

# A Two-Stage Assessment Center that Brought ALL Employees to a Higher Level of Performance

Roy G. Perham, Ph.D.

John Jay College

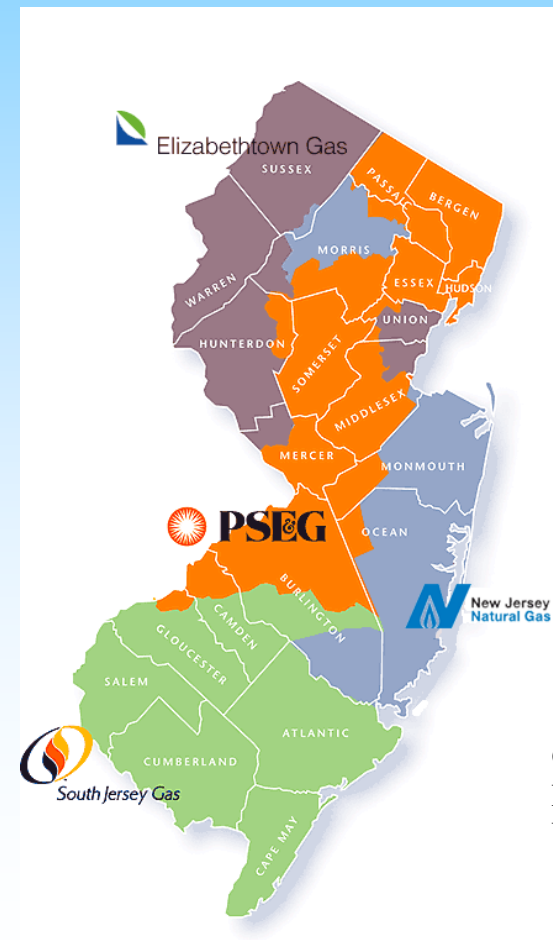
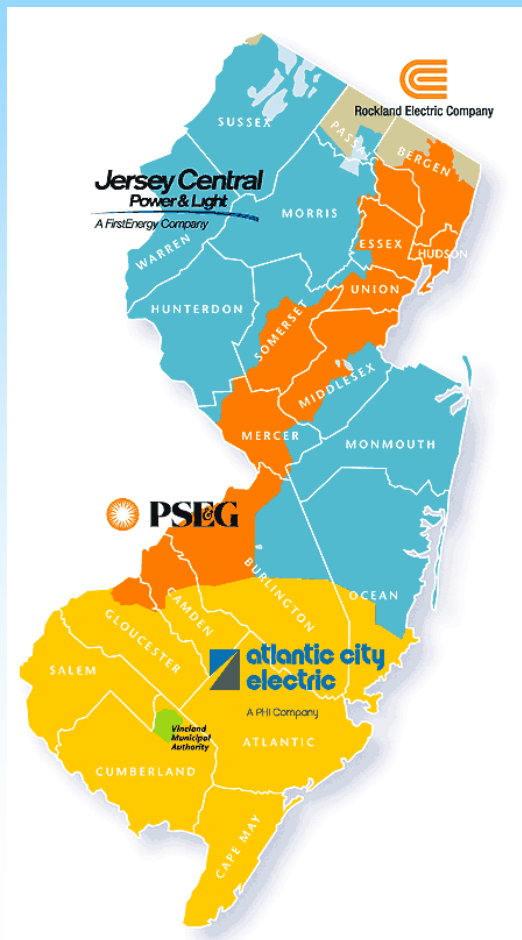
[RPerham@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:RPerham@jjay.cuny.edu)

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# The Brave New World of Public Utility Deregulation



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# Customer Service Reps Jobs Under Deregulation

- **From**
  - Mechanical
  - Fast
  - No Board of Public Utilities complaints
- **To**
  - Warm relationships
  - “Wow” customers
    - Customer service guarantees
  - Selling products and services

# Negotiations

- **Management:** Wanted to reassign or fire reps who didn't meet new higher standards
- **Union:** Okay, if fair test

AC #1

3 months  
training &  
coaching

AC #2

# 10 Dimensions

1. Fact Finding\*
2. Judgment\*
3. Decisiveness
4. Initiative\*
5. Oral Communication
6. Sensitivity/Empathy
7. Service Orientation
8. Negotiation/Persuasiveness\*
9. Self-Management & Organization
10. Resistance to Stress/Patience

\*Sales  
Dimensions

# Wasula Water Company

*Pressure for a Better Montana*

- Telephone & Walk-in Roleplays
  - Sales Situations
- In-basket
- Checklists
- Scoring guidelines set by senior managers
- Assessors were managers and supervisors of reps in each others' call centers



# WASULA WATER COMPANY

## ROLE-PLAY #1 ❖ TERRY R. KING

### INITIAL SCORING SHEET

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant #: 

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Assessor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessor Letter: 

A	B	C
---	---	---

 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FACT FINDING				
1	2	3	4	5
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Negative Behaviors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not ask for basic/necessary information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not probe for additional information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not clarify or restate when needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Responses to customer indicate poor listening skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not gather correct information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not demonstrate understanding of the customer's needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asked irrelevant questions (not related to the problem)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gave incorrect information to customer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not interrelate ____ with ____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not correctly identify the problem</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Part of problem: Amount owed (\$150.38)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOCUMENTATION CHECK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not correctly record customer information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Failed to correctly gather needed information from his/her documentation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Amount owed (\$150.38)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Positive Behaviors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asked for basic/necessary information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interrelated ____ with ____                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Viewed/accurately used customer screen #12 (King).</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Probed for additional information                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> About the employee's behavior</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asked for some relevant information, <u>such as</u> details of the employee's behavior, what he said, how he acted, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gathered correct information                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Initiated an investigation to verify the facts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gathered information on how the bill will be paid</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gathered information as to the specifics of which neighbors will be interviewed, i.e., their names, their addresses and so forth</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Listened and allowed customer to overview what she/he saw as the problem</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarified/restated problem as needed                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Described actual amount owed</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed customer information with customer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated understanding of the customer's needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gave correct information to customer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Correctly identified the problem</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOCUMENTATION CHECK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Correctly recorded customer information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interrelated with Screen # 12: TL King                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Found that middle initial is R instead of L</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> During role-play</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> After role-play</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interrelated with "Field Investigators" list - J. Babbitt                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> During role-play</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> After role-play</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Used authority granted by CCF policy sheet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		

## FACT FINDING

1

2

3

4

5

### Negative Behaviors

- Did not ask for basic/necessary information
- Did not probe for additional information
- Did not clarify or restate when needed
- Responses to customer indicate poor listening skills
- Did not gather correct information
- Did not demonstrate understanding of the customer's needs
- Asked irrelevant questions (not related to the problem)
- Gave incorrect information to customer
- Did not interrelate \_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_
- Did not correctly identify the problem
  - Part of problem: Amount owed (\$150.38)

### **DOCUMENTATION CHECK**

- Did not correctly record customer information
- Failed to correctly gather needed information from his/her documentation
  - Amount owed (\$150.38)
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -

### Positive Behaviors

- Asked for basic/necessary information
- Interrelated \_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_
  - Viewed/accurately used customer screen #12 (King).
- Probed for additional information
  - About the employee's behavior
  - Asked for some relevant information, such as details of the employee's behavior, what he said, how he acted, etc.
- Gathered correct information
  - Initiated an investigation to verify the facts
  - Gathered information on how the bill will be paid
  - Gathered information as to the specifics of which neighbors will be interviewed, i.e., their names, their addresses and so forth
- Listened and allowed customer to overview what she/he saw as the problem
- Clarified/restated problem as needed
  - Described actual amount owed
- Confirmed customer information with customer
- Demonstrated understanding of the customer's needs
- Gave correct information to customer
- Correctly identified the problem

### **DOCUMENTATION CHECK**

- Correctly recorded customer information
- Interrelated with Screen # 12: TL King
  - Found that middle initial is R instead of L
  - During role-play
  - After role-play
- Interrelated with "Field Investigators" list - J. Babbitt
  - During role-play
  - After role-play
- Used authority granted by CCF policy sheet
-

## **Fact Finding/Role Play #1**

Minimally acceptable performance: Participant must exhibit behaviors 1 and 2 plus at least two of the remaining four behaviors (3, 4, 5 and 6)

### **Behaviors**

1. Asked for or confirmed basic/necessary information, i.e., name, address, etc.
2. Viewed/accurately used customer screen #12 (King).
3. Asked for some relevant information, such as details of the employee's behavior, what he said, how he acted, etc.
4. Initiated an investigation to verify the facts.
5. Gathered information on how the bill will be paid.
6. Gathered information as to the specifics of which neighbors will be interviewed, i.e., their names, their addresses and so forth.

# Feedback, Training & Coaching

- Behavior Modeling Training
  - Video role plays
  - In-person practice
  - Relapse prevention
- Coaching by Call Center Supervisors
  - Dimensional coaching forms
  - Immediate feedback or recorded calls

### Customer Contact Skills Maintenance Worksheet

This call was concerning which of the following:  
 EBU  GBU  CSBU  NIAC  SIAC  Other (Describe):

This call was concerning which of the following:  
 Accounting  Collection  A&I  No Heat  Other (Describe):

What did the customer/client want or need (describe very briefly):

What did PSE&G want or need (more than one box can be checked):  
 To collect money from customer  To sell a service or product to the customer  To correct a problem caused by customer  
 To disconnect customer's service  To handle an emergency situation  Other (Describe):  
 To re-connect customer's service  To correct a problem caused by PSE&G

Demeanor of customer/client at start of contact (more than one box can be checked):  
 Businesslike  Friendly  Upset  Irrate  Other (Describe):

Demeanor of customer/client when contact ended (more than one box can be checked):  
 Businesslike  Friendly  Upset  Irrate  Satisfied  Delighted  Other (Describe):

Use the following scale to evaluate performance on contact # 1 of this monitoring session.  
 For example, (learning point) was demonstrated:  
 5 Enough to be extremely effective    3 Enough to be minimally effective    1 Not at all but should have  
 4 Enough to be very effective    2 Somewhat but not enough to be effective    0 Not at all because not applicable  
 For each of the following learning points fill in the box that indicates the extent to which it was demonstrated.

FACT FINDING LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
1. Listened effectively (confirmed the reason for the call).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Correctly retrieved customer data from customer, screens, and/or available documents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Questioned for understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Tied in data that related to the customer's situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

JUDGMENT LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Used gathered facts to determine appropriate solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Examined alternative solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Examined what impact the solutions would have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DECISIVENESS LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Took action instead of deferring the decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Assumed responsibility for the decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special note on Decisiveness: The dimension decisiveness can only be measured quantitatively. When someone describes the quality of a decision they are actually describing judgment.

INITIATIVE LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Took action designed to prevent the same problem from reoccurring.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Made that extra effort that demonstrated to the customer that he/she really wanted to help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special note on Initiative: The expected normal behaviors are not initiatives. Initiatives are added actions taken which go beyond what is normally required.

ORAL COMMUNICATION LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Spoke clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Avoided slang and jargon including company and industry jargon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Actively listened (correctly used technique to make customer aware that he/she was listening).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Customer Contact Skills Maintenance Worksheet (continued)

5 Enough to be extremely effective    3 Enough to be minimally effective    1 Not at all but should have  
 4 Enough to be very effective    2 Somewhat but not enough to be effective    0 Not at all because not applicable

SENSITIVITY/EMPATHY LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. Allowed the customer to express his/her feelings and the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Restated the customer's concern for thorough understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Used voice intonation and expressions appropriate for the customer's situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Apologized when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SERVICE ORIENTATION LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
19. Was courteous and professional.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Communicated a genuine desire to meet the customer's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Checked to make sure that the solution was acceptable to the customer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NEGOTIATION/PERSUASIVENESS LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
22. Clarified the differences between the customer's and the company's positions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Worked with customer to find a common ground that both could agree on.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Clearly specified how the negotiated solution addressed the customer's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Got agreement on what each party will do and by when.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
26. Kept work station organized so that information could be effectively accessed and recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Properly documented information that is necessary for follow-up or future reference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COPING WITH PRESSURE/PATIENCE LEARNING POINTS	5	4	3	2	1	0
28. Assumed a positive attitude.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Slowed down when the stressed customer sped up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Let the angry customer vent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Took on a caring tone after the angry customer vented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Did not get louder as the customer got louder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Did not respond to the angry customer with anger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the space below, record any additional observations that support your ratings.

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For additional space use the back of this sheet (  Over )



# Second AC

- 7 who didn't pass were reassigned

# Take-Home Points

- Involvement of executives, managers and supervisors may have been more important than the assessments themselves
  - Versus trend to prepackaged ACs
- Value of externalizing pressure on the organization
- More than acquiring new skills, reps may have already had them in their repertoires



# Take-Home Points, Continued

- Assessment Center as realistic job preview