



ESSENTIAL TELLER ISSUES

A Complete Reference for Today's Teller





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This workbook is intended to be a training tool for managers, trainers, supervisors, and employees. To answer specific legal questions, consult your attorney and the appropriate state and federal statutes and regulations. Your legal counsel should be consulted for a formal legal opinion or interpretation on any issue not readily understood.

The "Essential Teller Issues" workbook is designed to assist a financial institution in its efforts to meet the obligations of teller excellence and shall not in any manner be construed as an attempt to offer legal advice, interpretations, or opinions as to any of the information covered.

The applicable law and all related regulations should be referred to as the ultimate reference for any specific situation.

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- Talent management
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- Team Building
- Organizational Culture

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Vicki Kraai

Vicki is the CEO of Interaction Training. Vicki's 25+ years of financial services experience started at the family bank in rural Nebraska, serving as a bank teller and eventually becoming CEO. Vicki's many years of banking include credit card lending experience where she was a member of the management team that launched the Cabela's credit card program. She has a passion for developing people for success in the financial services industry. Attendees value Vicki's highly engaging "been there, done that" approach to all facets of her training and speaking engagements.



Vicki and her team offer training programs, workshops and webinars that are highly valued by banks, credit unions, state bank associations and credit union leagues.



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Introduction

This workbook is intended to be a training tool for tellers. The content is designed to develop alert, capable tellers who can minimize losses, follow explicit instructions, and provide quality customer service. For the new teller it acts as a supplemental guide to your financial organization's own teller training manual. For the experienced teller it serves as a reliable source and reference on the responsibilities and issues facing all tellers daily.

The goal of every financial organization is to train their tellers in the necessary skills to professionally deal with customers, use loss prevention techniques, and put a harmonious touch into every transaction. This workbook guides tellers to achieve that very goal!

Legal questions are not addressed in this manual. Consult your appropriate state statutes and regulations as well as Federal Reserve Regulations, the Uniform Commercial Code, the Internal Revenue Code, the FDIC, and other regulatory agency rules. Your organization's legal counsel should be consulted for a formal legal opinion on any issue not readily understood.



Module 1 | Professional Maturity

This module focuses on your self-awareness and how to use personal insight to become professionally mature. You will learn how to gain flexibility, manage your image, keep your emotions in check, act courteously, and be professional. This module promises to teach you how to boost your confidence and reputation. You will know what to say and how to say it.

What Is Professional Maturity?

Before we dive in, let's take a moment to define our topic. Professional maturity relates specifically to how one acts and reacts on the job. It is acquired through the development of a rich combination of self-awareness, self-evaluation, and personal insight. Professional maturity is not tied to age as it might suggest. Possessing professional maturity means you act responsibly according to circumstances.

How Do Others Perceive Professional Maturity?

Sometimes you may sense professional maturity, but it is almost always observable; something you can see or hear. Professional maturity communicates that you are focused and trustworthy and can manage your emotions. If you demonstrate professional maturity, you will be perceived as, business savvy, approachable, dedicated, and level-headed.

Self-Awareness and Self-Evaluation

Being self-aware has many payoffs. The clearer you see yourself, the better the odds that you can make sound choices. Self-awareness is an internal mirror that you look into to see if your behavior is appropriate. It is much like the mirror over the sink you use to tell if you look presentable.

Self-evaluation is the art of learning how to measure and monitor if what you are doing is matching up with what you want to happen. It isn't about judgment, grandiosity, self-loathing, or punishment; it's about continuous improvement.

Personal insight comes with mentoring, learning, investigating, observing, and the willingness to not always having to be right or in charge.

Flexibility

The adage “that’s not my job” is a thing of the past for employees working in today’s financial institutions. Especially, that can be said of tellers located in branch locations. A teller at a branch may be required to handle safe deposit box functions, new account customers, and all types of inquiries in addition to teller responsibilities.

What’s Expected of a Teller?

The industry has adjusted its staffing ratios to reflect technology, the squeeze on the bottom line, and the overall impact of branch banking. Additionally, expectations for tellers to handle a wider range, as well as a higher number of transactions means well-trained, and highly efficient tellers need to show up each day for work. Showing up can have its surprises. For example, one may be asked to report to a different branch, work a different window, or cross-train in a new area. These are just a few of the adjustments a flexible teller could likely face.

Deadlines, the unexpected, a change in procedure, or new regulations can put additional stress on the branches. These are times that tellers will be expected to pitch in, be flexible, and help work out what needs to happen to reduce the workload and stress.

Flexibility can be the rub of the teller. Tellers are trained to follow procedure. Financial institutions have to respond to the needs and requests of customers in order to provide exceptional service. Exceptional service requires exceptions to the rules from time to time.

Sounds familiar?



You are presented with a customer that requests, perhaps even demands, that an exception is made to a policy or procedure. As a well-trained teller, you hold to the procedure and the customer seeks out an officer or manager to overrule your decision.

Often the manager will do just that—overrule the teller’s decision—and often they should. It’s the obligation and responsibility of the manager to evaluate when and how exceptions occur. Hopefully, the manager will thank the teller for doing his or her job well. It’s especially meaningful if the manager thanks the teller in front of the customer.



Some financial institutions have adjusted limits and authority for tellers so that they are empowered to make decisions regarding some exceptions to the rules.

Change is an area for which the teller will find a high need for flexibility. And we're not talking dimes, quarters, nickels, and pennies here!

Changes occur routinely in today's financial institution and for the teller it can seem daily. Converting or updating the computer system, changing fee structure, work schedule, job description, and policy and procedure are just a few examples.

Interesting thought to ponder



Have you ever asked to leave early? Have there been times you've needed your employer to grant you special consideration due to a personal or family event that would mean you'd need to come in late? When you make a request like this, you are making a withdrawal from your very own "special consideration" account. Never get overdrawn! You can make deposits to that same account. The perfect way to make those deposits is to gain flexibility, take initiative, pitch in, and exceed what is expected of you.

Most companies are reasonably accommodating to employees. Allowing you to receive personal phone calls, making room for different personalities, engaging in on the job conversations with coworkers, and working out time off requests when an emergency comes up are just a few of the common accommodations. Do your part and make plenty of deposits to your "special consideration" account so that you don't take advantage of a good thing.

STRETCH YOUR FLEX MUSCLES ON A REGULAR BASIS!

Managing Your Image

Your image is created by what people see, sense, hear, and read about you. No doubt you see the importance of carefully considering the image you want to have and how to create it.

- What you wear sends a powerful message to others. Dress the way you want to be perceived.
- Your body language, especially your posture and attention to grooming details, will convey confidence.
- How you communicate verbally and in writing can either reinforce or erode your professional maturity.

Dress Code

It goes without saying that you should know the dress code at your company. Many employers elect to offer a business-casual dress code. Though this dress code allows employees to have a more relaxed approach to their work attire, you never put comfort before professional appearance! Your business casual outfits must always uphold a high level of professionalism.

DON'T SACRIFICE YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE FOR COMFORT!

Eight Tips for a Professional Appearance

1. Watch those who enforce the dress code to help clarify the policy.
2. Wear clothes that are pressed, neat, and fit well.
3. Make sure your clothes aren't too tight or too loose.
4. Do not compromise on the quality of your attire. Poor quality clothing shows wear quickly and will appear washed out or worn.
5. Groom your hair and facial hair. Include your nails in the grooming process.
6. Women, make sure skirts are not revealing when seated.
7. Men, wear dark colored socks to a length that does not show your skin when seated.
8. Watch out for the latest fashion fad such as flip flops, overdone jewelry, or low-cut tops. These fads may be trendy but are not acceptable at work.



Verbal Communication

A primary aspect of the teller's job is to provide quality service to the financial institution's customers and potential customers. A teller with professional maturity knows not only what to say in a variety of customer situations and circumstances, but also how to say it.

The importance of the teller acquiring professional maturity in what is said to customers and how it is said can't be stressed enough. Situations that call for the teller to act with the highest degree of diplomacy include:

- Requesting ID
- Turning down a customer request
- Explaining policy or regulations to a customer
- Answering questions pertaining to pricing or fees
- Interacting with an upset, angry customer
- Working with others

What You Say and How You Say It

Even if your message is clear and straightforward, it's important to consider what you say and how you say it. Make sure you choose a positive way of conveying a message, especially in a sticky situation.

Interesting thought to ponder



Sometimes the best choice is simply to ask the customer what they would like for you to do. You can't always do what they ask but don't hesitate to solicit their input on the solution!

Poor habits and their appropriate alternatives



Excessive talking or chatting	Be friendly and engaging but don't overdo it
Name calling or labeling (lazy, impatient, ...)	Don't place judgment on the person, describe the behavior
Making 'you' statements	Talking in 'I' statements
Soft, hesitant voice	Clear voice and proper volume
Belittling use of 'boy' or 'girl'	Use adult gender or no gender
Slang (yep, you betcha, ...)	Use words that affirm your willingness (certainly, gladly, ...)
Endearments (dear, sweetie, ...)	Use the person's name, never hesitate to ask how they prefer you call them.

Poor word choice and their appropriate alternatives



What is your complaint?	Could you explain the situation?
Our policy is...	Here's what I can do for you.
We can't do...	I can do...
Sorry, that's how it is.	Thank you for...
Why didn't you...	I can see why you...
The only thing I can do is...	I think the best option is...
There's a mistake...	It appears an error was made...
Huh?	Would you repeat that please?



Apologies

Never apologize for doing your job but be quick to offer apologies when the situation calls for it. Express regret for any inconvenience or misunderstanding and immediately follow up on it with a solution or way to deal with the situation.

Avoid apologizing in situations where you require information or regulations prevent you from doing certain things.



Situations in which you want to avoid “I’m sorry!”



I’m sorry I can’t cash your check.

I’m sorry I need to see your photo ID.

I’m sorry for the wait.

I’m sorry you are upset.



I’m unable to cash your check because...

I will need to see two forms of ID please.

Thank you for your patience this morning.

I can see/hear you are upset and I want to help you.

Non-Verbal Communication

Sometimes your body language speaks so loudly, others can't hear what you are saying. Body language is made up of facial expressions, gestures, posture, and grooming. You also communicate with tone of voice, stance, stride, body movement, and energy. Every one of us sends messages to others, both verbally and nonverbally.

Tellers must be especially aware of the signals they are sending to ensure the message is received in the best possible way, even if it's not the message the customer wants to hear. Aim for high value in the body language messages that you send. If you're not sure what your body language is saying to others, ask someone you trust to give you feedback.

How Do You Experience These People?

Take a moment to think what the people below are expressing. Despite the inability to see their faces or interpret their voice and tone, you can get a pretty good idea of how these people feel just because of what their body is telling us.

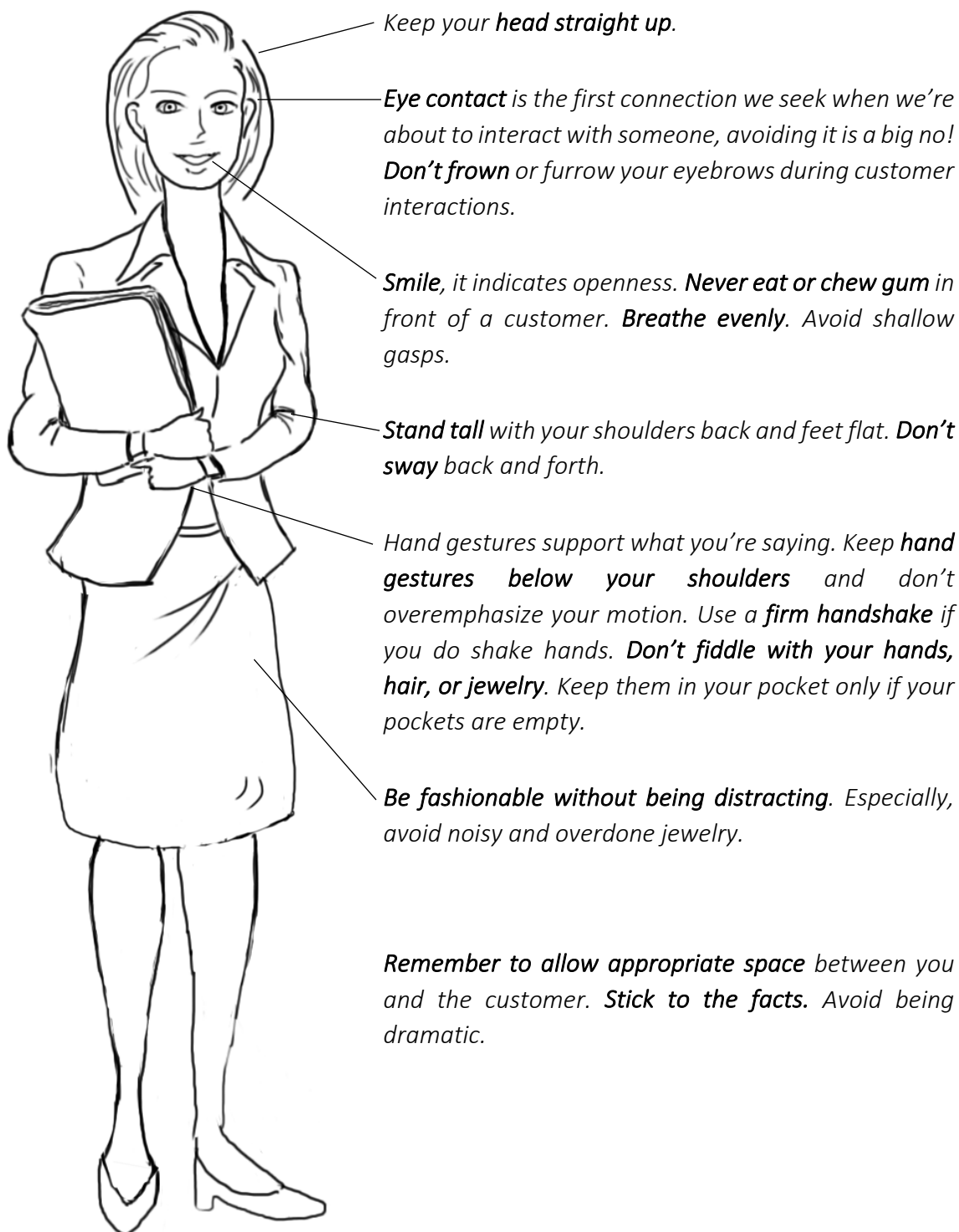


Do you agree that the person on the left appears stressed and not in control of the situation? The person in the middle possibly feels condescending about what the person in front of her is saying. The body language of the person on the right could be perceived as frustrated or even angry.



Body Language Tips

These body language best practices will add value to your professional maturity. Make a habit of practicing them!



Behavior

Your image is created by what people see, sense, hear, and read about you. Your chosen behavior, on the other hand, is the accumulation of your thinking, self-confidence, and attitude. Your behavior affects those around you in multiple ways.

Emotions

We've all met someone who seems to infect the rest of the workforce with their negativity. No matter how enthused you start your day, the moment you come across this individual, your mood is as black as theirs. Everyone brings their emotions to work. Feelings can fuel our behavior and impact our performance on the job.

Many things contribute to how we feel: a favorite project is cancelled, a customer snaps at you unfairly, a friend is laid-off, or you're assigned additional work when you're already overloaded. Add to this list all those personal things that affect your emotions: your child is sick right when it's time to leave for daycare and work, your budget took a hit due to unexpected car repairs, or your parent has found out they have a serious medical situation—the list goes on and on.

All these situations and circumstances create negative feelings—frustration, irritation, worry, anger, dislike, or disappointment—all of them appropriate for the situation. Acquiring professional maturity means you've learned how to manage your feelings without spreading them around the workplace inappropriately.

This is not to say you must become a robot at work, performing your job duties without feelings. It is about managing your emotions while at work.

Interesting thought to ponder



Regardless of the life and work situations you experience, at work your job is to take excellent care of those you serve. Whether those are customers or co-workers, keep your focus on efficiently and accurately performing your job duties without interference from negative emotions.



Managing Your Emotions

Managing your emotions can be harder from one day to the next. If you follow these tips, you have a better shot at keeping your emotions in check.

1. **Don't get caught up in the emotion.** The more you focus on the feeling, the more it will consume your every thought. Shift your focus to the customer's needs instead. Take your task at hand and complete the interaction on a positive note.
2. **Don't waste time worrying.** Time spent worrying about something that hasn't yet occurred is wasted time and emotion. What you're worrying about might not even occur at all. Worry is interest paid on trouble borrowed.
3. **Manage out of control anger.** Rage might well be the most destructive emotion of all. It is fueled by what you tell yourself. When you feel the emotion of anger, stop what you're doing for a while and take some deep breaths. This will interrupt the angry thoughts, helping you get back on a more positive path.
4. **Focus on being professional.** If you work with someone you dislike, it can be challenging. Be up for the challenge and be respectful. If the dislike is due to their behavior toward you, explain what you need from them to work together in harmony and/or seek the advice of your manager or Human Resources.
5. **Work to compartmentalize your emotions.** At work, focus on work-related tasks and duties. What is the expectation your supervisor has for your performance and interaction with others? Seek assistance to help you deal with situations that seem to be out of control or overrun with feelings.
6. **Smile.** A smile can make you feel better, no matter the situation.



Confidence

Confidence is demonstrated in the poise you possess. It is about that conviction and belief you have in yourself. Without confidence in yourself and your abilities, you will be inclined to avoid challenges and struggle with decision making.

You may think some people are born self-confident. Their self-confidence is more likely the result of keen observation, coaching, lessons learned, and encouragement. Always be on the lookout for others who are confident who might be open to sharing their story with you.

As a teller, you need to tap into your self-confidence to successfully handle customer interactions. You can build confidence through broadening your job knowledge and exposure to different personalities and situations. Seek out coaching from your supervisor and people you respect. Observe those in your circle of networking that have the respect of others. The knowledge and encouragement from these people will allow you to become more professionally mature.

Steps to Build Self-Confidence

Confidence is built one success at a time. It takes commitment, patience, and practice. These nine confidence building strategies will give you the freedom to both fail and succeed. Learn from your mistakes and missteps. Don't allow failure to stall your growth.

1. Set personal and professional stretch goals for yourself each year.
2. Never miss a learning opportunity.
3. Seek out a mentor.
4. Volunteer for assignments.
5. Take on more responsibility at work.
6. Ask your supervisor for additional work and cross-training.
7. Create a personal achievement list. List both personal and professional accomplishments. Look at the list often.
8. Take charge of a work project or volunteer in your community.
9. Write out positive statements about your abilities and read them every day to visualize your success.



Reputation

Another important building block of your professional maturity is your reputation. Developing a good reputation is highly valuable. A good reputation will serve you well all through life.

*YOUR HAPPINESS, SUCCESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE INCREASES
WHEN YOU HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION.*

Online Reputation

Social networking sites play a key role in today's world. Keep in mind that your online presence is a powerful ingredient of your overall reputation. Your online reputation begins with your profile picture; it lays the groundwork for the first impression people have of you online. Any additional content and photos you post build or destroy your online reputation. You may feel confident that you've shielded your online presence from business associates, but there is no guarantee your information isn't being shared or accessible one way or another.

It is not acceptable to talk badly about others or post questionable photos of yourself or others. Also, consider the groups, brands, or even celebrities you 'like' or associate with. These might have an impact on how others perceive you.

Building a good online reputation can include posting comments to charities you support, your history as a volunteer, or photos from a little league team that you help coach.

Trustworthiness

Nothing can tarnish a person's reputation more than being viewed as untrustworthy or dishonest. Hold yourself to high personal moral standards so that any day or night of your life could end up in the news and not be an embarrassment. Be yourself, be genuine.

Attitude

There are few things that affect your reputation more significantly than your attitude. Your attitude shapes your environment, even your life. It's the difference between seeing the glass as half full versus half empty. Your outlook on life is the road map that guides the quality of your life.

Interesting thought to ponder



Attitude is the way you communicate how you're feeling and what you think. To the degree you improve your attitude, you improve your quality of life.

Positive people exude a favorable attitude that draws like-minded people toward them. It's natural to want to be around people who have an uplifting influence, and who don't pepper most conversations with negative remarks. When you are pessimistic and continually expect life to be negative, you put up a barrier to other people. Attitude is shaped in your mind. It's the way you look at things, circumstances and people. It's your perspective. You're in control of your perspective so you are in control of your attitude.

Life is very challenging. It is naïve to think we can be 100% positive 100% of the time. Excessive optimism can appear false and may, at times, be inappropriate. When things are going well it's much easier to maintain a healthy outlook. The challenge comes when something happens to test our positive perspective. The difference between a positive and negative person is that the positive person knows that she or he will bounce back; that whatever the situation, they will not be bogged down in it forever.

Any fact facing us is not as important
as our attitude toward it, for that
determines our success or failure.

— Norman Vincent Peale



Choose Courtesy and Kindness

Customers often deal with just one person at the bank or credit union. In many cases that would be you, the teller. How that interaction goes between you and the customer will determine what the customer feels about the company.

Do your best to resolve customer issues without being triggered by their anger. Disrespectfulness is long remembered and not easily forgiven.

HOW YOU TREAT CUSTOMERS DURING YOUR WORK DAY IS DINNER TABLE OR WATER COOLER CONVERSATION WHEN THE CUSTOMER GOES HOME OR BACK TO THEIR JOB.

Courtesy, kindness, and professionalism apply not only to how customers are to be treated, but also to how you treat and interact with co-workers. There is a growing concern among business leaders that the lack of consideration amongst coworkers is affecting team spirit and productivity. This concern stems from the ever increasing electronic and technological efficiencies that we are experiencing today. Additionally, feelings of entitlement have led many to move into rude and demanding behavior, creating considerable discord in the company structure.

When interacting with someone, remember that courtesy is kindness in action. The idea is to act in ways that make people feel valued. It begins with good manners: saying please, thank you, it's my pleasure, or excuse me. Consistently choosing courtesy involves more thoughtful ways of showing respect. It matters how we address people and how we greet them, as well as how we eat, talk, sneeze, and cough in their presence.

*PEOPLE REMEMBER HOW YOU MAKE THEM FEEL
WHETHER OR NOT THEY REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAY OR DO.*

Courtesy and kindness demonstrate that you care. Choosing both in the workplace are essential to achieving professional maturity.

Polish Your Professionalism so it Shines

1. Respect other's right to privacy. Avoid gossiping about others or making comments about their life; this includes coworkers, managers, and customers. Ask yourself, "Is it the truth?" "Is it necessary?" "Is it kind?" If you can't answer "yes" to all three questions, don't say anything.
2. Keep your voice modulated. Stay in check about your volume. Too loud disturbs not only coworkers but could violate confidentiality and trust issues with customers. Too soft will encourage others to question your authority, maybe even your ability.
3. Be respectful when offering help or assistance with your coworkers. When you are overly zealous about helping someone, it could be perceived as you don't think your coworker knows how to do something. Offer help and wait to see if it is welcomed before jumping in to help or taking over a task.
4. Think before you speak. Practice evaluating what you are about to say if you have any history of regretting what you say. Anytime you speak and wish you hadn't, make things right as soon as possible. Own your behavior.
5. Accept other's ideas and suggestions. This is especially important in meetings. Everyone needs the opportunity to voice their ideas and suggestions. If you have a differing opinion, mind your tone of voice so as not to come across as punitive or degrading.
6. Pepper your conversations with *thank you, please, would you be willing to...*, and *excuse me*, etc.
7. Always perform job duties and tasks without grumbling or complaining; accept assignments willingly.
8. Get and keep control of your work day. Arrive on time; early is best. Don't be a habitually self-serving team member. You know the one that often leaves early or takes Friday and/or Monday off.
9. Avoid slang expressions or insider jargon.
10. Manage your personal life as best you can so that it doesn't interfere in an abusive or intrusive way on the job.



Time Management

The final aspect of your professional reputation that we will cover is time management. Even if you do a spectacular job, nobody will consider you professionally mature if you don't respect time. Be on time for work, breaks, and lunch. Respect internal deadlines, appointments, and schedules.

The correlation between a teller's balancing record and organization is generally very tight, as shown through the following advice.

- Keep your teller station organized and tidy.
- Arrange your cash drawers neatly.
- Strap and bundle money properly.
- Arrange your unstrapped money face up and straightened out.
- Keep your cash supply adequate and within policy limits.
- Keep necessary forms and supplies handy.
- Continuously count down currency and sort out unfit money.
- When time is a factor, for example during peak business hours, and your cash drawer exceeds the stated limit, consider moving your excess currency to your coin vault. Then when time permits, you can strap it properly.
- Keep all work face down and out of reach.
- Make a daily to-do list to ensure you accomplish your priorities.
- Use a tracking tool as a reminder to follow-up on commitments, projects, and tasks.
- Maintain a notebook of information vital to your position. This could contain items such as quick reference guides and interoffice memos.
- Designate a monthly cleaning day.



Module 2 | Procedures

This module covers the importance of procedures in your role as a teller. You will learn how to handle cash like a pro, see to the details, keep the auditors happy, and maintain vigilant compliance. This module also includes reminders concerning what to do in the event of a robbery.

Why So Many Procedures?

Financial institutions put procedures in place to ensure accuracy, consistency, and compliance. These procedures help to maintain order, reduce risk, and serve as a guide in providing exceptional customer service.

RESPECT FOR THE FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ORGANIZATION AND THE ACCOUNT HOLDER IS PRIME IN YOUR JOURNEY TO PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE.

Good communication and customer service skills are necessary for a teller. Strong math skills and being competent at handling money are also required. As a teller, it is your job to deliver exceptional customer service while staying mindful about the on-going threat associated with potential loss and liability due to fraud, poor judgment, or error. You play a key role in reducing the risky business of banking as you remain attentive to the well-being of the accountholder as well as your financial organization.

You are responsible for learning your financial institution's rules, regulations, and procedures. Operating within the established procedures of your financial institution can be trying at times. The nightly news tells you that crooks continue to ramp up scams and are determined to rip-off financial institutions. Customers are easily offended by all the measures that ward off con-artists. Your challenge is to detect a scam early on and to politely manage questionable and high-risk transactions without offending the legitimate customer.

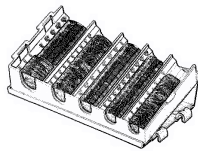
Handling Cash like a Pro

Learning to correctly handle money with concentration, consistency, and accuracy is basic to almost all elements of your job as a teller. Your financial institution will expect you to be knowledgeable and responsible for all of the following:

X

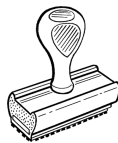
Working Cash

Loose currency and coins to handle day-to-day transactions.



Coin Dispenser

Tray or device to hold and dispense loose coins.



Teller Stamp

The stamp verifies who handled a transaction. *Make sure it's stored securely when you're not at your station!*



Keys

Keys are issued for your cash drawer, coin

Σ

Bulk Cash

Packaged currency and rolled coins to handle large transactions.



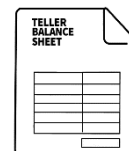
Bank Forms

Depositor, internal, and other forms needed to record transactions.



Mutilated Money

Currency that is removed from circulation because it's no longer usable.



Balancing Sheet

End-of-day cash drawer count according to standard protocol.



vault, access to secured areas, and locked equipment.

Cash-Handling Policy

As a teller, you should have a personal interest in cash-handling procedures. You must be certain your financial institution policies are rigorously adhered to when it comes to dispensing cash or issuing a negotiable instrument. Cash limits vary from one organization to the next but also from one teller to another, depending on the teller's responsibilities. Limits can also change from day-to-day, depending on your cash needs.

Cash Deposits

Large cash deposits or purchases should be removed from your teller station as soon as possible. Similarly, prepared change orders awaiting pickup should not be kept at your teller window.

Cash Exposure

Keep an adequate supply of cash on hand to meet customers' needs, but always be careful when handling cash. Unnecessary exposure is a prime opportunity for theft. Dedicated tellers understand the danger of leaving large sums of money exposed to view and never leave their window with the cash drawer unlocked.

Cash Storage

Your coin vault can be used for safe temporary storage during the day. Keep in mind you are responsible for the currency and coin supply assigned to you. You are also responsible for accepting money from, and paying money, to your customers.

NEVER USE YOUR WORKSTATION AS A TEMPORARY STORAGE SPACE FOR LARGE SUMS OF CASH!

Organizing like a Pro

A successful teller pays close attention to important details. It's critical to organize yourself and your work station to minimize the chance of errors.

Keys

Door keys, cash vault keys, and money drawer keys, as well as any other cash access keys issued to a teller, are the full responsibility of the teller to whom they are issued.

Teller Stamp

Your teller stamp in the hands of the wrong person can falsely indicate the responsibility of any transaction. Ensure your stamp is not readily accessible to others.

Vault Combination and Passwords

Each teller is responsible for retaining vault combinations and computer passwords in secure, discrete places.

Arriving and Leaving Your Organization

Always approach the institution alertly and cautiously. If you are expected to open the institution or are one of the first to arrive, exercise caution. When possible, do not get out of your car until someone else you know arrives. Follow instructions concerning the "all clear" procedure for entering the building.

When leaving the institution at the end of the day or when transporting cash from one facility to another, scan the area for suspicious-looking individuals. Avoid leaving the institution alone. Each lobby or drive-up may have unique opening and closing procedures. Be sure you know and follow your institution's policy.

Dual Control

Here are examples that typically require more than one person be present:

- Vault Entry
- Balancing/replenishing an ATM
- Night Depository



Change Orders

Commercial customers or other branches may request a change order involving thousands of dollars. Pay the upmost respect for transactions involving large amounts of cash. You never want to create vulnerability or needless exposure around significant sums of cash. Change orders prepared and waiting for pickup are always out of sight and safely stored. Never prepare or fill a change order without close scrutiny and control.

Mail Deposits

Incoming mail deposit envelopes should be counted before distributing them to tellers and retained by date.

Items for Proof

Proof work should be protected as though it were cash. It is part of the daily work critical for the teller to be in balance and to successfully complete each transaction.

Cash Payout Limits

When paying out cash, the teller is responsible for observing limits as set by the financial institution.

Signature Cards

The signature card states the style of ownership for each account. It indicates all authorized signers on the account.

Dormant Accounts

The term "dormant account" means demand, savings, or other deposit-type accounts which have continuously remained inactive for a determined period of time. Typically, that means no credits or debits of any kind by the depositor have occurred for more than one year. These accounts are susceptible to fraud and are flagged indicating you would need authorization to handle a transaction involving the account.

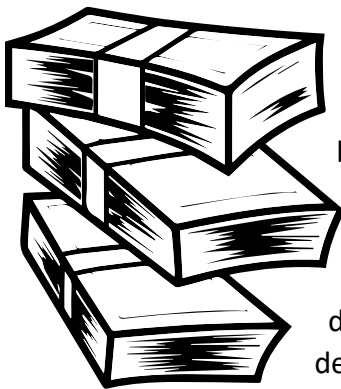
Accuracy and Attention to Detail

Expertise can only be achieved through consistent concentration, alertness, and strict adherence to standard procedures. Accuracy must never be compromised for speed and efficiency.

*SKILLFUL MONEY-HANDLING IS CRUCIAL. IT IS ACQUIRED THROUGH PRACTICE
AND KNOWLEDGE OF PROPER OPERATING PROCEDURES.*

When paying out currency, tellers should record denomination totals of the money on the calculator function of the computer and compare the total on the monitor to the corresponding transaction. Deposits containing cash should be properly sorted and arranged with the bills all facing the same direction. Again, the currency should be entered into the calculator by denomination totals and then the teller must hit total and verify the amount against the deposit slip. A best practice is to place a check mark by the currency amount on the deposit slip indicating the teller verified the incoming cash.

Various items accompanying transactions, such as the depositor's adding machine tape detailing cash amounts, coin envelopes, or money straps from currency in deposits, should be held by the teller until the end of the day. In the event of a discrepancy, these items are excellent tracing tools.



As a teller, you should never take anything for granted when it comes to cash. When you buy and sell currency from the vault or from another teller, every important precaution must be followed. This includes verifying all strapped money, just as you would do when accepting cash from a customer. All incoming strapped currency should be counted twice. When selling strapped bills, the money strap should always have a dated teller stamp and be initialed. The date stamp should denote the date the currency was verified.

ALL CURRENCY IN YOUR POSSESSION SHOULD BE KEPT FACE-UP AND STORED NEATLY.



When purchasing currency, verify the currency immediately, turn the strap or replace it with a new strap, stamp it with your teller stamp, and initial it. All strapped currency in your possession should be dated with your teller stamp and initialed on the up side of the strap. In order to prevent misuse, it is important all used currency straps be torn in two.

The teller assumes full responsibility for all coin and currency in their possession and guards the cash and all related transaction items with inordinate care.

Cash Drawer Best Practices

Every teller wants to balance and following these best practices helps to ensure you do.

Validate your cash drawer is intact by starting the day counting and recording the cash drawer matches your most recent ending balance.

If interrupted during counting, stop and begin again. It's better to take the extra minute than to shortchange or overpay someone.

Avoid making unnecessary conversation when counting cash or preparing a cashier's check. Focus is important to avoid being distracted when handling a transaction.

Ask customers to count large amounts of cash before they leave the window. As an added precaution request the customer sign for large amounts of cash indicating verification and receipt of the money.

Handling currency and coin in a consistent and professional manner assures the work is simplified and the chance of error is reduced. Equally important, tellers develop the skill to concentrate on both the transaction and the customer.

Keeping Auditors Happy

The auditor's job is to be certain the teller follows the policies put in place by the institution's board of directors. Dual control, dormant accounts, and control logs are examples of areas that an auditor may test for when auditing a teller.

When an audit report details neglect, errors, violations, or inaccuracy it must be corrected and measures must be taken to reestablish adherence to policy.

Audit Checklist for Tellers

- ☐ The cash drawer is balanced
- ☐ Vault entry/exit log is accurate
- ☐ ATM restocking procedures are followed
- ☐ ATM sites are checked twice a week for adequate supply
- ☐ Guard gates to the vault are closed at all times
- ☐ Access to the teller area is well-secured
- ☐ Access to debit cards is well-secured
- ☐ Process for issuing negotiable instruments is adhered to
- ☐ Bank keys are well secured
- ☐ Software security procedures are followed
(no passwords or access information is available or visible in the teller window)
- ☐ The cash drawer and coin vault are within stated limits
- ☐ All clear procedure is accurately stated by the teller
- ☐ All clear procedure is routinely changed
- ☐ All tickets that have to be remade are voided
- ☐ There are no handwritten tickets in the teller's work
- ☐ There's a ticket for all money bought and sold



Thieves, Swindlers, and Con Artists

You are the constant target of thieves, swindlers, and con artists. This is true of almost all phases of teller activity. Teller training must go beyond the basics of counting money and making change. Learning how swindlers work at cheating tellers is an essential part of the training. Professional crooks are clever and resourceful. They are well acquainted with internal procedures, and constantly invent new deceptive tactics. Management must understand that when a *new* trainee steps up to the teller window they enter the world of major-league fraud.

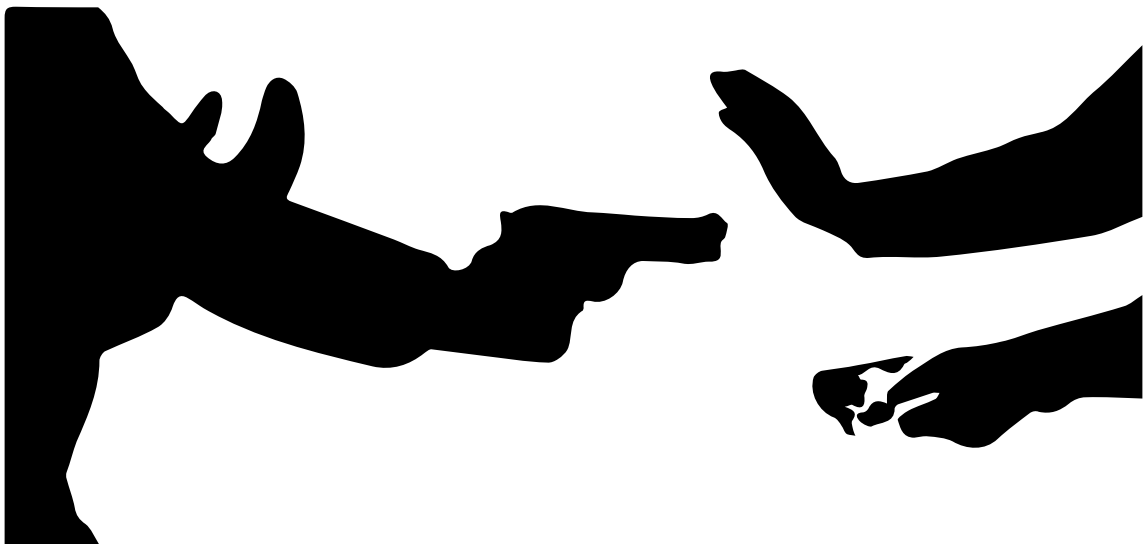
One of the oldest schemers is the short-change-artist. The first clue to this swindle is the stranger requesting change for several large bills. The large bills can be disarming to the teller and that helps set the stage for this con to confuse the teller further. For when the obliging teller hands him the money, he suddenly changes his mind about the denominations or decides to keep one of the large bills. Money and conversation are freely exchanged. In the end, the confused teller is swindled out of hundreds of dollars.



Bank Robbery

Keep in mind the only thing that offsets panic in an emergency is training – each and every teller must be trained on what to do if faced with a robbery. According to research, bank robberies are relatively uncommon: only about 2 of every 100 robberies are of a bank. Although violence is rare, employees and customers are at some risk of injury. Because of the potential for violence, police always respond quickly to a bank robbery in progress. The probability of nabbing a bank robber on or near the scene is higher compared to other crimes. That is, in large part, due to the fact that bank robberies are reported quickly. Most robberies occur during the daytime and have multiple witnesses, some of which take photos or record footage that can be used to broadcast and canvass the surrounding area for suspects. With a nearly 60 percent success rate, bank robbery has the highest clearance rate of all crimes. Since bank robbery is a federal crime, the FBI has jurisdiction over most U.S. bank robberies, but local police will be the first responders.

Employee resistance can increase violence. To reduce the threat of violence, banks and credit unions train you to comply with the robber's request and to follow mandatory training you have received. More than two-thirds of bank robberies last less than three minutes. It is not uncommon for the robber to wait in your teller-line with legitimate customers and pass a demand note to you. This is typically done so discreetly that other customers—even other employees—are not aware that a crime has occurred until after the robber flees.





Contributing Factors to Bank Robbery

- Branches are plentiful and most have competitive, extended hours.
- Banks are the most lucrative of all robbery targets.
- Bank robberies are usually fast, low risk crime for the criminal.
- Branches have standardized designs and predictable layouts and operations.
- Bank employees are unarmed and consistently compliant.

Bank Robbery Preparedness

There are various options available to financial institutions that assist in discouraging robbers.

Bandit Barriers

In some environments or locations installing bullet resistant glass walls or windows is an important security feature. Certainly not the right choice in every case, but it does reduce the threat of robbery. Bank robbery is reduced by over 90 percent when bandit barriers are in place.

Teller Window Concerns

Some banks and credit unions give plenty of consideration to the height and configuration of the teller window to discourage visibility of the cash drawer and the teller area.

Interior Obstacles

The more doors for entry and exit can increase vulnerability for robbery, giving the thief more choices to enter or depart. Revolving doors and timed safes are believed to be a deterrent for bank robberies because they slow down a quick get-away.

Disguises

Some banks require that customers remove hats, hoodies, sunglasses, or other apparel that can be used as a disguise. However, weather can overrule the effectiveness of this type of policy.

Tracking Devices

Tracking devices use low voltage transmitting microchips with transponders. They can be hidden in special packets of currency because they are so slim and compact. The device emits an electronic signal that can be tracked by police. Since the intention is apprehending offenders, tracking devices are unlikely to prevent robberies.

Dye Packs

A dye pack is a radio-controlled incendiary device used by some banks to preemptively foil a bank robbery by causing stolen cash to be permanently marked with red dye shortly after a robbery.

In most cases, a dye pack is placed in a hollowed-out space within a stack of currency (usually \$10 or \$20 bills). This stack looks and feels similar to a real one, current technology allows the manufacturing of flexible dye packs which are difficult to detect by handling the stack.

A dye pack is typically stored next to a magnetic plate near a teller, ready to be handed over to a potential robber. When it is removed from the magnetic plate, the pack is armed. Once it leaves the building, a radio transmitter will trigger a timer (typically 10 seconds). The dye pack will explode and release an aerosol and sometimes tear gas, intended to permanently stain and destroy the stolen money and mark the robber's body with a bright red color. The chemical reaction causing the explosion of the pack and the release of the dye creates high temperatures of about 400 degrees Fahrenheit (204 degrees Celsius), which further discourages a criminal from touching the pack or removing it from the bag or getaway car.

Bait Money

Bait money is cash with sequential serial numbers that are recorded by the bank. When the money reenters circulation, police track its use in hopes of locating the suspect. Bait money is widely used by banks. It is highly incriminating when the suspected robber is apprehended and has bait money in his possession.

Rewards

Some banks actively publicize a most wanted list of bank robbers, displaying surveillance photos and offering rewards for information leading to their capture. Banks have found it valuable to use websites, local silent witness programs like Crime Stoppers, and tip lines to publicize crimes and flush out offenders.



Spotting Suspicious Behavior

To deter robbers, security officers will advise bank employees to watch for suspicious behavior. Branches, however, have such predictable interior designs and consistent methods of operation that less than 20 percent of robbers even case their targets. In fact, many robbers do not even go inside the bank prior to robbing it.

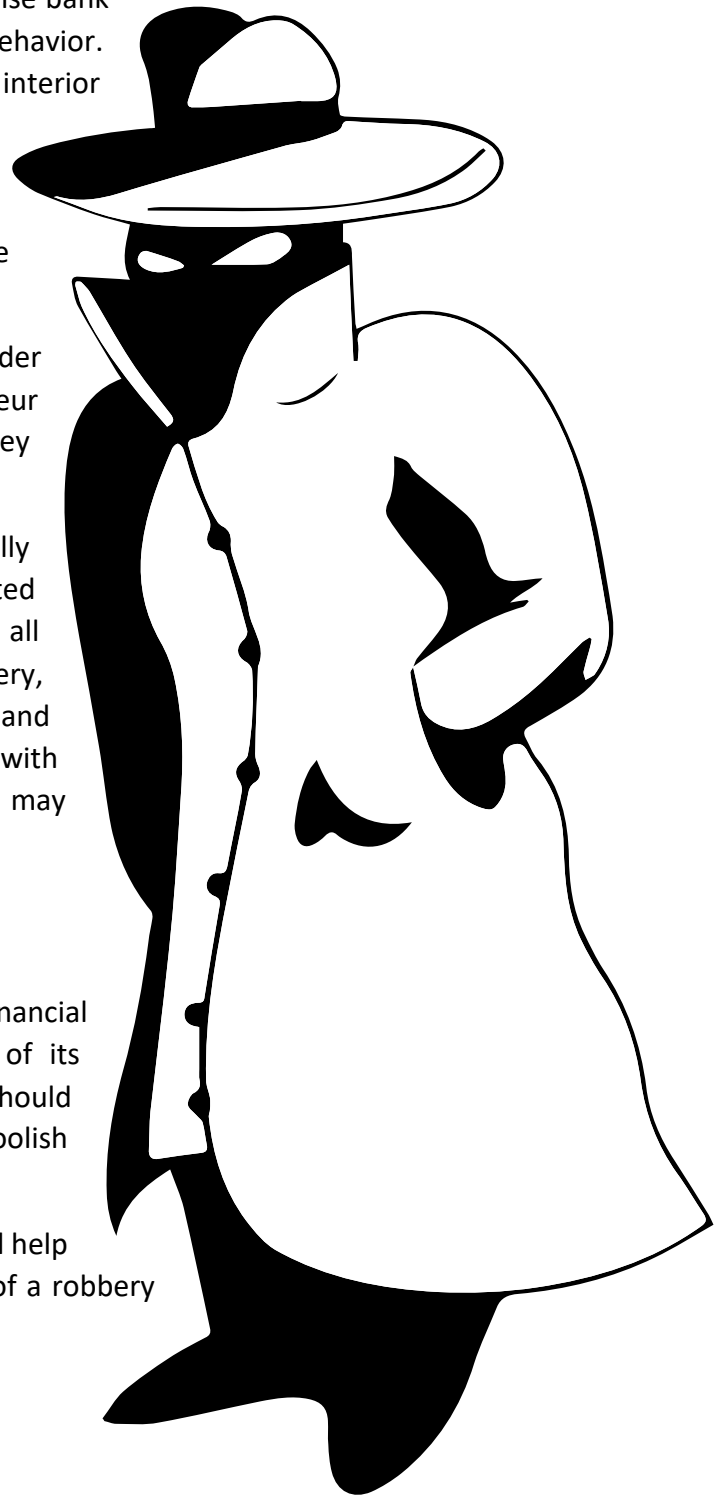
This is true regardless of whether the offender is an amateur or a professional. The amateur robber can be difficult to spot because they strive to blend in with other customers.

Federal law requires U.S. banks to annually provide training about bank security-related topics. The annual training should include all aspects associated with bank robbery, including how to be a good witness and preserve evidence. In financial institutions with high branch personnel turnover, training may need to be offered more frequently.

Help! We're Being Robbed!

No doubt, the most important thing to a financial institution is the safety and well-being of its employees and customers. No one should endanger his life or the lives of others in foolish acts of heroism to save money.

The suggestions on the following pages will help you understand what to do in the event of a robbery and how to act when the robbery is over.



During a Robbery



Stay calm.

Draw attention to yourself.

Remember your training. Remember it will be over in seconds.

Scream or faint.

Give exactly the amount demanded, including bait money. Giving more will scare or make the robber mad.

Do anything to prevent giving out money.

Be polite, courteous and observant.

Argue with the robber.

Remember what the robber says, does, and touches and where he or she stands.
Practice this!

Antagonize the robber.

Form a good mental picture of the robber. If there are multiple robbers, concentrate on the one nearest to you.

Try to delay the robbery.

Use customer identification techniques.
Concentrate on speech and mannerisms.

Make sudden movements.

Presume the robber has a real weapon.

Ask to see the weapon.

Retain evidence, like a note.

Presume the weapon is a toy.

Activate the alarm and cameras when it is safe to do so.

Make movements you wouldn't make for a regular customer.

Observe the direction of the escape.

Try to out-guess or out-think the robber.

If you can do so safely, remember the color, type, make, and license plate number of the getaway car.



After a Robbery



Stay calm.

Chase the robber.

Lock doors you are assigned to. Stay at that door. Allow only police to enter and advise them that it is safe to do so.

Leave the premises for any reason.

Observe the door used by the robbers and identify the direction of escape, and the vehicle details.

Discuss the holdup with employees.

Activate the alarm.

Discuss the holdup with customers.

Dial 911. Only call the police and the FBI if 911 is unreachable.

Give out information to the media.

Isolate the victims. Stop people in the lobby from leaving.

Talk about the holdup by way of text, email, or social media.

Check for injuries.

Disclose the amount stolen.

Lock cash drawers and other valuables.

Disclose the amount missed by the robber.

Notify the bank security officer.

Touch anything in the areas where the robber has been.

Write down your observations on a robbery description form.

Handle evidence left by the robber.

Write down the names of customers you serviced before, during, and after the crime.

Leave your workstation unless you are advised to do so.

Stay at or return to your station.

Block off areas touched by the robber.

Cooperate with the police.

Vigilant Compliance

Understanding and following rules, regulations, procedures, and policies are key to paying due respect to compliance matters as a teller. Some of the regulations tellers are expected to follow can have severe consequences and penalties if ignored or violated.

The Bank Secrecy Act

Since inception, the Bank Secrecy Act's impact on the teller position has been, in large part, about complying with the regulation's requirement to report and/or maintain information on certain cash transactions. Your financial institution will provide you with required Bank Secrecy Act training. Use this checklist to verify your expertise.

Bank Secrecy Act Checklist for Tellers

	YES NO
You can explain how BSA impacts work on the teller line.	
You are aware of who in your organization can provide guidance on BSA.	
You are trained on using your organization's Customer Identification Program (CIP).	
You are trained on handling BSA-related transactions.	
You understand what steps to take regarding a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR).	
You know the \$3,000 Monetary Instrument rule.	
You know the greater than \$10,000 Currency Transaction rule.	
You recognize suspicious structuring of cash.	
You can complete work following the rules.	
You know how to discuss the rules with customers.	
You know how to get information for BSA reporting from uncooperative customers.	
You know how to identify and report suspicious activity.	
You can identify any unordinary combination of transactions.	



Expedited Funds Availability Act (REG CC)

Important reminder



A Regulation CC hold does not reduce the risk of the transaction if the character of the presenter or the integrity of the item is in question!

The Federal Reserve Board established the Expedited Funds Availability Act in the late 1980's to uniform the approach financial institutions take in placing holds on deposits. All financial institutions are obligated to comply with the Expedited Funds Availability Act (REG CC).

REG CC Checklist for Tellers

YES | NO

The Funds Availability Policy notice is displayed at your workstation.	
You can explain your company's policy.	
You are aware of who in your organization provides REG CC guidance.	
You know the difference between placing a hold and sending an item for collection.	
You can quickly identify potential hold items when items are deposited.	
You can clearly explain the procedure for placing a hold on a deposit, including the type and number of days for the hold.	
You can properly complete and provide the hold notice to customers.	
You know how to discuss placing a hold on an item with the customer.	
You know deposits and a savings account are exempt.	



Module 3 | Scrutinizing Transactions

In this module, you will explore how to scrutinize transactions. We will discuss verification concerns, check cashing guidelines, and identification rationale. You will be able to examine endorsements, dissect less-cash deposit, know your money, and identify popular scams.

The Importance of Dissecting Transactions

From the list above, you see that a transaction is not just one simple thing that you handle. Each transaction has multiple aspects and considerations that you must scrutinize. This module zeroes in on the items, conditions, and concerns that you will be responsible for.

As a teller, you must be aware of your organization's policy on acceptable identification and what steps to take when a transaction is in question.

Check payments involve important and delicate customer contact techniques and you need a trained eye to spot the unusual. A mistake you make when paying a check is almost impossible to correct. An unjustified refusal to pay a check can be embarrassing and costly. A dishonored check (one not paid upon proper presentment) is a serious reflection on the maker's credit and possibly on his integrity. If a financial organization refuses payment without proper cause, even because of an innocent mistake, the depositor could sue and may be awarded damages exceeding the amount of the erroneously dishonored check.

Verification Concerns

In your role as a teller, verification cannot be overemphasized. Signatures, balances, account holder information, and a host of other concerns must be verified in order for the teller to make accurate and rock solid decisions. Tellers should always practice caution and follow proper procedures during transactions involving large dollar amounts. Judgment calls must be based primarily on facts known to the teller. Instinct is always of secondary importance.

In this section, we will cover verification concerns that impact risk management such as: cash verification, identification, account history, policy and compliance, limits, and supervisor approval.

Cash and Check Verification

Verification of cash is not negotiable; it is a must, each and every time. Once money leaves a teller window, a strap of currency is broken, or cash is placed in the drawer, it is too late to second guess anything that had to do with the cash. All currency and coin coming in or going out must be verified by the teller.

When balancing, you should never question whether incoming or outgoing cash was verified. Verifying cash is a discipline that is never broken.

*NOTHING WILL EVER ELIMINATE THE NEED
TO PAY THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MONEY TO THE RIGHT PERSON.*

Checks made payable to a company should never be cashed at a teller window. Some institutions have varying policies for sole proprietorship. However, the institution that finds it acceptable for a sole proprietorship to cash checks payable to the business, may find the policy confusing for tellers. It is recommended a financial institution never cash a check made payable to any entity or proprietorship. Checks drawn on financial institutions outside the continental United States must be sent through proper channels for collection and cannot be processed as a standard negotiable item.

Check Cashing Guidelines

Financial organizations are legally obligated to cash "on-us checks" presented by the maker who maintains a checking account at the institution—provided the checking account meets certain requirements.

Interesting thought to ponder



When a check is paid in cash at your teller station, not only is it legally paid, the possibility of recovering the cash paid out is usually questionable. Tellers must be constantly aware of the finality of paying checks!



	On-Us Checks	Not-On-Us Checks
Presented by your accountholder	Visually identify the account holder or request identification. Verify sufficient funds.	Check for proper endorsement by the payee. Check the average balance and NSF history of the account holder's account.
Presented by the payee	Check for proper endorsement by the payee. Verify the payee's identification. Verify sufficient funds. Check for stop payments or alerts on the account.	Check your financial organization's policy for these transactions. If acceptable: Check for proper endorsement. Verify the payee's identification.

Important reminder



Always obtain supervisor approval if the amount involved is over your limit!

Identification

Requesting, examining, and recording the presenter's identification is an important part of the check-cashing decision. It is how you determine whether the presenter is the person he or she claims to be. Since it is difficult to recognize all of your institution's depositors, properly identifying them is critical. While the signature card provides the best form of identification, other ID is acceptable. When two forms of ID are required typically only one of them is required to be a photo ID.

Generally, financial institutions follow the same standards on identification. Determine the validity of customer identification using the identification validity test below.

Six Point Identification Validity Test

Acceptable identification must:

①

Contain a photograph.

②

Describe the presenter.

③

Show a sample of the presenter's signature.

④

Include the birth date of the presenter.

⑤

Display a date of expiration.

⑥

Be recognizable as an official ID and
contain a registration or identification number.



Acceptable Forms of Identification

①

Valid driver's license with photograph.

②

Armed forces ID.

③

USA or foreign passport.

④

State-issued ID with photograph.

⑤

Institution officer visually identifies
and accepts responsibility for presenter's identity.

⑥

INS issued Alien Registration Card

Other Forms of Identification to Be Considered

⑦

Well-known employer ID card with photograph.

⑧

Government ID.

⑨

Financial organization issued ID.

Important reminder



Acceptable identification must pass the 6-point validity test.

Identification Rules and Guidelines

When you ask someone for identification it may offend them. Asking for identification means the transaction will take far longer. The key is to know when to request information, how to examine it, and how to record the information in the most efficient manner. Always aim to protect the institution without inconveniencing customers.

Requesting Identification

Many financial organizations will require you to request two forms of identification with any cash withdrawal, even if you recognize the presenter.

Examining Identification

Once the person presents identification, examine it this way:

Be observant

Body language such as darting eyes or fidgeting could be an indication the presenter is nervous.

Make a three-way comparison

Compare the information on the item presented with the information on the identification. Compare the person to the picture. Keep in mind hairstyle and color changes, so you should be looking at facial features. The height and weight information on the ID can be helpful when comparing the presenter to the ID. Be wary if the person presenting the ID looks younger than the birthdate reflected on the ID.

Look for signs of tampering

Fuzzy numbers or letters, red eye in the photo, or bumpy surfaces are good clues. Key information often tampered with is the picture, birth date, height, and weight. Also, check for rough edges; after altering the ID numbers or a state seal, edges may not match up after the laminate is put back in place.

Check the expiration date

A license with an expired date is not valid; it may signify that it is a borrowed license, as the original license holder may have given one away that is no longer needed. In contrast, check for an ID which is marked as a duplicate. This could indicate the original license holder may have requested a second license for someone to use.



Get out a recent book of your state's driver license details

Compare this to the ID. Rules change often, so make sure the copy is up to date. Compare the birth date against the driver's license number as many con artists forget to change this detail. Some states may code the license number with the birth date and other identifying data.

Ask the person for additional forms of ID

Anytime you are required or feel the need to verify a driver's license, ask for additional ID. It is unlikely a phony presenter would have additional forms of ID with the same name.

Talk to the person

Insert key questions which are not usually thought of when someone alters data on a license. Ask the presenter to verify their date of birth or high school graduation year. When you question the true identity of the presenter, ask to verify the spelling of their middle name. You could ask the presenter how they got their name (named after a family member, etc.) and see if there is a hesitation before the response.

Compare the address shown on the identification to the address on the check

This isn't a check point that always helps since not all checks issued have the payee's address. Be cautious if addresses don't match. It could be an indicator the check ended up in the wrong hands or that the person has moved. (If you have concerns, refer the check-cashing decision to your supervisor.)

Determine current information

If there has been a recent change in the person's name, address, or phone number, be sure you determine the current and correct information.

Compare signatures

Always compare the signature(s) on the identification with the signature(s) on the item presented. Depending on the situation and the presenter, this may mean you are verifying internal records for the maker or the endorsement of the payee.

Check any bulletins or notices

Bulletins will advise you not to cash checks for specific individuals or notify you of stolen checks. Most banks or credit unions have set procedures for circulating such notices so you—as a teller—can be on the lookout for known scams or check cashing thieves.

Check cashing fees

In some financial institutions a fee is collected to cash a check for a noncustomer, even for an on-us check. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) states, "There is no federal law or regulation that requires national banks to cash checks for noncustomers. Most banks have policies that allow check cashing services only for customers who have an account with them in order to protect both themselves and their customers from forgeries."

Other situations that can call for a fee to cash a check is when your financial institution agrees to provide the convenience of cashing checks drawn on a well-established business or a local municipality that doesn't have an account at your company.

Stay aware of any fee-related circumstances in place for check cashing.

Recording Identification

Many organizations record the ID on the face of the item using the T-bar format across the top. Identification recorded on the back may be inadmissible to help obtain a conviction if it is covered by institution processing marks. In some states, there may be privacy laws that prohibit what you can and cannot record. Verify with your supervisor exactly where and what you are to record regarding ID.

You may be asked to record:

- The type of identification (for example: driver's license)
- The identification number
- A phone number (if not shown on the check itself)
- Other coded information, such as the presenter's physical description



Identity Doubts

When you doubt the presenter's identity, hold the identification for a few moments; ask the presenter a personal question, such as date of birth, home address, or employer. Often, a thief will not be able to answer correctly.

A professional criminal may try to intimidate the teller rather than answer questions. An honest account holder may be offended by the questioning but will likely understand the request if the teller proceeds with competence and sensitivity.

Many financial institutions offer a printed hand-out explaining why identification or verification is necessary.

*EVERY TELLER SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY TRAINED ON
HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE NEED FOR VERIFICATION AND IDENTIFICATION.*

Endorsements

Endorsement is the writing on the back of a negotiable instrument. Endorsement is critical for two reasons:

- The endorsement is the means of legally transferring a check from one party to another.
- When a person endorses a check, he or she promises to pay the institution the amount of the check if the check is dishonored (not paid) for any reason.

All checks must be endorsed with the payee's signature and, sometimes, with additional signatures. Otherwise, the institution which cashes the check has no claim to the money and cannot be paid.

Interesting thought to ponder



When you examine endorsements, you must be thorough without delaying the person too long, and without being too obvious about scrutiny. This takes practice and a thorough understanding of the importance of endorsement guidelines.

Types of Endorsements

There are five types of endorsements. Some are accepted for cashing, some are not. The five types are: blank, special, restrictive, conditional, and qualified. We'll cover each in detail below.

Blank Endorsement

The blank endorsement is among the most common and accepted type of endorsement. A blank endorsement contains the payee's signature and one or more other endorsers. A blank endorsement does not include any other instructions.

Sometimes a check has two or more payees. Special scrutiny is required when there is more than one payee. The teller should require officer approval when the check is "owned" by several parties.

By using a blank endorsement, the payee on a check makes the check negotiable. The check can then be transferred to someone else simply by giving it to them. Customers typically use blank endorsements to transfer ownership of a check to the institution when they cash the check at a teller window. The payee can also use a blank endorsement to transfer a check to another person as a form of payment. For example, Suzie Dodge endorses a check and turns the check over to Paul Green. Then, when Paul Green wants to cash the check, he adds his endorsement.

Until Paul Green adds his endorsement to the check, the check could actually be endorsed and cashed by anyone who finds it. To avoid this risk, many payees prefer to use a special endorsement if they wish to transfer a check.

Special Endorsement

A special endorsement transfers a check from the payee to the specific person named in the endorsement. Before the check can be negotiated to anyone else, the special endorsee must first endorse it.



Restrictive Endorsement

A restrictive endorsement on a check identifies the purpose of the transfer, which restricts the use of the check. A typical restrictive endorsement is widely used and accepted. The word '*only*' is the distinguishing trait of a restrictive endorsement.

When a check is endorsed '*for deposit only*' it should not be cashed or even accepted for a split deposit—it should only be deposited. A depositor who presents such a check and wants cash back would usually be asked to deposit the check and write a check for cash.

Another case of restrictive endorsement is where the payee endorses the check payable only to someone else.

Conditional Endorsement

Conditional endorsements are rarely used and rarely accepted. A conditional endorsement states certain conditions must be met before the check can be negotiated.

If your institution cashes the check and the conditions aren't met, the institution may have difficulty recovering the funds from the endorser. This explains why most financial institutions are reluctant to accept conditional endorsements.

Qualified Endorsement

Another rare form of endorsement, which should also be referred to your supervisor, is a qualified endorsement. A qualified endorsement usually contains the words "Without recourse," which relieves the endorser of the legal responsibility of guaranteeing payment if the check isn't honored.

Because qualified endorsements involve a risk of non-payment, financial institutions rarely accept them.

Endorsement Rules and Policies

Just because a check has an endorsement, doesn't mean the endorsement is proper and acceptable. Like the items on the face of the check, you need to examine the endorsement to be sure it meets certain guidelines. We will cover those next.

Endorsement Guidelines

If the endorsement passes all tests, use the following guidelines to decide whether or not to accept the endorsement.

Payee Endorsement

The payee must first endorse the instrument in order to cash or deposit it.

Always Examine Endorsement

All checks deposited to a depositor's account—business or personal—should be examined for proper endorsement. For future reference, all endorsements should include the account holder's legible name and account number.

Transfer to Another Party

To transfer the instrument to another party, not only must the payee first endorse it, the other party must also endorse the instrument. Once an instrument has been transferred, only the last endorser has title to the funds.

Endorser Guarantees

By endorsing the instrument, each endorser guarantees the following:

- Upon proper notification, he or she will pay the amount of the instrument if the check is dishonored. (Endorsements that contain the words 'without recourse' are an exception.)
- All prior endorser's signatures are genuine and authorized.
- To his or her knowledge, the instrument is genuine and free of defects. This protects your organization from any disagreements between the payee and the maker, or the payee and a second endorser.
- He or she has good title to the instrument and the right to transfer it to someone else or to cash it.
- He or she has not altered the instrument in a way that would affect its negotiability.



Non-Personal Endorsements

Checks payable to a company, lodge, church, or other organization—anything other than a personal account—cannot be deposited to a personal account, and are accepted only for deposit to the payee's account exactly as the payee is written on the face of the check. You must be aware that the organization guarantees the endorsements on each processed check once it is accepted by you, the teller. If the payee on the face of the check has not properly endorsed the back of the check and is not present to complete the endorsement, other procedures must be followed as deemed by institution policy.

Account-Holder Depositing

When the check is payable to the account holder depositing it, the teller may stamp the back of the check: "Deposit to the account of the within-named payee." Care must be exercised if the check has two payees on the face, as both payees must be signers of the account in which the check is being deposited.

Indicate Action

When a check is presented for deposit, or to be cashed made payable to the financial institution where the request is being made, place a hyphen and indicate action taken.

Non-Account Holder Cashing

Checks made payable to the financial institution should not be cashed for a non-account holder because the purpose of the check is unclear.

Judgment of Adequate Funds

When a check is accepted for deposit, the account holder is guaranteeing any endorsements of the instrument which precede his. However, the teller must make a judgment concerning the prospect of adequate funds being available in the depositor's account to charge back the item if it is returned. Consequently, be careful in giving immediate credit to the account holder.

Check Related Fraud

Even with today's payment options and the number of checks written declining every year, there were more than 18 billion checks cashed in 2012 totaling around \$26 trillion, according to a 2013 Federal Reserve study. Check fraud amounting to about \$1.1 billion annually continues to rise, according to the Fed.

Technology is not always the best friend of banks and credit unions. Advancements in computer-generated graphics, scanners, and laser printers enable today's scam artist to produce counterfeit checks that are hard to detect. Much of what is needed to make a convincing fake can be obtained online.

The best defense against losses due to counterfeit checks includes:

- A conscious effort to know depositors
- Close scrutiny of new accounts
- Highly trained tellers, and
- Consistent deposit/withdrawal review procedures

Forgeries and Stolen Checks

As a teller, you must be fast, efficient, competent, and well-versed in money, monetary transactions, and financial instruments. The teller must be sufficiently trained to cope with the professional *paperhanger*, who makes a comfortable living by defrauding financial institutions and merchants out of hundreds of millions of dollars annually. There is no substitute for experience in the teller's arsenal of defense weapons, but until that experience has been acquired and carefully developed, intelligent training methods must fill the gap.

Forgeries and stolen checks are big business! Law enforcement personnel advise that, following a burglary, the criminal will try to move as fast as possible to pass any stolen or forged checks.

Interesting thought to ponder



Tellers are like a US secret service agent. They must treat each customer as though he or she is a dignitary, but be constantly aware they may be a con artist.



Looking Out for Possible Check Fraud

When examining a questionable check, review the check number. It can indicate a new account. For example, a temporary check, personal check numbered 199 or less, or a business check numbered 1100 or less, may mean an account that was recently opened.

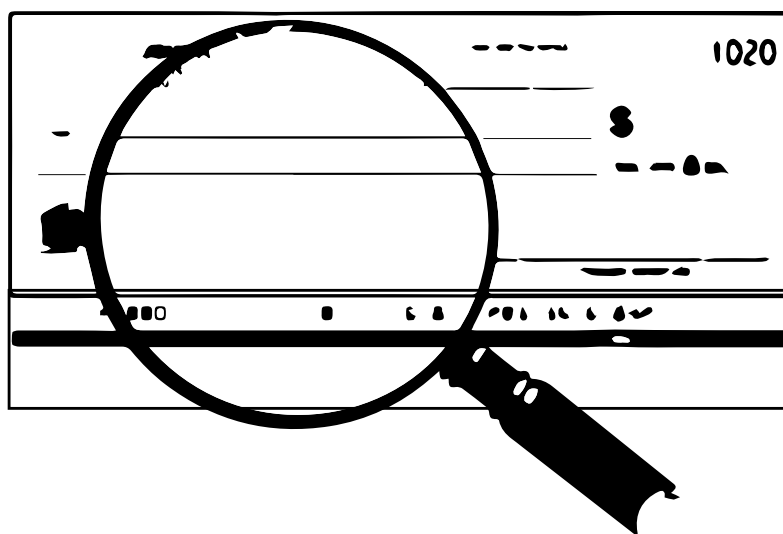
All financial institutions should have a policy to print the month and year the account opened on printed checks and to start all new account check numbers with the same number.

New Account Scams

New accounts with holds on initial deposits should never be issued temporary checks and the permanent checks should be held at the institution until the funds have cleared.

New account scams are a common way for a thief to steal money from a financial institution. The professional criminal knows cash is well received by financial institutions and may open an account with cash. Within hours or days, he will begin to deposit stolen checks requesting cash back on the deposit.

Another common way to defraud the institution through a new account is for the criminal to steal a well-established firm's incoming checks and attempt to open an account in a similar name, perhaps using the company's initials. Detecting new account scams begins with the new account department. As a teller, you are responsible for evaluating the authenticity of identification or negotiable items presented for immediate credit or to be cashed.



Valid Check Theft

Another scam, not new to financial institutions, is for the thief to steal checks out of the last book of checks or at the back of the checkbook. The theft goes undetected by the account holder until a forgery is committed.

When you verify a check that appears to belong to a well-established depositor, do a query on the last few check numbers paid. If the check being presented for payment is significantly out of order, it may indicate something is amiss and you should exercise caution.

Infrastructure Vulnerabilities

Remote facilities—primarily the drive-thru—are more vulnerable to forgeries and stolen checks because:

- They provide thieves with a quick getaway
- Positive identification is more difficult
- There is pressure to keep the line moving due to volume
- Communication lines can fail during shift changes

Don't Underestimate Criminals

The professional check passer often knows as much about the financial institution's check-cashing procedures as the teller. He knows most organizations do not cash non-account holder's checks drawn on another institution, so he or she rarely tries it. But crooks may use checks stolen from legitimate businesses. They seldom go directly to the institution the check is drawn from. So there is only one alternative left: he presents the teller with a check drawn on another institution, a check he has stolen in blank form, and filled in with your depositor's name as payee. He pretends to be that person.

Important reminder



Never trust a phone number that is written on the check or given to you by the presenter. Often a forger has someone standing by to take the call and pose as the issuer.



Unfortunately, it is relatively easy for a check passer to obtain enough information about a legitimate account holder to fool a teller.

He or she may have “borrowed” an account holder's checking account statement from the mail box long enough to copy the person's signature from the checks, noted the average balance, and account number. Often a crook will send a *runner* to the institution to cash a check. The runner will pretend to be the account holder, but the forged endorsement will have been put on the back of the check before the runner enters the institution. This is easily thwarted. Always ask the check casher to endorse the check in front of you. Cover the original endorsement so it cannot be copied. Only brazen check passers come into the institution and forge the endorsement in front of you.

*REFER THE TRANSACTION TO YOUR SUPERVISOR
IF YOU ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THE PERSON PRESENTING THE CHECK.*



Fraudulent Check Giveaways

1. Watch for shaky writing, especially in the upper portions of letters l, b, k, t, `l` and h. To successfully duplicate another's signature, the forger must write much slower than normal. The writing looks wobbly but not like age-related tremor.
2. When the writing is done slowly, ink seeps into the paper's surface, making blots and feathery corrugations in the strokes. This is particularly obvious with felt tip and fountain pens, but not as apparent with ballpoint pens.
3. Other traits indicate a check forger is trying to imitate another's writing while hiding his own penmanship: uneven spacing between letters, changeable slant of letters within a name (some backhand and some slanting forward), and a bouncy writing line.
4. Often a forger misspells a name, either the maker or the endorser. Watch for missing or extra letters.
5. Forgers like to use flourishes or unnecessary strokes in writing, particularly in the capital letters.
6. If the forger cannot get perfect letters on the first try, he tries to correct with additional lines referred to as *patching*. It is easier to see by holding the item in front of a light.
7. Sometimes a forger starts to write and discovers his pen is at the wrong spot. He lifts the pen, shifting its position slightly to begin again. The small dot or mark where the pen originally rested is the forger's calling card.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Doe". The signature exhibits several characteristics of a forgery, including uneven slant, patching, and a bouncy writing line. The letters are not perfectly aligned, and there are visible corrections or "patching" in the strokes, particularly in the "J" and "D".



Check Kiting

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines check kiting as follows:

A scheme which artificially inflates bank account balances, in accounts that are under common control, for purposes of obtaining unauthorized use of bank funds, through the systematic exchanging or swapping of checks between these accounts, in a manner which is designed to misuse the float that exists in the banking system.

Interesting thought to ponder



Not everyone that writes a check and then rushes to the bank to cover it is kiting. Kiting is a crime defined as activity intended to obtain something of value by trick, deceit, deception, or swindle.

According to law enforcement experts, check kiters generally have a professional appearance and manner. The professional check kiter usually has a good working relationship with his or her financial institution, regardless of whether the kiter has a legitimate or bogus business. This good relationship eventually works to the disadvantage of the bank because personnel are much less likely to be suspicious of "good" customers.

The American Bankers Association describes check kiting as "the process of floating worthless checks between accounts established in two or more banks." The ABA goes on to state "that a kiter is able to create the impression of having a real balance in each of the banks by carefully timing deposits and checks, and taking advantage of the time needed for checks to clear."

Identifying Check Kiting

Kiting involves checks from other organizations that appear to be drawn on an account established by the same account holder. Certainly, not all checks of this nature are kiting schemes. But as an alert teller, you should always watch for potential kiting.

Here are 12 indicators of check kiting:

1. A high number of deposits, usually several per day.
2. A high percentage of deposited funds coming from accounts under common control of the suspected kiter.
3. Take notice of any customer who makes frequent inquiries about his or her balance or other account activity. Kitters often make early morning or late afternoon deposits.
4. More "real" money is being taken out than put in.
5. Deposit and withdrawal activity conceals negative actual balances.
6. Total dollar debits and credits are almost equal.
7. Many deposit items drawn on the same bank(s) or many checks payable to the same payee.
8. Overdrafts covered with checks and not with cash.
9. Checks written in rounded dollar amounts.
10. Frequent inquiries regarding account balances.
11. Frequent use of different bank branches.
12. Frequent use of ATMs to make deposits.



What to Do When Kiting Takes Place?

When kiting takes place, the financial institution stands at risk. If a kite goes undetected, the account holder may have numerous financial institutions involved. When the kite stops "working," usually the last institution involved experiences a loss. If you suspect kiting notify your supervisor immediately.

Here are risk management best practices a financial institution may ask of a teller or teller supervisor with transactions that may have kiting-related characteristics:

1. Alert management and the officer on the account.
2. Place special instructions on the account to alert other tellers.
3. Contact the other institution(s) involved to confirm the funds are available.
4. Never accuse or confront the account holder.

Financial institutions lose millions of dollars annually as a result of kiting schemes. The strongest combination for deterring or stopping kiting is observant, alert tellers and the aid of the computer list of all items presented for payment that are drawn against uncollected funds.

The institution would be well-advised to have a kite-watch procedure where all "not-on-us" items of an established amount (for example, \$1,000 or more) are placed in a review bin so that a designated deposit review person gives these items a second look. Centralizing the effort allows a few specialists to become very familiar with depositors moving money from one institution to another, amounts, frequency, etc. Also, this approach allows tellers to work efficiently and reduces the need to slow transactions down delaying the account holder at the window, as well as others in line.

Just as the first bank to identify a kiting scheme is usually the one to minimize their losses, alert tellers and close scrutiny of possible kiting transactions can effectively insulate your bank from crippling losses.

Less-Cash Deposits

The same procedures for cashing a check should be followed when handling a less-cash deposit. Many depositors indicate on their deposit slips they want cash back on their deposit. Tellers must take the following precautions when paying out cash.

Verify the Account Owner's Signature

Remember, the signature card requires an owner's signature to withdraw cash from an account. Be sure the cash-back line on the face of the deposit slip is signed by an owner of the account. It is an authorization to pay just like a check on the account and the signature should be verified.

Don't Make Assumptions

Never assume the presenter is the account holder. Follow all the steps required anytime cash is paid out including: The presenter must be positively known by the teller or steps must be taken to validate the presenter's authority, the signature card verified, or valid identification requested. Do not confuse recognition with actual knowledge of an account holder. When someone other than an owner presents a cash-back deposit, the presenter must sign below the account holder's signature either on the front of the deposit slip or on the back of the check acknowledging receipt of the funds.

Presenter Identification

Once cash is paid out, it is rarely recovered when lost in a scam. Ideally, the presenter should sign the deposit slip in the teller's presence. If the presenter is positively known by the teller this may not be required but the presenter must have signed the deposit slip indicating receipt of the cash.

Important reminder



Everyone receiving cash from a teller must sign for the cash.

Even checks presented for payment payable to cash should have an endorsement on the back if the person presenting the check is not the maker.



For Deposit Only

In the event the items deposited have been endorsed with the restricted endorsement "for deposit only," it is considered an exception to allow cash back on the deposit.

Altered Information

When the deposit slip is altered in any way, you must have the person presenting the deposit initial all changes.

Less Cash Received Deposit Schemes

Many less cash deposit schemes have been perpetrated against financial institutions, and they rank high on the list of operational losses incurred by tellers.

Give special notice when the deposit instructs you to provide cash back. An inexperienced teller may not suspect a depositor who is willing to leave substantial money in their account and wants withdraw only a portion of his funds. Most less cash deposits are legitimate. However, these transactions must pass all the validity tests for a check presented for payment.

Family members or employees of account holders attempting to defraud either the institution and/or the depositor often try it through less cash deposits. Such transactions must not catch tellers off guard. Evaluate them in the same manner as all transactions involving cash payment from the teller's drawer.

Important reminder



Don't give cash back on commercial deposits or assume the person making the deposit is the account holder.

Don't Underestimate Criminals

Crooks and con men work full-time at defrauding financial institutions and merchants. That is how they make "a living." Many use stolen but legitimate materials: printed deposit slips, checks, and identification. Law enforcement personnel say cash-back con artists prefer drive-up facilities where it is harder to check ID. At peak times, the emphasis can easily switch to speedy handling, so the chance of catching a crook is greatly reduced.

Confirm and Record Your Decisions

If you have second thoughts, rely on the head teller or an officer to confirm your decision about denying or completing a transaction. After their approval, have them initial all items involved in the transaction. Record the identification but take care not to deface a deposit slip or any negotiable instrument. Make a photo copy of the identification if you have any doubts. Record the date, time, license plate number, and physical description of the person receiving the cash and note characteristics of the transaction. Were others with the "customer"? Any monograms on their clothing, using a company vehicle, etc.?

Respect Your Instincts

Above all, respect your instincts. If you suspect fraud it is better to investigate and double-check all information. Remember it is hard to recover any cash that is paid out!



Module 4 | Extraordinary Customer Service

As a teller, you have the potential to create a positive, lasting impression on your customer. In this module we will pinpoint the choices you must make to always create an exceptional customer experience.

Important reminder



The intention of a professional teller is to make their customer's day.

You will learn what the customer wants, how to communicate effectively, and how you can make your customer's day. We will conclude with five habits you must adopt to be a highly effective teller.

The Service You Provide

The level of service you provide is made up of all the interactions a customer has with your company. This includes how pleasant in-person contact is, how well the ATM functions, how easy online systems perform, and all aspects of a telephone call.

Interesting thought to ponder

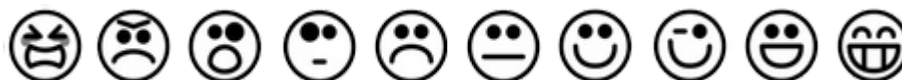


If customers were asked to rate your service level, where do you think they would place their mark?

Poor

Satisfactory

Exceptional



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

No doubt your objective is a 9 or better, right? How do you achieve that consistently? What about a difficult customer? What happens when you are having a bad day?

The Three Levels of Service

Every encounter, every interaction impacts the customer's opinion of the company. As a teller, it's likely that you see more customers than anyone else in the company. Needless to say, you play a key role in the customer's perception and satisfaction.

Important reminder



In the eyes of the customer, only three service-levels exist: poor, satisfactory, and exceptional.

Most people only remember when the service they received was very bad or very good. Satisfactory service is not noteworthy; it didn't make an impression on the customer and it's not remembered.

When a poor impression is left with the customer, they tend to feel like nothing more than a number. The relationship is cold and impersonal. The end result is that no emotional connection was formed with the company.

When a good impression is made with the customer, they feel served and valued and the relationship is warm. The customer becomes emotionally connected to the organization.

Tellers who are committed to leave a positive impression on the customer will want to make the most of the famous phrase, "It's the little things that count." When you go out of your way to find ways to add the little things with customers, it makes them feel more valued and appreciated.





Techniques to Brighten a Customer's Day

Practice the following techniques to ensure you your customer's day:

- Embrace the mindset: I'm paid by the smile, not by the hour.
- Give everyone a warm welcome and a smile right away.
- Look them in the eye, and they will return the smile almost every time.
- Clearly shift the center of attention from you to them.
- Add humor where appropriate. "Sorry for the delay today, you would think with all this business we had money on sale half-price!"
- Ask about them; express genuine interest and concern.
- Keep clutter to a minimum.
- Clean up your work area, do all you can to keep it looking inviting, fresh and welcoming.
- At points where there are unavoidable delays, keep the customer informed with progress reports so that they know they have not been forgotten. In the lobby, offer them a drink or a magazine to absorb their time during the wait.
- Send a thank you card, just because they're your customer.
- Send a sympathy card when someone they love has passed or they have lost a cherished pet.
- Send a get-well card if they've been sick or in the hospital.
- Give out Valentine's Day cards and treats.
- Trick or treat them on Halloween with treats only.
- Utilize all holidays to find ways to make the customer's day.
- Demonstrate attention to detail; both in the quality and friendliness of service.
- Give the customer what they are not expecting. When waiting on customers, check to see if it's their birthday or if, by chance, it's the anniversary month of when they first opened their account.
- Express appreciation for choosing your organization. Gratefulness is easy to make part of the customer experience with every encounter. Simple examples include: "thank you" or "we appreciate your business" are the perfect comments to make to express appreciation.

What Your Customer Wants

Whether the customer connects with you on the phone, in the lobby or the in drive-through, you can make the experience exceptional.

Listen

When we demonstrate we are listening, it shows that we respect the customer. It shows our personal concern for whatever issues and problems the customer might experience.

Take Responsibility

When the customer finds they are experiencing a problem or concern, they want and need us to walk them through the problem and to a solution.

Attention to Detail

Quality customer service starts by attending to the basics accurately and not forgetting any small step along the way. Painters and writers put their name on their finished product. What about you? Would you want to sign your name to every customer experience you provide along with all the details?

“I Got This” Attitude

Remind yourself often that you can learn what you need to know and reach out to others to mentor you when the need arises. Be careful to not tell yourself that you can't do this or that. Catch yourself when you notice your thinking reinforces negativity versus positivity. Guard against taking on someone else's bad mood, laugh often, and confide your troubles to a trusted friend that encourages you to work through the tough times.

Sense of Humor

Tasteful humor is critical to success for a teller. You want to find ways to inject humor into your workday. “A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower



Positive Attitude

There are few things that affect our lives more significantly than our attitude. Our attitude shapes our environment—it's the difference, to use a cliché, of seeing the glass as half full or half empty. Our outlook on life is the road map that guides the quality of our lives. A simple way to look at attitude is this: Attitude is the way we communicate how we're feeling to other people.

Positive, optimistic people exude a favorable attitude that draws like-minded people toward them. It's just natural to want to be around people who have an uplifting influence and who don't pepper most conversations with negative remarks. When we are pessimistic and continually expect life to be negative, we put up a barrier to other people.

Interesting thought to ponder



Attitude is shaped in our mind. It's our perspective. It's the way we look at things, circumstances, and people. We're in control of our perspective, so we are in control of our attitude.

Make It or Break It

Customers have many opportunities and contacts to form an impression of the institution—and employees. If the impression is good, we make it; if the impression is bad, we break it.



Make it

Call the customer by their name.

Attention to detail.

Caring and friendliness.

Ownership of problems.

Quick solutions.

Clean, neat surroundings.

Relationship building.

Smile.

Listen.

Respect.

Acceptance.

Negotiating disagreements.

Affirmation of the customer's feelings.

Expressing interest and care.



Break it

No sense of urgency.

Eating or chewing gum.

On hold for too long.

Long line.

Faded signs.

Dirty or messy surroundings.

Forgotten promises.

Indifference.

Ignorance.

Lack of acknowledgement.

Unprofessional behavior.

Unfriendly.

Rushed interaction.

Chatting or texting with someone else.



The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule should be our yardstick for how we treat everyone we encounter. What would we want to have happen if we found ourselves in the customer's shoes? In order to have others treat us with dignity and respect, we must first give it.

Choose words carefully when dealing with an upset customer. Choose words that soothe rather than repel.

Interesting thought to ponder



What would you want to have happen if you were in the other person's shoes?

Be a Work in Progress

You've not arrived when you land the job—you've only just begun. Think about your career. What do you want to do X years from now? What will you do to make that happen? We are each responsible for our own growth and development. Don't wait on someone else to see you get ahead. If it's to be, it's up to you!

Strive to learn more. Go online during down time and learn more about the industry, regulations affecting institutions, etc. Stay up-to-date on what's going on in the industry by reading journals and periodicals or searching online.

Visit bank-related websites to see what learning opportunities they have available. Many are free. Visit us at www.interaction-training.com and sign up to receive our free newsletter, articles, and tools.

Look for opportunities to help your supervisor with some of his/her duties. Cross-train in other areas; this makes you a more valuable asset to the institution. Ask to attend training that would enhance your skills.

Seek a mentor. Someone you admire within the institution or in another business will often help you navigate the path.

It's Their Time and Money

We must never forget who we work for: THE CUSTOMER! We are not doing them a favor by waiting on them; they are doing us a favor by choosing to do business with our company.

Effective Communication

Thoughtful body language and words, along with an energized tone of voice is a perfect recipe for success at communicating effectively. Honest, authentic communication encourages the same type of communication from others. When we connect with people, we have a greater chance of influencing them. If we can influence others, we have a better chance of getting our needs and wants met.

Communication is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages. The sender uses verbal and non-verbal means of communication to send his message to the receiver. The receiver responds either physically or mentally to the message sent.

Verbal Messages

Verbal messaging is composed of words and phrases and depends on organization. The words we choose to use when communicating with others can inflame an already upset customer, or can soothe them.

Words to avoid and what to say instead



Problem



Challenge, situation, circumstance, issue, concern

Reject

Decline

Mistake

Oversight, error

Can't

Can



Non-Verbal Messages

Non-verbal messaging is composed of facial expressions, gestures, posture, grooming, tone-of-voice, attitude, and body language, such as stance, stride, body movement, and energy.

When we are face-to-face with customers, it is the combination of verbal and non-verbal messages that facilitates communication. The use of gestures or facial expressions helps convey the message. A receiver of the message hears what is being said and reads the sender's body language to help determine the meaning of the message.

Matching Verbal and Non-Verbal

Messages can become misinterpreted or distorted when the visual message disagrees with the audible message being communicated. Verbal and non-verbal messages must match. If they do not agree, the receiver will only register what your body language says.

Likewise, if our tone of voice or the way we speak indicates annoyance, frustration, anger, impatience, etc., the receiver will pick up the feeling of the message regardless of the information being supplied.

How well we use eye contact and handshakes can set the stage for effective or ineffective communication with others. If we fail to look at others when we are speaking or receiving information, the other person may receive the message we do not care about him or his needs, or he may get the impression we have something to hide.

Effective Listening

To be effective communicators, we must work to achieve effective listening. Many things can get in the way of listening well. Information overload, preoccupation, and distractions can impair our concentration.

We spend a lot of time listening to what others are telling us. How we respond both verbally and physically lets the other person know if we are paying attention to what it is he is saying. Effective, active listening requires concentration and physical effort. Active listening is participatory. Both parties are involved in the communication and share in the responsibility for making the exchange successful.

Knowing How to Say It

Sometimes, it is what you say that makes the difference between a disgruntled or happy customer. Replace any triggering phrases you might be using with calming phrases.

Trigger Phrases and their Calming Alternatives



Our policy is...

Here's what we can do...

I'm sorry, we can't...

I can...

That's how it is.

Thank you for...

I don't know...

I can find out...

But...

And...

You should have...

I understand why you...

Why didn't you...

I can see why...

You need to...

I suggest that you...

No problem.

It would be my pleasure.



Five Habits of Exceptional Tellers

Make sure you apply these five behaviors each time you encounter a customer.

1. Head up with a smile – it says welcome!
2. Eye contact – it says I see you!
3. Speak verbally and/or visually – it says I acknowledge you!
4. Use the customer's name – it says you're not just a number to me!
5. Thank the customer – it says we appreciate your business!



Module 5 | Acing Cross-Selling & Referrals

In this module, we explore the importance of expanding and growing the customer's relationship. The objectives are to teach you how to ace cross-selling and to promote your success at making referrals.

We will cover product knowledge proficiency and techniques on how to spot and convert opportunities. You will also learn to be inquisitive, engaging, and prepared.

Growing the Relationship

Every position within your company that has contact with customers has the opportunity to impact cross-selling results. Branch managers, tellers, and contact center representatives are excellent candidates for generating cross-sale activity. It comes down to having the right communication skills and product knowledge, coupled with the ability to pick up on customer cues and act on them appropriately.

When it comes to cross-selling results on the teller line, the biggest difference between mediocrity and high performance is commitment. High performers are willing to invest the time to truly uncover their customers' needs and how to meet them.

Regard every interaction with an existing customer as a golden opportunity to expand the relationship and contribute revenue growth through cross-selling. Ask pertinent questions and employ your listening skills to explore each customer's financial situation. Demonstrate that you have a genuine interest in the customer's financial success. You will often uncover additional needs the customer didn't even know existed, and be in a prime position to fulfill them with the most appropriate products and services your bank has to offer.

Important reminder



The perfect combination for cross-selling success is extraordinary customer service and needs-based suggestions.

Positive Attitude

A positive attitude accounts for almost half of the job of cross-selling. A whopping 48 percent of the sale is attributed to the attitudes we hold toward our products and services, self, the institution, and the customer.

Listen to the clues you receive from customers when they are ready to buy or when they have a problem that needs resolution.

Customers rely on tellers who are perceived as expert, caring professionals. Customers share their thoughts and feelings with tellers during the course of their transactions. Cross-selling can be as easy as answering a question or making a suggestion to assist with a problem.

Cross-selling is not about being pushy. It is about building on the existing relationship you have with the customer. When you perform your job in a friendly, knowledgeable, and efficient way, customers will be inclined to think of your institution first when a need for additional products or services surface.

Are you aware that it costs five times more to acquire a new customer than it does to sell an additional product or service to an existing customer? So it makes perfect sense to maximize and expand the relationship you have with your existing customer. The road to that success is paved with cross-selling. The teller window is one of the best stops on that road!

Success at cross-selling requires much more than selling. It calls for building relationships and excelling at customer service. Creating a sales culture at a financial institution is about fostering and nurturing a process that meets and often exceeds customer expectations. Cross-selling becomes the highest form of customer service. Cross-selling success is about adopting a process whereby the right solutions are provided to the customer in the right way at just the right time.

The customer's attitude toward their financial institution is highly influenced by two key factors—location and customer service. Locations staff tellers; tellers provide high impact customer service at those locations!

We encourage you—in your role as a teller—to acquire the skills and attitude necessary to detect, and on occasion, create, prime opportunities to cross-sell and refer customers to product specialists.



Benefit for Customer, Company, and Teller

The customer, company, and teller all benefit from cross-selling success at the teller line in different ways. Here's how:

Customer

Your customer that wants all the convenience and satisfaction your company has to offer! Never assume the customer magically knows what you have to offer that will enhance satisfaction and elevate convenience! As a dedicated quality service provider, the teller must complete the job of taking good care of the customer by first seeking out what the customer may need and then matching that need with services available.

Company

Your employer expects a fair return on the dollars spent on state-of-the-art technology to offer competitive products and services. No matter the size of your financial institution, investments have been made to create internet visibility, stay as competitive as possible in product offerings, attract new customers, and keep the ones they have. The ultimate intention of cross-selling is to bolster both customer satisfaction and profitability. Plus, the teller is in a primary position to engage the customer and create a positive experience that reinforces the likelihood the financial institution will retain the customer.

Teller

Your reputation for excellence in your position rides on many things, including product knowledge and customer focus. Success at cross-selling and referrals will be dependent on your skills and attitude about taking exceptional care of the customer.

Combined Effort

Cross-selling and referral-making are legitimate expectations of all frontline personnel. It takes teamwork and commitment by everyone to grow the profitability of any company. Specifically, in a financial institution, the teller is expected to reinforce the company's brand while spotting opportunities to provide additional products and services to customers.

The teller will see customers every day that pose an opportunity to provide helpful suggestions. They become aware of the circumstances and situations their customers

experience. Therefore, tellers are in an excellent position to cross-sell and refer the customer to relationship enhancing products and services.

Promoting and converting customers over to the most convenient products you have saves the customer time and worry, will save the back office from manual labor, reduce operating costs, and tie the customer to your company.

Improve Customer Retention Odds

- A customer with only one service or one product has an even chance of leaving the institution.
- A customer with two services or products will be 10 times as hard to move to another bank or credit union.
- A customer with three services or products will be 18 times as hard to move.
- If you can increase the customer's services or products to four, it becomes 100 times harder to get the customer to move his accounts.

Product Knowledge

In large measure, cross-selling and referral-making success is grounded in product know-how. It means knowing the ins and outs of your company's products and services and being able to provide customers with an immediate, seamless connection to fulfilling their needs. When you master product knowledge, you'll be able to convey the features and benefits in a way that delivers your value proposition and positively impacts your organization's bottom line.

Product Knowledge Proficiency

Be familiar with each product's strengths and know its capabilities and compatibilities with other products that your company offers. Develop second-nature recall of these features and benefits so that you can respond to customers quickly, confidently, and accurately. Knowing in great detail what your bank has to offer in terms of products and services enables you to expertly recommend the most appropriate solution for satisfying a particular customer's financial needs.

Product and service knowledge consists of more than what types of accounts can be opened at the institution. Each product and service has features and benefits that you should be knowledgeable about in order to be successful at cross-selling.

Features define a product or service. Benefits make our products and services valuable to our customers. The benefit is what you sell after the need has been determined.



Product Knowledge Best Practices

- Build your own product reference guide using a three-ring notebook.
- Take each product, service, and potential referral partner and create a tell-all, know-all section about each in your reference guide.
- Include a clear see-through sleeve to hold brochures, marketing material.
- Print out screen shots from your website.
- Interview people that use the product or service and write down their testimony.
- Personally use every possible product that you can so that you can offer your own testimony! When you can speak first-hand, and with enthusiasm, about the product you want to share with the customer, that is a real endorsement!
- Format a four-column sales fact sheet (see the next page) for each and every product/service labeling the columns: Features, Benefits, Advantages, and Companion Products. Include who is an ideal prospect for the product/service and add prompting questions and benefit statements.
- Make a set of flash cards; one card per product or service. Work with a colleague to test each other on recalling at least one point from each of the four columns.
- Brainstorm with others to create an Overcoming Objections sheet for each section of your reference guide.
- Create a list of next step and closing dialog suggestions for each product/service.

Product or Service Fact Sheet Form

Product/Service Name		In-House Specialists	
Features	Benefits	Advantages	Companion Products
<i>IDEAL PROSPECTS FOR THIS PRODUCT/SERVICE</i>			
<i>TESTIMONIES</i>			
<i>INTEREST PROMPTING QUESTIONS</i>			
<i>BENEFIT STATEMENTS</i>			
<i>OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS</i>			
<i>CLOSING STEPS</i>			
<i>FOLLOW UP SUGGESTIONS</i>			



Be Inquisitive, Engaging, and Prepared

You must always set the stage for cross-selling with excellent service and a positive image. Start your day off with cleaning up your window, stocking it with supplies and marketing material. Include brochures, business cards, and, if you have a special offer, create a tent card for your window by tastefully mounting a screen shot or newspaper ad for display. Clear picture frames make excellent props for displaying brochures or advertising. Focal points generate conversation. You will want to support any effort the company has put forth in statement stuffers, signage, and advertising.

Interesting thought to ponder



There's an old adage that goes like this: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Conveying that you care begins with a smile.

Tips for Setting the Stage

Adopt these behaviors, use these suggested phrases, and be perceptive to your customer to ace cross-selling.

- Appear friendly and approachable.
- Introduce yourself, look them in the eye.
- Use their name.
- When it's appropriate, start and end on a handshake.
- Pay them a sincere compliment.
- Get to know them as a person.
- Engage them with questions that express care and interest.

"How's your week going?"

"Tell me about your family."

"Tell me about your work."

"What's new with you?"

"Any big plans for this time of the year?"

- Sometimes they have someone with them; ask about the other person, this could be an entrée to more conversation.

"Who is this you have with you today?"

- Inquire how satisfied the customer is with your company.

*“Before today, when was the last time you visited the branch?
How did we do?”*

- It is important that you are perceptive and spot the right time to cross-sell and the times to not. Your customer’s body language and tone of voice can speak volumes to you. Sometimes the customer is in a hurry or appears to have lost their patience while in line. Respond to those cues.

“I can see you are in a hurry; I will get this done right away!”

“I know you had a wait today and I thank you for your patience.”

Spotting Opportunities and Starting Conversations

Cross-selling opportunities are abundant at the teller window. Be on the lookout, “listen” for cues the customer shares, and respond with prompting questions and/or benefit statements. Always express congratulations to good news, and compassion or regret to tough news. Remember to assure your customer that you are willing and able to help. Cross-selling is about helping the customer get what they need. Tellers devoted to customer service will find cross-selling expertise is just another way to take great care of the customer. Stay alert to the opportunities that come your way every day.

Spotting Opportunities

Create your own scripts so you are prepared to start conversations and respond to the needs of the customer.

“I just started a new job.”

Congratulations on your new job! If you are going to have the opportunity to roll-over a 401K from your former employer many of my customers have found our investment area very helpful. May I introduce you to one of our specialists?

*“My husband got a promotion,
we are going to celebrate this evening.”*

What good news, that is wonderful! Promotions usually prompt a pay increase and if that is the case for your husband, that is even better news. Something to think about would be to start an automatic debit from your checking account and move any additional dollars into a savings or investment product so that your family benefits long term from a pay increase. May I show you how that works?



*“We spent last weekend looking at colleges
for our son who will graduate this year.”*

What excitement that must be for you and your family! I am hearing from several of my customers that they have children graduating this spring. Now is an ideal time to set him up with a student account. That will give him time to practice managing a checking account and, since we don't charge for using ATMs anywhere, that account will work for him wherever he ends up going to college. Of course, when he is off to college you can easily add to his account if you need to; may I introduce you to Julie so she can get that set up?

*“Our A/C went out yesterday.
I am worried sick over what the expense to fix it will be.”*

We specialize in putting an end to worries. If you have the time, let me introduce you to George Williams, he could talk with you about a line of credit. If you need money, it's there for circumstances just like this. I see he is free and I would like to at least introduce you, would that work?

“On my way to start shopping for a new car.”

That is great! Before you find the car, let one of our lending specialists get you ready. That way you don't have to go through all those delays at the dealer when they insist you talk to this person and that person. I had my financing lined up the last time I bought a car and it was empowering to tell the dealer that I just wanted to discuss price; I had the financing taken care of! I see Nancy Davis is in her office, may I introduce you?

*“My husband and I met yesterday to sign a drilling lease on our land.
I don't know what might happen with that, but we are excited.”*

Sounds like good fortune is coming your way! Congratulations! Several of my customers have sought the advice of our investment area following signing a lease. May I introduce you to Melanie Adams, she is an expert, and I know you will be glad you met with her. There's no charge and it isn't complicated. I am sure you would find time spent with someone looking out for your investments an excellent choice.

*“My daughter just received a large settlement in a lawsuit.
I am thinking she needs to get some help with what to do with the money.
Do you handle trust accounts here?”*

We would welcome the opportunity to help. We do handle trust accounts and have a specialist that can help you determine all your options. Excuse me for a minute so I can make a phone call to see who is available to help you.

“I am hoping I can start out on my own with my CPA practice soon.”

That’s terrific! We specialize in helping professionals launch their practice. May I introduce you to Jimmy Green; he has worked with many of our customers that have started a business.

*“My wife is going to retire in May.
Things will be changing at our house!”*

No doubt about that! How wonderful that she can retire. We have a retirement planning specialist that can help you and your wife explore all your options. May I introduce you to Jeannine Lyons? She has helped so many of our customers create a plan that is customized to the lifestyle in retirement they want to have. It’s free and I think you’d find it very beneficial.

*“My neighbor was a victim of identity theft.
I worry about that all the time.”*

I’m so sorry to hear about your neighbor. Identity theft is a big problem and a stressful hassle for victims of it. Would you like to learn how to worry less about identity theft? We have a product that protects you in the event your identity is stolen.

Important reminder



Learn the needs of your customer by asking questions and by making follow-up inquiries when they give you a buying signal.



Continue the Conversation

A classic response that will encourage your customer to share more with you is this:

“Tell me more.”

When you know your products and have practiced discussing them, you will be confident and helpful to respond to cues and cross-selling opportunities. Try this to spark interest in a particular product or service:

“If I could show you a way to {fill in the blank} would that be something you’d be interesting in hearing about?”

For example:

“If I could show you a way to be well-prepared and well-informed about retirement, would that be something you’d be interested in hearing about?”

Prepare for Objections

When timing is good, always find out what the customer’s objections, concerns, or reservations are when you suggest a product or service. Gentle probing will help you and your company in several ways.

- When you know why the customer won’t buy, you can share more information or clarify facts.
- When customers resist or don’t perceive a product is valuable, your company needs to be aware of how frequently that is happening. It could be pricing or product features need to be adjusted.

Preparing for Anticipated Objections

Don’t take no as an answer every time. When it seems right, find out why a customer objects to a product or service.

“Mrs. Lewis, tell me about your reservations.”

Restate what they said and encourage more conversation.

“You don’t feel comfortable paying bills online, tell me more about that.”

Encourage the customer to share about their opinion, concerns, or experience.

“Tell me more about that.”

Use the feel, felt, found formula.

“I understand how you feel.

Other customers have told me they felt that way.

Let me share with you what they found out.”

Suggest Solutions and Share Information

Today's customers are much more educated and perceptive than ever before, and are looking for experts that care about them as an individual. Just like you, most know when they're being sold to or pushed into a product. Cross-selling is about offering solutions, not pushing products. The warning bells go off immediately when a teller approaches from a position of pushing a particular product versus really understanding each customer's unique needs.

Build Rapport

Build rapport with your customers by getting to know them, learning what matters to them, and understanding what needs are on their mind. Ask thought-provoking, open-ended questions about their financial goals and what concerns they may have. Listen closely to the answers. When a potential need arises, ask what steps they have taken to solve it. This type of collaborative dialogue helps establish you as a caring, trustworthy professional seeking to satisfy each customer's acknowledged needs, rather than merely trying to make a sale.

Offer a Real Solution

The key to proposing a suitable solution is to match your company's products and services to a customer's needs and present the solution in a caring and consultative way. Highlight the benefits (what it will do for the customer) of each product and service you offer, in addition to discussing their features (how it works). Whenever possible, provide the customer a visual like a brochure or computer screen that explains or demonstrates how a product works. It is vital that you learn to speak first-hand about your own valuable experience with as many products as possible.



Track Your Results

TARP, a Virginia-based company that measures customer satisfaction and loyalty, claims that when informed of a new/existing offering that would be appropriate during a friendly interaction, 30 percent of customers are likely to take advantage of the offer. That is an impressive number.

Interesting thought to ponder



If you know the ins and outs of cross-selling and you interact with 30 or more customers per day, what's the potential outcome of your efforts? It's significant!

Customers, whose needs are met by the products and services they have purchased and who trust the suggestions you provide, are more likely to remain loyal to your financial institution. This creates a win-win-win for everyone. Cross-selling enhances customer satisfaction, increases your long-term cross-selling results, and improves the bottom line.

Although effective cross-selling has plenty to do with the quality of the one-on-one interaction between teller and customer, establishing a method to track these key events has also proven helpful to achieving greater customer satisfaction.

Consider that the average small-business customer touches three to five different areas of a bank—from making deposits in a branch, working with the lending group, or possibly consulting with the investment area. Unless there is process in place to track and retain each customer's information and communicate it to all areas of the bank that need to know, you run the risk of missing cross-selling opportunities. You also chance challenging the customer's patience when various staff in different areas asks the customer for the same information over and over again.

The tracking process can be as simple as capturing data on paper and making it available throughout the company, or developing an automated system where you can data mine, retrieve, and store critical customer information.

Whatever the process for sharing information inside and throughout your company, be certain you adhere to it. In some cases, a financial institution has purchased an automated application that the teller signs into to send referrals or make entries regarding customer interactions and sales. Some tellers will be taught a manual approach to recording and tracking referrals and sales. It is imperative that the financial institution that embraces a solid sales and service culture provide a tracking procedure; so that the progress and communication is monitored.



Module 6 | Mastering the Balancing Act

In this module, you will find best practices on balancing, an audit checklist, things you should and shouldn't do, how to deal with outages and interruptions, and how to eliminate transpositions.

When a teller's cash drawer does not balance at the end of the day, it can be extremely difficult to locate and reconcile the difference quickly and satisfactorily. Shortages invariably must be charged against profit. For the financial institution with a large teller staff, shortages can accumulate to alarming proportions.

Best Practices that Impact Balancing

Mastering the balancing act will mean implementing best practices. As a teller, you are required to count, verify, and protect the cash assets assigned to you. Every transaction that involves cash is ideally balanced when you close out the transaction. Stay alert and acquire a systematic, disciplined approach to handling cash. It plays a very important role in balancing at the end of the business day. Here are our best practices that will help ensure that you balance.

Manage Your Cash Drawer

Manage your cash drawer in a highly organized way. All currency is neat, orderly, straight, face up, and facing one direction. Use caution if you use paper clips to segregate unstrapped batches of currency, because loose bills not intended to be included in the batch can get stuck.

Important reminder



Sell your excess cash to the vault if your cash exceeds the established limits. Always buy and sell currency and coin with a ticket.

Keep it Neat

In your working cash drawer, the bills closest to you are \$1 followed by \$5, \$10, and \$20. Don't allow the compartment for any denomination to become too full. Bills can get stuck behind the drawer or fall out when you go to close your drawer. Keep both mutilated and large bills (\$50 and \$100) separate from your working cash. Strictly follow all policies regarding your bait money, including where you store it. Frequently change the date on strapped bait money so that it doesn't appear to be unusual in any way.

Counting

Separate currency by denomination, from highest to lowest, before counting it. The most common amount a teller may be out of balance is less than \$1, so when coin is a part of the transaction it is always counted and verified first.

Always count currency face up. Study and know your money, becoming familiar with each denomination and the distinguishing characteristics. Genuine currency looks genuine because it is printed from engraved steel plates by experts, using the highest quality paper and equipment designed exclusively for that purpose.

Always count and list all outgoing or incoming currency by denomination totals, and then do a grand total to be certain the amount matches the deposit slip or withdrawal/check. That is a vital step to always take before you put the cash up or count it back to the presenter.

Always count the money that leaves your drawer three times when paying out in the lobby and at least twice in the drive-in. Out of your drawer, by denomination totals as you list, and compare the grand total to the transaction and then to the customer. When in doubt, recount. Never put money in your drawer if you question the amount or the authenticity of the currency. Never release money or count it back to a customer if you have any second thoughts or concern about the accuracy of the cash.



Strapped Money and Rolled Coin

Verify any strapped money before you break the strap. All used straps must be torn in two so that they are never misused by someone.

Verify rolled coin before you add it to your loose coin and tear the wrapper in two. Pay close attention to any writing on the wrapper. If an account number or other customer information is on the wrapper, you will need to shred the wrapper once you've verified the count. A best practice is to ask customers to not put their personal information or account numbers on the wrapper. If they do, you must rewrap the coin before you sell the roll to the vault, another teller, or to a customer.

Rolled coin that is being dispensed from your cash drawer or that is coming into your possession is treated exactly like currency—start with the highest denomination, counting and listing the denomination totals, and then hit the grand total to verify the sum matches the transaction.

Stay Alert

Never start a new transaction until the cash and accompanying items are put away.

Many tellers agree balancing delays and problems often surface at the end of a slow day. The professional teller is accustomed to a steady pace and often prefers the pressure of a payday to the erratic flow of a slow day. A slow time can be a good time to organize, clean, or catch up on relevant reading and training.

Be well acquainted with all audit aspects related to your position. Adhere to all policies, procedures, and expectations that ensure dual control is maintained and that your work will pass an audit.

Protect Your Items

Keep all cash, deposits, checks, and other items out of the sight and reach of unauthorized individuals.

Audit Checklist for Tellers

YES | NO **CASH**

	Cash drawer is balanced
	Bait money was in place
	Cash drawers/coin vault within limits
	All money was bought and sold with a ticket
	All incoming cash is verified on my teller journal
	Deposits/tickets are check-marked on my teller journal
	Currency was face-up and organized according to standards
	Strapped currency was face-up, orderly, and oldest straps were most accessible
	Teller stamp is secured
	Cash drawer is void of any pending items

SECURITY

	Vault entry/exit log is documented accurately
	ATM restocking procedures are followed
	Guard gates to vault are closed at all times
	Access to teller area is well-secured
	Access to debit cards is well-secured
	Bank keys are well-secured
	No passwords or access information is available in the teller window
	Teller accurately stated the all-clear procedure
	All-clear procedure is routinely changed
	Teller stated the procedure for activating security cameras
	Teller stated the procedure in the event of a robbery at his or her window
	Teller stated the procedure in the event of a robbery at another teller's window

PROCEDURES

	All security procedures are followed
	Process for issuing money orders/cashier's checks is adhered to
	Tickets made in error or in need of correction are voided and a new ticket is generated; no handwritten or corrected tickets
	ATM sites are verified twice a week for adequate supply of disclosures
	Night depository bags are logged and managed according to procedure
	Mail deposit envelopes are counted and recorded according to procedure

COMMENTS

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Ten Things You Must Do

1. Always be _____ and disciplined with each transaction.
2. Count and record all _____ in and out.
3. Coin is always counted _____.
4. Total and _____.
5. If you manually count out money, count it _____ in the lobby and _____ times in the drive-thru.
6. In preparing to balance, the teller will _____ and _____ all strapped money verified that day.
7. Before discarding anything with your _____ or initials on it, tear it in two.
8. Use _____ straps first.
9. Stay _____.
10. Eliminate and prevent _____.

Six Things You Never Do

1. Breach _____.
2. Be _____ to act.
3. Allow your cash to exceed the established _____.
4. Borrow money or loan money from your _____.
5. Buy _____ with _____.
6. Alter the cash under any circumstances, even in order to _____.

(Answer key on last page)

Outages and Interruptions

Management and supervisors cannot adopt the philosophy that unexplained differences are simply an unavoidable cost of doing business. To do so is not only shortsighted, but exceedingly dangerous. Furthermore, while shortages represent a direct loss, overages cannot be ignored.

Absolute perfection as a teller is unattainable. However, management should let it be known it views tellers' differences with considerable concern. Most tellers are naturally interested in the accuracy of their performance as a matter of personal pride. But this innate desire for personal proficiency can easily be eroded if management does not demonstrate a strong interest in quality achievement.

Outages

An overage usually means a customer has been shortchanged, which is not a pleasant thought for the institution striving to enhance its public image. Or, as is sometimes the case, a belated but necessary adjustment to a teller's daily balancing record can quickly convert an overage to a shortage. For example, a \$100 correction would change a \$10 overage to a \$90 shortage.

Auditors and management should prohibit the use of what is commonly called a "kitty" in a teller's window. A kitty is used by eager tellers to store overages or adjust an outage without investigating their cause.



Interruptions and Distractions

The average office worker is interrupted six times an hour, all day long. All interruptions are distractions. Most interruptions involve co-workers, salespersons or inquiries that want to shift your attention from what you're doing to something else. While all people may be important, many issues are not. Learn to separate people from issues, and then deal with the issue. It will be easier to cope with interruptions. Be gracious with people but serious about time.

Most people get trapped in their own thoughts. Since they have to render service to others, they assume there is nothing they can do about the haphazard way interruptions disrupt their days. The trick, if there is one, is to manage the controllable interruptions so you will have more time to deal with uncontrollable ones.

Do your part to prevent unnecessary interruptions and remain mindful about how risky losing concentration can be.

Best Practices to Minimize Losses due to Interruptions and Distractions

- Stop unnecessary personal phone calls
- Adhere to the policies regarding sending and receiving texts on the job.
- Stop small talk with other employees quickly when a customer is present
- Politely point out interruptions that interfere with customer service.
- Tellers must concentrate on the transaction at hand and, when normal concentration is broken, it is wise to recheck the transaction.
- Use a buddy system where you and a partner check each other's work so you can eliminate errors requiring immediate attention from other departments.
- Minimize distractions that interfere with concentration.

Interesting thought to ponder



Keeping an interruption log can be very helpful to identify causes for interruptions. Try it out for a week and you'll have a good idea of what is distracting you.

Eliminating Transpositions

Those who deal with money and numbers often encounter a transposition—swapping the sequence or position of numbers which makes the sum wrong. When out of balance and the amount is divisible by nine this can indicate that a number has been transposed.

Avoiding a transposition is critical. Tellers who work with teller machines or a teller platform application are required to record every transaction. An absolute best practice is that all cash taken in and paid out by the teller is entered by separate denomination totals so the grand total of the cash can be compared to the transaction involved before storing the cash or paying it out. In large cash-out or cash-in situations, or in cashing a list of checks, double-listing is a must.

Transpositions occur when a series of numbers are rearranged. Using an adding machine, teller machine or computer will reveal the error before money is paid out to the customer—the best possible time to correct the mistake!

Confidence is desirable in your job as a teller, but overconfidence can result in being out of balance. Transpositions can become a habit and must be dealt with before resulting in a loss. Tellers must address harmful habits and slow down when handling cash transactions if transpositions happen often.



Balancing Procedure Checklist

	Double-check today's cash forward
	Count down all loose currency and coin
	Update mutilated currency totals
	Verify any currency strapped today, if not already counted twice
	Record all category totals: Cash-ins, cash-outs, cash items
	Record any exceptions, including bait money
	Record all rolled coin and strapped currency
	Record all loose coin and currency
	Compare the balance sheet against the money supply, double check especially high- or low counts in each denomination
	Carefully run a tape on the balance sheet
	If the sheet is in balance, attach all required documentation. Include the teller's signature, teller stamp, and the adding machine tape.

Out of Balance

When out of balance, you should verify the following.

- Is the amount divisible by 9? If so, hunt for a transposition.
- Is the cash forward total accurate?
- Are the exception totals correct?
- Is loose currency and coin counted correctly?
- Are rolled coin and strapped currency totals accurate?
- Are there no entry errors on cash-in and cash-out tickets?
- Are there no missing tickets?
- Did you check for discrepancies on cash out or cash in totals compared to the accompanying transaction?
- Did you review all proof work?

Answer Key: Ten Things You Must Do

1. Always be consistent and disciplined with each transaction.
2. Count and record all cash in and out.
3. Coin is always counted first.
4. Total and compare.
5. If you manually count out money, count it three times in the lobby and two times in the drive-thru.
6. In preparing to balance, the teller will date and initial all strapped money verified that day.
7. Before discarding anything with your teller stamp or initials on it, tear it in two.
8. Use oldest straps first.
9. Stay focused.
10. Eliminate and prevent interruptions.

Answer Key: Six Things You Never Do

1. Breach confidentiality.
2. Be pressured to act.
3. Allow your cash to exceed the established limit.
4. Borrow money or loan money from your cash drawer.
5. Buy money with money.
6. Alter the cash under any circumstances even, in order to balance.



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