



## The Customer Service Taste Test: Salty or Sweet?

**Purpose:** To create an experience that highlights the strength of a negative experience. This exercise can be used as an icebreaker to introduce customer service training and the customer experience.

### Preparation:

Collect the following supplies:

- Single serving sugar and salt packets – enough packets of each for all participants
- Toothpicks

Place 1 sugar packet, one salt packet and a toothpick in front of each participant.

### Directions:

1. Ask group: What flavor is stronger, sugar or salt? Get feedback and say let's take the taste test.
2. Ask each participant to rip off the corner of their condiment packets.
3. Then ask each participant to lick the tip of their toothpick and dip into their salt packet. Tell them to knock off the majority of salt leaving one or two crystals on the toothpick. Place toothpick with salt crystal on your tongue and taste.
4. Using your toothpick, repeat the process but now with the sugar – again knocking off excess sugar and leaving just one or 2 granules of sugar. Place toothpick with sugar granule on your tongue and taste.

### Debrief:

- Which taste is stronger?
- Which substance requires more crystals to taste?
- How does this experiment relate to our customer's experience? What analogies can you make?
- If salt represents the negative service experience and can leave a bitter taste in our customer's mouth, what types of small interactions or behaviors can create this negative feeling?
- If sugar is the good stuff, what are the positive behaviors we can do to make our customer feel good? Notice how it takes more sugar to taste the sweetness...so we need more sugar/ great service with our customers, for them to sense the positivity.
- What can you do to reduce the salt and increase the sugar with our customer?