Issues**

Ensure technicians understand the correct processes for escalating customer service issues and know the appropriate key contacts internally

## **3. Establish a Standard Internal Email Procedure**

Teach technicians and teams a standardized email procedure that promotes transparency and effective communication between departments. Provide specific and relevant details: serial #, facility name/location, clinical staff PoC, timelines, etc.

## **4. Ensure Accurate Documentation and Proper Hand-Offs**

Promote accurate documentation practices to ensure that information is correctly transferred between departments and customers

## **5. Align Technicians and Supervisors for Consistent Messaging**

Foster alignment between technicians and supervisors to ensure a consistent message is delivered to customers

*By implementing these strategies, technicians will be empowered to confidently handle a variety of communication challenges, leading to improved productivity and enhanced customer service.*

# Thank you for attending!

Lisa Gonzales, Vice President of Student Services, [lgonzales@cbet.edu](mailto:lgonzales@cbet.edu)  
Lesley Harrington, Director of Career Services, [lharrington@cbet.edu](mailto:lharrington@cbet.edu)