

Jocelyn Low

Three Course Leader Challenges (and How to Overcome Them)



Are you a passionate but frustrated Course Leader? Here's how to overcome it!

I recently asked a group of experienced UYS Course Leaders two questions:

1. "What is your biggest frustration as a Course Leader in your organization?", and
2. "What are you going to do about it?"

Each person who answered this question had already facilitated more than 10 workshops for their colleagues.

Here are two of the stated frustrations, and constructive recommendations:

1. Leaders need to "go-live" more timely and more often
Our CEO and Leadership Team did the first round of communications very well.

Everyone in the company learned that we would be implementing UP! Your Service education programs, and we were all very excited. Then the first workshops began.

We learned new service principles and discussed how to apply them at work. We could see our

progress as a team and in our department. But, we have no visibility on what or how the other departments were doing. And we could not see how the organization as a whole was performing. Participants would ask us, and expect us to know as the company's Course Leaders, but they – and we – have been frustrated by our lack of informed and up-to-date answers.

It is imperative that a company's Leadership Team provide continuous "live" feeds into the organization – and especially to the Course Leaders – on 'where we are now' and 'how we are improving' as a company. People want to know how the service education and action plans have made an impact with our customers and our business results. Employees are eager to hear where their colleagues are on the shared service improvement journey.

When people cannot see what is ahead, they lose energy and focus. Our leaders must keep communication flowing. No need to wait till the end of the month or the start of the next quarter. People want to hear the news when it happens. (Nobody likes to hear a belated birthday song. The mood and significance just isn't the same.)

"And one more thing. Don't just announce the BIG WINS and the big numbers. Announce and celebrate the small wins, too."

And one more thing. Don't just announce the BIG WINS and the big numbers. Announce and celebrate the small wins, too. Frontline colleagues want to know when their unrelenting smiles have won the loyalty of a customer or two. People in the packing room will be uplifted to hear that compliments are pouring in. Leaders are naturally good at sharing the BIG WINS, but we need them also to positive promote the just-as-important small wins.

What can be done?

Course Leaders say: Leadership Team members need a communication strategy that cuts across the breadth and depth of the organization, and one that responds sharply to time and urgency.

UYS says: Learn more about The 12 Building Blocks of Service Culture – especially #5: 'Service Communications'. This Building Block can inform, educate and motivate everyone with creative communications that provide relevant service information, timely customer feedback, and current challenges and achievements.

[Click here to learn more about The 12 Building Blocks of Service Culture.](#)

2. Pessimism in the Classroom

Some participants come to the workshop with an attitude that 'this is a waste of time and

resources". They may be beleaguered by personal issues, disgruntled about remuneration, off kilter in their work-life balance, frustrated with their managers or colleagues, etc.

They clearly want to talk about something other than service and do not "buy into" the overall cause of the organization's service improvement mission. They say things like, "Why are we teaching service when we should be spending on employee welfare?" Or, "We have bigger problems than service issues!"

What is even more challenging is, when the participant's manager or supervisor knows there is an attitude problem and does not inform the Course Leader in advance. Or when the managers themselves are the ones with the problem, who do not walk or even talk the talk, and who actively demonstrate negative behaviours in class.

Then there are participants who put a higher value on technical know-how than on service education. They think service language is mere "literature" and prefer to focus on the "nuts and bolts" of technology or engineering. They are pessimistic that service education will make any difference to their job, or to the company. They do the minimum just to get through the day and put little effort into group activities or writing personal action plans.

Whichever group an individual belongs to, pessimism dampens the spirit of learning for everyone else in the room.

What can be done?

Course Leaders say: Empathize with workshop participants when they open up to you. Don't make them wrong. Give them a listening ear. Often an upset person wants to feel genuinely heard. And only then can they open up to new possibilities and perspectives. Be careful about trying to be all things to all participants, however. Re-direct them to the appropriate senior leaders who can help them with pay, performance, or other personal issues.

UYS says: Organizations serious about transforming their service culture need everyone to walk the talk. Service

role-models are needed, especially those who convert from 'neutral' to becoming real 'supporters' of the cultural change. This is not the work of Course Leaders only, but needs everyone's attention, starting with the CEO.

Learn more about The 12 Building Blocks of Service Culture – especially #12: 'Service Role Modelling', because everyone can be a positive role model. [Click here to learn more about The 12 Building Blocks of Service Culture.](#)

3. Course Leaders are treated as 'Bridge'

Participants sometimes look to Course Leaders to serve as a bridge between Managers and Employees on Human Resource issues. Course leaders who are people managers find ourselves wearing two hats as a liaison between management and employees.

Sometimes participants catch us during coffee breaks and start 'talking deeply and personally' about work issues, asking us for advice. Some Course Leaders are able to steer clear from irrelevant topics and keep the conversation focused on service, but others get caught up in the talks and topics, often consuming time but going nowhere constructive.

What can be done?

Course Leaders say: Thank your participants for opening up to you. Then encourage them to "TPR" ("Take Personal Responsibility") with no blame or excuses. Ask them to speak with their managers or someone appropriate from HR.

UYS says: Encouraging 'TPR' is the right thing to do. Look for an opportunity to help your participant apply a service principle to their situation. All service concepts taught in the UYS workshops are applicable to both external and internal situations. And the best moment to apply them is when you have a real problem! So the next time a participant comes to the Course Leader as a bridge, help them cross it by identifying and applying a relevant service principle!

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About the Author

Ms Jocelyn Low enables Client Success and delivers Actionable

Service Education programs through UYS Train-the-Trainer Certification approach. She brings over 20 years of experience in sales and learning and development across the globe.

Prior to joining UP! Your Service, Jocelyn worked for years with global talent development firms, managing business development, facilitating programs, and consistently exceeding customer expectations. Jocelyn's experience and expertise include Service Excellence, Consultative Sales, Leadership, Mentorship, and Train-the-Trainer certification. She is ATD-competency model certified.

Jocelyn holds a Master's Degree in Linguistics from North-Eastern Illinois University and a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications & Broadcasting from Moody Bible Institute, Chicago. She received training on Action Learning by the World Institute of Action Learning and Six Disciplines of Breakthrough by Global Trainers.

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