Learning & Development

Workshop 101:

Securing a Now Due Promise to Pay (PTP)

Overview: This class is the first in a series of three workshops that Collections plans to offer agents throughout 2013, as well as other non-workshop training opportunities. One workshop is scheduled toward the end of each Quarter for Quarters 2-4 (i.e., conducted in July, October, and January).

A workshop is a class that emphasizes an exchange of ideas and the demonstration and application of techniques, skills, etc. In short, this class does not include the typical lecture/facilitation, but requires the facilitator to ensure participants are engaged and successful in completing each learning objective, as well as keep everything on time.

Time: 60 minutes

Suggested Class Size: 12-16 participants

Materials:

1. Facilitator Guide (FG)
2. Attendance Sheet & Survey Instructions Hand Out
3. Learning Station Signage (4 Signs – Station Number and Name of Objective on flipchart or paper)
4. Learning Station Instructions (4 sets – 1 for each station)
5. Learning Station Cards for:
    a. *Overcoming Objections* (6 cards)
    b. *Setting Up Multiple Payment Arrangements* (10 cards)
    c. *Assertiveness* (5 cards + 1 blank, which can be tossed)
6. Answer Key for *Setting Up Multiple Payment Arrangements*
7. PowerPoint Timer
8. Oversize Foam Die
9. Blank paper & pens for *Obtaining Payment from a Spouse*

Learning Objectives: This training covers different elements to help Collections agents secure a Now Due PTP arrangement from a customer:

- *Overcoming Objections* (Learning Station #1)
- *Setting Up Multiple Payment Arrangements* (Learning Station #2)
- *Obtaining Payment from a Spouse* (Learning Station #3)
- *Assertiveness* (Learning Station #4)

Teaching Techniques:

- Workshop – Four learning stations that correlate to the four above-referenced objectives
    - 12 minutes per Learning Station *(48 minutes total)*
    - 12 minutes to split among:
        - Welcome/Introduction *(e.g., 5 minutes)*
        - Closing/Questions *(e.g., 5 minutes)*
        - Transitions between stations *(e.g., 2 minutes cumulative – 30 seconds each)*

Welcome/Introduction

Welcome participants. Explain the purpose of the class, the objectives, and the format.

For example: *"Welcome to Workshop 101: Securing a Now Due Promise to Pay. This is a fast-paced workshop that allows you to work with and to interact with your fellow agents to help you develop and apply best practices in securing a Now Due Promise to Pay from your customer. Today, we will cover the following objectives:*

1. *Overcoming Objections*
2. *Setting Up Multiple Payment Arrangements*
3. *Obtaining Payment from a Spouse*
4. *Assertiveness*

As you can see, there are four different areas – or Learning Stations – one for each objective. We will divide the class into four groups and each group will move to one of the stations. You will have 12 minutes to read the instructions and to conduct the exercise. Time will be displayed on the screen and you will hear an audible warning to indicate the end of each exercise. When time has expired, your group moves to the next Learning Station (e.g., Station 1 moves to Station 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, and 4 to 1). We will continue this process until all groups have completed all stations."[1]

Split participants into four groups of three or four members. Facilitator determines the best way to create groups (e.g., participants count off 1-2-3-4, etc.). Direct each group to one Learning Station. Use the PowerPoint (PPT) timer, which should already be open, to keep track of time. At the end of the initial 12 minutes, advise groups to move to the next station.[2] Continue this until all groups have completed all stations.

The facilitator's main responsibilities include the following:

1. Provide initial instruction on how the workshop is conducted.
2. Keep time.
3. Ensure a smooth transition from station to station.
4. Move around the Learning Stations to listen in and provide any necessary guidance and/or assistance (e.g., if you see a group struggling or not adequately participating, you should immediately intervene).
5. Conclude the class by addressing questions/concerns and asking participants to complete a course survey.

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[1] If so desired, you can give teams an extra 30-60 seconds to read the instructions at each Learning Station before beginning the timer. Just ensure you work it into your timeline of 60 minutes.

[2] At the end of a 12-minute period, there is an audible alarm/noise – a duck quacking – to indicate time is up. After the alarm sounds, the screen goes black. Click once to reset timer. Click again to start next 12-minute period when ready to begin the next exercise. It might be nice to give groups a 2-minute warning before timer sounds.

Station #1: Overcoming Objections

This Learning Station helps participants practice overcoming customer objections to making a Now Due Promise to Pay. It utilizes the "Wagon Wheel" form of role-playing where one participant – playing the role of the customer – stands in the middle of the other participants who play the role of agents. In turn, each participant has the opportunity to role play both the customer and the agent.

Directions:

1. The group leader[3] begins by reading the Learning Station instructions aloud to the group.
2. The initial customer[4] begins by choosing a card (6 cards total) that informs him/her of an objection to paying the Now Due on the account. The customer reads the card aloud:
    a. "I am not paying because the wrong amount was charged to my account."
    b. "I am sick and tired of you people calling all hours of the day. You can't squeeze blood from a turnip!"
    c. "My spouse is supposed to pay this! I am going through a divorce right now."
    d. "I don't owe anything! I mailed a payment."
    e. "I will not pay because you people keep harassing me!"
    f. "I will try to pay something by the end of the week."
3. The initial customer points to a participant in the circle and he/she becomes the initial agent.
4. The initial agent begins the role play dialogue by attempting to get the customer to agree to make a Now Due PTP. The agent should use his/her knowledge and negotiation skills to secure a payment from the customer. The dialogue continues until customer agrees to make a Now Due payment or two minutes lapse.
    a. The group leader is tasked with keeping time for each role play.
5. Conclusion:
    a. If agent was <u>unsuccessful</u> in persuading the customer to make a Now Due PTP, participants who did not take an active role in the role play should take one minute to provide feedback to the agent on what he/she could have done differently.
    b. If agent was <u>successful</u> in persuading the customer to make a Now Due PTP, others should still provide any feedback that they feel could have enhanced the conversation.
6. Initial customer puts card at bottom of the deck and moves to the circle.
7. Initial agent becomes the customer and moves to the middle of the circle. He/she chooses a new card and reads it aloud.
8. The new customer points to a participant in the circle who has not played the role of an agent.
9. The process is continued until all participants have had the chance to play both roles or until 12 minutes lapse.

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[3] Facilitator instructs participants how to choose a group leader for each station (e.g., participant in each group whose birthday comes first on the calendar, participant in each group who is wearing the most jewelry, participant in each group whose first name comes last alphabetically, participant in each group who was the last to arrive at the Learning Station, etc.). This must be done prior to <u>each</u> <u>time</u> groups begin a new Learning Station.

[4] Instructions advise participants how to choose the initial customer and how to rotate roles (e.g., group leader = initial customer).

Station #2: Setting Up Multiple Payment Arrangements

This Learning Station helps participants recall the required steps and the necessary order to set up multiple payment arrangements – or Split Pay – to help customers pay their Now Due before their due date (e.g., take the Now Due and divide it into smaller payments to be received prior to the customer's current due date).

Directions:

1. The group leader begins by reading the Learning Station instructions to the group.
2. 10 cards containing the required steps to setting up multiple payment arrangements are located at the station.[5]
3. Participants work as a group to determine the proper sequence the cards should be ordered.
4. Once a majority of the group agrees on the initial step/card, the group leader places it on the table.
5. The group continues to agree and place cards in their (assumed) proper order until all cards have been placed.
6. Once all cards are placed, the group leader picks up the Answer Key to determine whether the group has correctly identified the proper order of the steps/cards.
7. If time allows, group should discuss and answer the following questions located at the bottom of the Answer Key:
    a. How would this process change if a customer wants to make multiple payment arrangements via another method of payment (e.g., in-store, through the mail, etc.)?
    b. What are the necessary steps?

Answer Key: 4, 7, 5, 2, 10, 9, 6, 3, 1, 8

Station #3: Obtaining Payment from a Spouse

This Learning Station helps participants learn to negotiate a payment from a spouse. There are different tactics that can be used to negotiate a payment:

- *Aim High* – Always ask for more than you think you can get. You might get it! And, if you don't, you'll still stand a better chance of getting the most you possibly can.
- *Pecking* – Customer states they can only pay something today that is smaller than the Now Due. You keep pecking away with other payment amounts to get the account current faster or until you get it all or most of the Now Due.
- *The Lob* – When the customer makes an offer, you lob back a counter offer to them. They, in turn, might counter your offer, which might be more favorable to you.
- *Sweeten the Deal* – Offer incentives to move a negotiation forward.
- *Trade-offs* – Ask what the customer might be willing to trade to get what they really want. Then ask yourself, what are you willing to trade? After listening to the customer, offer something that appeals to their interest.
- *Time Pressure* – Give the customer a specific date to work within to become current. The best date is "today," but always try to work within the next due date for the account.

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[5] Front of cards are numbered 1-10, but steps on reverse are not in the proper order.

Participants explore using these tactics on the spouse of a customer to obtain a payment on an account.

Directions:
1. The group leader begins by reading the Learning Station instructions to the group.
2. The group leader rolls a single die to randomly choose one of the above-referenced tactics to discuss and determine the best way to utilize the designated tactic with the customer's spouse.
3. The group has four minutes to brainstorm and come up with ideas on how to use the tactic and the group leader records their ideas on a sheet of paper.
4. At the end of four minutes, the group leader rolls the die again to select another tactic. The die should be rolled again should the same number appear as the first.
5. The process is continued until 12 minutes lapse.

Station #4: Assertiveness

This Learning Station helps participants remember to be firm on the issues, but fair with customers. Negotiation for payment on an account deals with customers who have feelings and perceptions that might differ from yours. Although you must always treat your customer with respect, there are times when you must be assertive to obtain the payment.

Directions:
1. The group leader begins by reading the Learning Station instructions to the group.
2. The group leader divides the group into pairs[6] for role play – one customer and one agent.
3. Each pair chooses a card that contains a piece of information or a suggestion they can use in an assertive manner to obtain a Now Due PTP from the customer:
    a. Number of months past due
    b. Sense of urgency
    c. Balance and Now Due
    d. Optimism that delinquency can be resolved today
    e. Open-ended questions on the customer's plan to resolve the delinquency
4. The agent reads card to self and then begins the role play dialogue ensuring he/she uses that piece of information to show assertiveness in obtaining a payment from the customer.
5. Upon completion of the dialogue, pairs can reverse roles and conduct the role play again.
6. If time allows, pairs can engage in feedback to each other on their performance as the agent.

Closing/Questions

Facilitator should:
1. Answer any questions and/or concerns participants have regarding the workshop and advise they will remain after class to address questions participants might want to ask privately.
2. Thank participants for their time, attention, and engagement in the workshop.
3. Pass out *Survey Instructions* hand out before/as associates leave the classroom.
    a. http://mymacys/sites/enterprise/departments/ccs/CCSld/elLib/SitePages/Collections_2.aspx

[6] If group has an odd number, add extra participant to one of the pairs.