

Effective Comm. Strategies – Roleplay

Directions

One partner can be Jim (or Jane). The other partner can be the sales clerk, (male or female).

Jim walked in to South's Electronics, with his iPod in his right hand. It was a busy Saturday morning, and the store was filled with customers. Jim/Jane found a long line near the repairs counter and took his/her place in line. When he/she finally reached the front of the line after a long wait, a young woman looked up and greeted him/her.

"How may I help you?" she/he asked. She/he looked down again and continued to shuffle a pile of papers as she/he waited for Jim's/Jane's answer.

"Well see, I need to get my iPod fixed. I had a party a couple of months ago, and some of my friends got really wild. Anyway, I think somebody must have dropped or spilled food on my iPod while it was playing. It doesn't work anymore."

"What seems to be the problem?" the salesclerk asked.

"It makes a funny noise," Jim/Jane answered. "And the problem started right after that party. Or it could have been the week before, when my brother helped me move into my new apartment. He might have dropped it, because he was fooling with it."

"OK, but what specifically is the problem?" asked the sales clerk, looking at her/his watch.

"You know when you're trying to upload a new song? Well, you hear..."

"A background noise?" the sales clerk interrupted. "That's very common. I think I know what's causing the problem. If you will leave the iPod here, someone will take a look at it. Then I will call you about the cost. Your name, please?"

"No, I don't think it's a background noise," Jim said. "I think it comes from inside the machine itself. It sounds like something from outer space."

"Now that's a really helpful description!" the sales clerk shouted. "Could you get to the point? Other customers are waiting."

For review, writing, or discussion:

1. Was the sales clerk a good listener? Why or why not?
2. Was Jim's/Jane's explanation of the problem helpful? Why or why not?
3. What caused the communication problem between Jim/Jane and the sales clerk?
Describe in your own words how each of them could have avoided the problem with communication.