

Practice #1: Customer wants gas cards – How to say “no” and when to use some judgment about saying “yes”.

A young man, Michael Johnson, has told the Greeter he wants a gas card. He tells the Greeter he has received gas cards at The WorkSource before. The Greeter tells Mr. Johnson that an Employment Counselor is available and walks him over to Edwina Carr.

We need someone to play the following parts

Ms Greeter

Edwina Carr - EC

Michael Johnson – MJ – the customer

Practice # 1: Version 1 – How to say “no”

Greeter to EC: Hi EC; this is Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson tells me that we have given him gas cards in the past. He wants to speak to you about getting a gas card today.

EC to Greeter: Thanks.

EC to Mr. Johnson (MJ): Hi, My name is Edwina Carr. How are you today?

MJ: I'm okay.

EC: Good. You're here early. I think that's the best time to come. The traffic's worse as it gets close to lunch time.

MJ: Yea. I avoid the freeway by using the back streets. If you know the neighborhood, it's never too bad. You live around here?

EC: Not far. Before you leave, I may ask you to tell me a better way to get here. I spend a lot of time in the morning sitting in traffic.

Ms. Greeter said you asked about getting a gas card?

MJ: Yea.

EC: Why do you need one?

MJ: To pay for my gas? (laughs) I have a job interview.

EC: Where is the interview and when is it?

MJ: At ABC company. It's about 7 or 8 miles from here but it's the other side of the freeway. I can go anytime. My friend told me about the job. His cousin works there.

EC: Tell me something about the job.

MJ: It's a warehouse job.

EC: Have you been looking for warehouse work?

MJ: I've done mostly warehouse work but I'll take just about any job if it pays enough.

EC: How much is enough?

MJ: At least \$9.00 an hour.

EC: You said that you'd gotten gas cards at The WorkSource in the past. Is that right?

MJ: Yea, a couple of times.

EC: Have we given you job referrals?

MJ: Yea, you gave me some last time but my car broke down so I couldn't go.

EC: Is your car fixed now?

MJ: It's running. I can get a ride if it breaks again.

EC: Okay; I'd like to look at your work application. Sometimes I can add some information or change it a little, and you get better matches to jobs. I also want to check on what's happened on the job referrals we've given you. We only give the gas cards if you are going to interviews, and need the cards to get there.

MJ: Well I couldn't always go because my car is old and sometimes the jobs were too far to go in my car. I try to get a friend to take me.

EC: Well let's look. (Turns to the computer and moves the screen so MJ can see what she is doing.)

EC: It looks like we gave you \$40 in cards altogether. What happened at DEF, GHI, JKL, MNO, PQR, and STU Companies?

MJ: Some of those were too far and then my car broke and by the time it was fixed I figured it was too late to go.

EC: MJ, we gave you those gas cards to help you get to an interview. You haven't used them to look for work. Are you really ready to go back to work right now?

MJ: Sure. I need a job.

EC: Then let's get more information on this application so it will match to jobs you really want. It shows about 3 months experience, and there isn't a resume with it. How much work experience do you have altogether?

MJ: All together, I have a little over a year. I worked for 3 months on my last job, but before that I worked at Andrew's warehouse for a year. I liked the job at Andrews but I hated that last job because I had to work at night on the weekend. I kept missing work on Saturday night so they fired me.

EC updates application while MJ talks and watches.

EC: Do you like warehouse work if it doesn't mean working on weekend nights?

MJ: Yea. I'm certified to drive a forklift, and we checked inventory in and out of the warehouse on the computer at Andrews. I'm good on the computer.

EC: One of the jobs that we sent you to earlier - STU Company - is still open. It's only about 4 miles from here. It's Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Some overtime, but they aren't open on weekends. It pays \$8.00. Are you interested in it?

MJ: Okay. What about a gas card?

EC: Not this time. This job is only 4 miles from here. You said the job your friend told you about was close.

When a company lists these jobs, they tell us how many people to send for interviews. When you don't go, it keeps someone else, who might want the job, from being sent to interview. I'll call STU company for you if you're sure you're still interested. If you don't get hired, we'll try to figure out why before we send you to another interview. Either call me or come back to the office and let us know what happened. Okay?

MJ: Okay

EC: I changed the application to show you don't want week end work and you need something close to home. You may want to look at the application on the computer after the interviews to make sure it shows everything you've done. The guy in the resource area can help you if you have trouble.

MJ: Okay I might come back later.

EC makes the call to STU Company and finds the job is still open and MJ is welcome to leave an application.

EC: Hey MJ, do you still want to tell me about the back way into the office?

MJ: Maybe next time. (smiles)

Practice #1: Version 2 – The EC uses judgment and decides to give MJ gas cards. The situation and conversation is the same until we begin to talk to MJ about his use of the gas cards received previously. Think about the difference in the two sets of circumstances.

Summary:

In the second scenario, let's see what the EC does when MJ says that he has gone to some of the interviews for The WorkSource job leads. We'll pick up where the EC begins to ask MJ what happened on those interviews.

EC: You said that you'd gotten gas cards at The WorkSource in the past. Is that right?

MJ: Yea, a couple of times.

EC: Have we given you job referrals?

MJ: Yea. You sent me on 5 jobs altogether. I went to 3 of them and then my care broke. By the time it was fixed, I figured it was too late to go on the other two so I came back here.

EC: What happened on the jobs you checked?

MJ: One of them was filled. On the other two, I left applications but I haven't heard anything.

EC: How long ago was that?

MJ: About 3 weeks. I really didn't want one of those jobs because it was working week ends, and I was fired from my last job for missing work on Saturday. I told them on the application that I couldn't work on the week end.

EC: Let's look at your application to see if it's set up to match you with the right kind of jobs. Did you know the job required you to work on Saturday when you took the referral?

MJ: Yea but I figured I'd go talk to them anyway.

EC: I think we'll do better for you and for the companies if we look for something that you're sure suits you before you go. When a company calls us, they ask us to send only a certain number of people. That means if we send you, we don't send someone else who would be more satisfied with that job.

Okay, I've got your application on the screen. *(Shows MJ the screen)* It shows about 3 month's experience, and there isn't a resume with it. How much work experience do you have altogether?

MJ: All together, a little over a year. I just worked 3 months on my last job but I worked in the Andrew's warehouse for a full year just before that.

EC updates application while MJ talks and watches.

EC: Do you like warehouse work if it doesn't mean working on weekend nights?

MJ: Yea. I am certified to drive a forklift, and we checked inventory in and out of the warehouse on the computer at Andrews.

EC: One of the jobs you didn't go to is still open. The job is at STU Company. It's not far from here. It's Monday through Friday 7am to 3:30 pm. Some overtime, but they aren't open on weekends. It pays \$8.00. Are you interested in it?

MJ: Okay. What about a gas card?

EC: This job is only 4 miles from here. You said the job your friend told you about was close. Do you have enough gas to get to those two interviews?

MJ: I'm running on empty. That job you gave me that was already filled was real far but it paid a lot. I wanted to go even though I didn't have all the qualifications because it paid \$15 an hour. I used some of the gas money to take my car around to some shops to get a price on fixing it, and I used some of it to pay a friend to take me to the last interview. If I don't get a job soon, I'm going to get evicted.

EC: Okay. We'll help with gas money for these two interviews. The money is only intended to get you to interviews, so it's important for you not to take job referrals that you don't really want. Are you going to STU company? They pay is \$8.00 with some overtime. The warehouse is air conditioned, but you'd be working outside sometimes when you unload trucks. Some of it is heavy work. They're asking for a year experience.

MJ: I'll go.

EC: It says here that you are to call for an interview. Do you want me to call for you?

MJ: That would be good.

EC: I'll call before you leave. Can you go at any time?

MJ: Yes. I'd like to go today.

EC: I have a couple of questions for you. You've been out of work for about 3 months. Have you been looking for all that time?

MJ: I didn't really look much for the first month.

EC: Do you have any idea why you haven't gotten the jobs you're applied for?

MJ: I think it's because I got fired from my last job. I worked at Andrews Company for a year before that last job and I did a good job there.

EC: Can you get a reference from someone you worked for at Andrews?

MJ: My supervisor will give me a good reference.

EC: Good. I've changed your work application to show you don't want week end work and you need something close to home. You may want to look at it some more today, or come back after the interviews to make sure it shows everything you've done. The guy in the resource area can help you if you have trouble. We have classes on interviewing and resumes that will help you too.

MJ: Okay I might come back later if I don't get one of these jobs.

EC: I'll make the call to the employer. If I get a chance to talk to the interviewer, I'll tell them about your job at Andrews. If you can get a letter of recommendation from Andrews, it will help to overcome the fact that you were fired from your last job for missing work on weekends.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did we say “no” to MJ in the first scenario and “yes” in the second one?

- In the first scenario, the EC says “no” to the request for gas cards. - MJ has not done anything we asked of him. He didn’t make it to any of the interviews. He needs to show that he is serious about following through with his part of the relationship with The WorkSource. He must look for work before we provide more financial aid. .
- In the second scenario, the EC says “yes” to the gas card request. - MJ went to the job leads we gave him before his car broke. He drove a long way on a job that was already filled and left applications at two other jobs. We have some fault in MJ’s lack of success.
 - We did not adequately interview MJ to know that he left his last job because he didn’t want to work on week ends. The job we referred him to required that he work on weekends. He likely disqualified himself by stating on the application that he was not available on the weekend.
 - We sent him on a job that was quite a distance from his home. He didn’t meet the qualifications, and the job was already filled.

The EC made a judgment call to give MJ another chance with the gas cards. She considered that he did as requested until his car broke. She believed that better referrals by The WorkSource were likely to result in MJ getting hired. She explained thoroughly what we would do for MJ and what we expected MJ to do in the future.

2. What else did the EC do to assure that MJ was likely to get a job?

- Make the call for him. – This makes him confident the job is open and he is welcome to apply.
- Good advice on how to handle the fact that he was fired from his last job.
- She updated the application – This will help with better matches and keep the next person from asking MJ the same questions.
- Was the greeting a good one?

3. How did the EC set expectations by explaining how we view our relationship with our customers?

- We send the employer a limited number of people at her/his request. Applicants must meet the job requirements i.e. willing to work weekends.
- We send you on jobs that suit you and where you are likely to get hired.
- We only give financial help for you to look for work. If you don’t follow up we will not give you more financial aid.

Discussion Points:

1. Why is it important to set expectations? In what other areas should we be clear with the customer about what we will do and what we expect them to do?
2. Our job is to help our customers get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. How is saying no sometimes the best customer service?
3. How do we say “no” and continue to be respectful of our customer’s ability to make their own decisions?