

# Customer engagement

Level 2 Providing a positive customer experience in the fitness environment

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Describe different methods of engaging with customers
- Explain the importance of regular communication with customers
- Describe different methods of building rapport with customers

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of being visible and approachable within an exercise environment
- Explain the importance of giving health, safety and exercise etiquette information to customers

## Engaging with customers

There are many ways in which an instructor can engage with their customers to ensure that the customer receives a positive experience

Face-to-face or verbal communication is the most obvious but remember that non-verbal communication methods can also create a positive impression

## Methods of engaging with customers

- Verbal communication (face-to-face, telephone)
- Listening and questioning skills
- Non-verbal communication (body language, gestures, appearance)
- Written/visual communication (posters, newsletters, social media)
- Creating a positive impression
- Getting to know different customers
- Building rapport
- Initiating conversation
- Behaviours that make a customer feel special

## Verbal communication – face-to-face, telephone

- Always use good grammar and pronounce words properly
- Avoid being sloppy or lazy with language, using words such as ‘yeah’, ‘yep’ or ‘um’ Speak softly and clearly
- Be courteous at all times to convey a sense of respect and consideration
- Always address the customer formally with their title (e.g. Mr Smith); only use their first name if you have been invited to do so

## Verbal communication - listening

Instructors should ensure that they:

- Are not distracted and the focus is on the customer
- Sit quietly and don't interrupt while the customer is speaking
- Use appropriate facial gestures and body language
- Are attentive, face the customer, give appropriate eye contact
- Turn their body towards the customer and mirror their posture
- Consider the customer's personal space, keeping enough distance to create the privacy necessary for discussion

## Verbal communication - listening

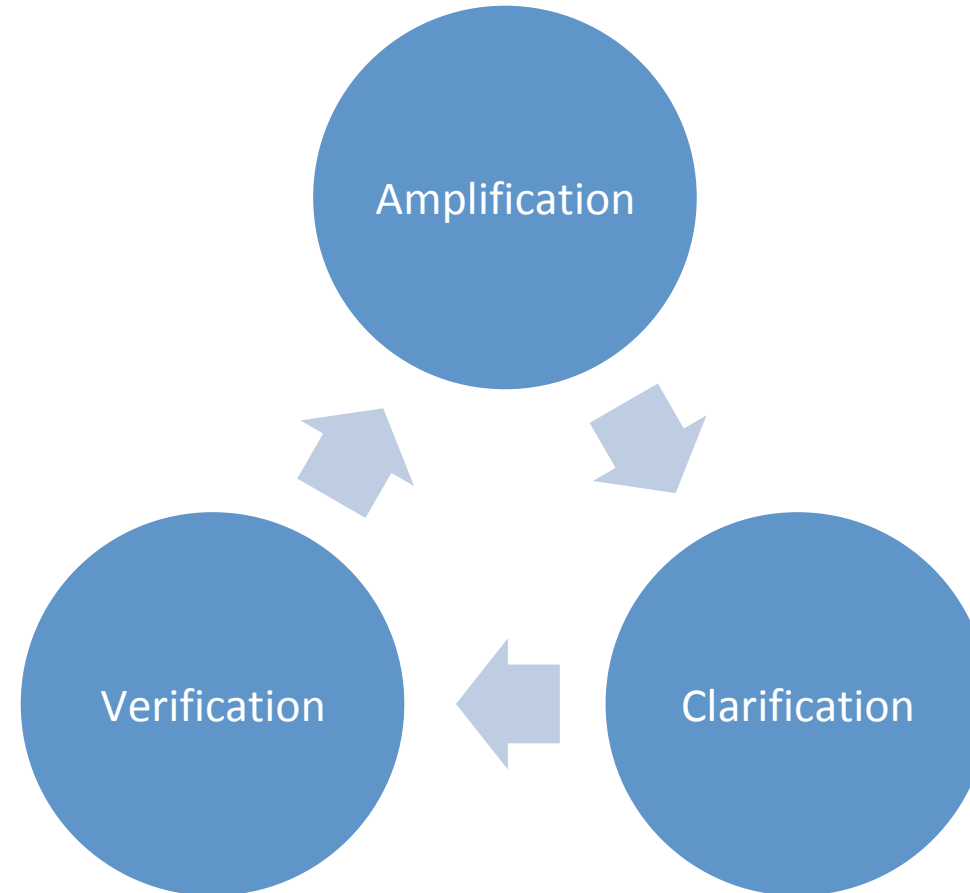
Effective listening is fundamental to effective communication

Reflective listening differs from active listening

- Reflective listening is clarifying the meaning of a conversation
- Active listening is repeating back the content of a conversation to prove that what was heard was correct



## Three stages of active listening



## Amplification

This stage is when an instructor:

- Asks for more information
- Gathers all the facts before responding
- Uses a range of open questions such as:
  - ‘tell me more’
  - ‘how did you feel about that?’
  - ‘when did you decide to begin a fitness programme?’

During this stage, it is important that the instructor does not interrupt or impose their own thoughts or ideas

## Clarification

This stage is used when an instructor is not completely sure of what the other person is saying, using statements, such as:

- 'help me understand'
- 'could you be more specific?'

will ensure more information is collected or clarified

By doing this, the customer's feedback will help the instructor to fully understand the message that the customer wants to communicate

## Verification

This is simply repeating the client's statements (i.e. paraphrasing at regular intervals) to verify understanding

Verification statements include:

- 'if I understand you correctly'
- 'let me make sure I've understood this'

By verifying what has been heard before moving on, the instructor can get the essential information necessary to meet the customer's needs

## Questioning – open and closed questions

### Open-ended questions

- Enables the instructor to engage the customer in discussion
- Does not require a specific answer and lets the customer choose the direction of the conversation and allows the instructor to gather essential information
- Usually begin with ‘who’, what, where, how, why and when’

Closed questions do not engage customers in discussion and usually provide a yes or no response

## Non-verbal communication

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Head movements
- Eye contact
- Hand gestures
- Body positions
- Tones of voice
- Etc.



Body language expresses an individual's emotions, feelings and attitudes and can override the words that are being spoken

## The importance of regular communication

- Offering good customer service
- Customer retention
- A way to keep customers up-to-date

## Building a rapport

Creating a rapport is essential to retaining customers

Rapport is:

- ‘A state of harmonious understanding with another individual or group that enables greater and easier communication’
- About finding similarities and ‘being on the same wavelength’ as somebody else
- A connection or an emotional affinity



## Building rapport

- Break the ice using non-threatening and 'safe topics' for initial small talk (the weather or how the customer travelled)
- Listen to what the other person is saying and looking for shared experiences or circumstances
- Use an element of humour to create harmony
- Maintain eye contact for approximately 60% of the time
- Lean slightly forwards to indicate you are listening
- Mirror body-language
- Show empathy to show you see the other person's point of view
- Make sure the customer feels included in initial conversations
- Put the other person at ease
- Let conversation take a natural course

## Instructor visibility

An instructor should be visible to customers at all times ensuring they are approachable and available for any customer questions

A major part of a gym instructor's role is to offer support and advice to gym users; not just when customers ask but on own their initiative

This is a fantastic platform for instructors to share their knowledge with customers

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## Customer questions

Customers will approach an instructor with a range of questions requiring advice and guidance on:

- Group exercise and activities
- Services or products
- Booking inductions, consultations or reviews
- Correct exercise technique
- New exercises or activity ideas
- Equipment, resources or activities
- Memberships
- Guest access requirements/costs

## Health and safety

A major part of an instructor's role is to communicate health, safety and exercise etiquette to customers

This includes guidance on:

- Responsibilities of the customers
- Minimising risks and hazards
- Keeping a safe and clean environment
- Emergency procedures
- Ensuring a positive exercise experience for all
- Respect for other users
- Maintaining health, safety and welfare of all users