

# Small Actions that Can Build Trust & Help Serve Students

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Dean of Student Experience

# CAHEA Mission Statement

The mission of CAHEA is to advance the cause of Christ by promoting, supporting, and nurturing alternative delivery methods for offering distinctively Christian post-secondary education designed for adult learners.

# Higher Education (and Our Institutions) Business Goals

- Enrollment Numbers
- Persistence/Retention Rates
- Graduation Rates

Before we go too deep...Why is this important?

2012 Stanford study Impact of Student Persistence

*Students that leave an institution before graduating can cost that institution up to \$40,000 per student*

- A need to recognize there are different student personas and learn about them
  - Adult higher education vs. traditional campus student needs
- A need for fast response times and to measure service
  - How...Technology paired with a Customer Service culture
  - “more institutions are beginning to look at students and parents as “customers”, with the goal of providing a level of service that students and parents would expect to see in other industries like retail or hospitality.” (COMEVO, 2019)

# Technology Ideas and Examples

- Live Chat
- Unified Help Desk – awareness of personas
- CRM Tools
- Website updates from user experience
- Google Analytics to help inform FAQ on website
- Survey tools with Net Promoter Score (NPS)

# Ideas to Help NOW with Goals for Student Service Areas

## Building Trust through:

- First Person Language to show empathy and personal help
- Warm vs. Competent Language... When to Use
- Concrete Language for Active Listening

## First Person Language

Standard use of pronouns:

“Your patience is greatly appreciated.” “Your call is important to us.”

Research indicates:

- Emphasizing “I” (the agent) over “we” (the company) will positively affect the customer (consumer, student, etc.)
  - Why? “I” suggests a personal connection and empathy – an ownership and direct relationship.
- “You” is already a known entity (student) and can signal blame
  - Standard conflict resolution technique and “I” messages vs “You”
  - Example – “You entered data wrong”

## Experiment Email Scenario (MIT Sloan example)

A few days after you ordered a product online from Shopsy.com, you realize it hasn't arrived. You email them to ask about the status of your order. Here is the email response you receive from an employee of the company-

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### Firm Agent Email Stimuli

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No pronoun  
control

The order is leaving the warehouse. It will arrive in 3-5 days. Apologies for the unacceptable delay experienced. For further assistance, just reply to this email.

We

We found that the order is leaving the warehouse. It will arrive in 3-5 days. Our apologies for the unacceptable delay experienced. If we can provide further assistance, just reply to this email.

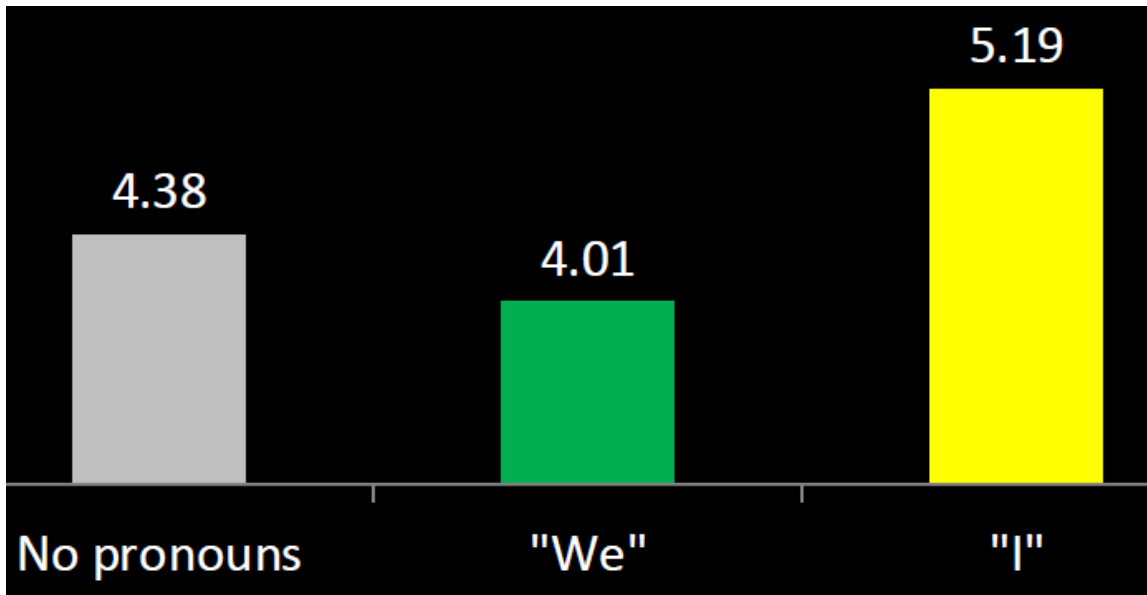
I

I found that the order is leaving the warehouse. It will arrive in 3-5 days. My apologies for the unacceptable delay experienced. If I can provide further assistance, just reply to this email.

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## Results (MIT Sloan example) Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intentions



Results from replication in the field vs an email test

- A 10% increase in "I" pronouns resulted in 0.8% increase in "purchases"
- A 50% shift from "we" to "I" pronouns resulted in 6.6% increase in purchases

Implications for higher education = Increase student satisfaction  
Goal =  persistence/retention

## Summary (MIT Sloan Example)

**We**

If we can provide assistance...

We can offer a discount today.

**You**

If we can provide you with assistance...

We can offer you a discount today.

**I**



If I can provide assistance...

I can offer a discount today.

# Warmth vs. Competence

- Does more warmth (Customer/Student Care) = Less competent
- Does more competent (Customer/Student Service) = Less warmth

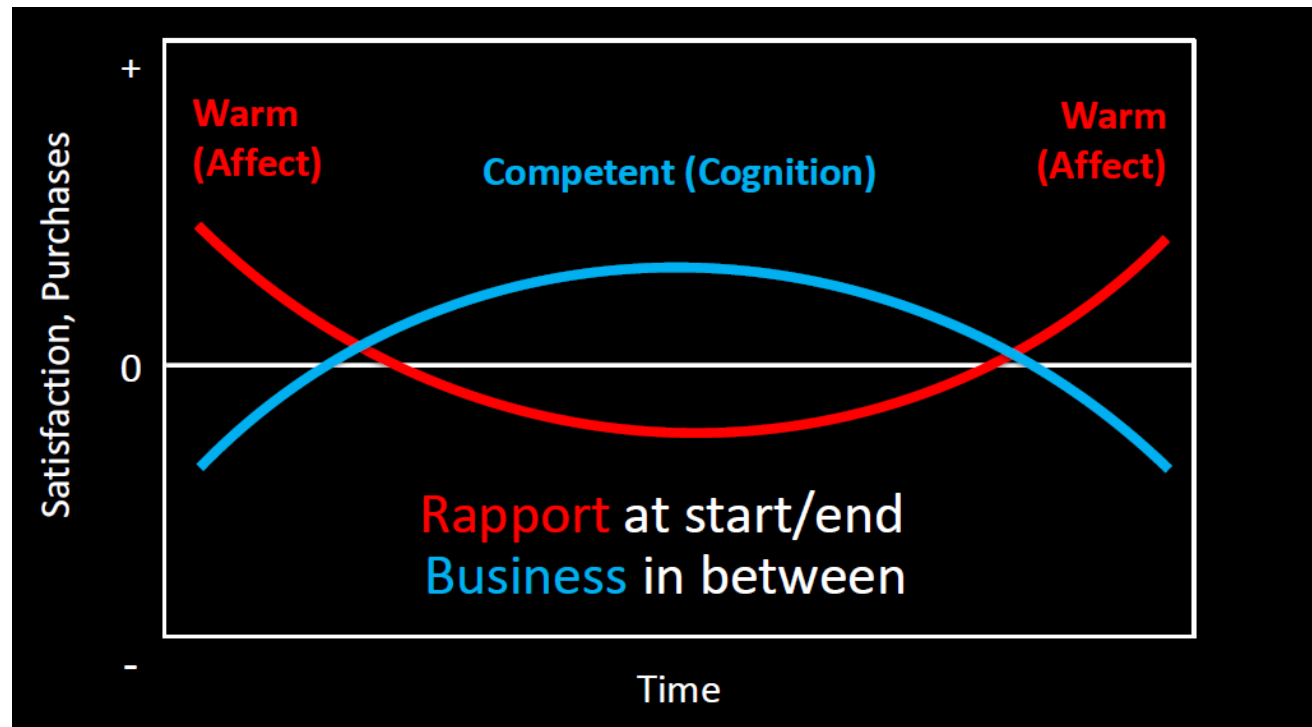
A need to be both but at **DIFFERENT TIMES.**

# WARM then COMPETENT then WARM

A need to establish a relationship and connection at the start and end of the conversation

A need to be solution/competence based in the middle of the conversation

- A decrease in satisfaction if all solution/competence at the start of the conversation



How much did it help the company?

- Customer Satisfaction increase by 2.5 points
- Purchase increase by 3.42 orders

Higher Education Goals can be similar!

Our students and alumni become our champions!

- Increase in admitted students
- Increase in retention
- Increase in graduation rate

# Recent Team Example Email:

XXXX,

First of all I want to tell you that you are doing a fantastic job in the FNP program so far! This is your first C of the program and that is awesome, especially seeing all that you are dealing with right now! It really is an uncertain time for everyone with a lot of unknowns for both adults and kids, so I completely understand the stress you are under right now. Your profession is under a lot of stress right now as well, so again, you are really excelling!

Unfortunately, with the practicums you need to get a B-. It is our policy stated in our catalog. The policy can be found here <https://library.olivet.eduXXXXXXX> on page 21.

Any questions or concerns about what is needed to retake NRSNG 667 and auditing NRSNG 665A you can reach out to XXXXX for more details on the expectations. She can be reached at XXXXX [@olivet.edu](mailto:XXXXX@olivet.edu).

Again, I want to commend you on all the success you've achieved so far and please know we are cheering you on and praying for your success! Please let us know if you have further questions or concerns.

# Concrete Language and Active Listening

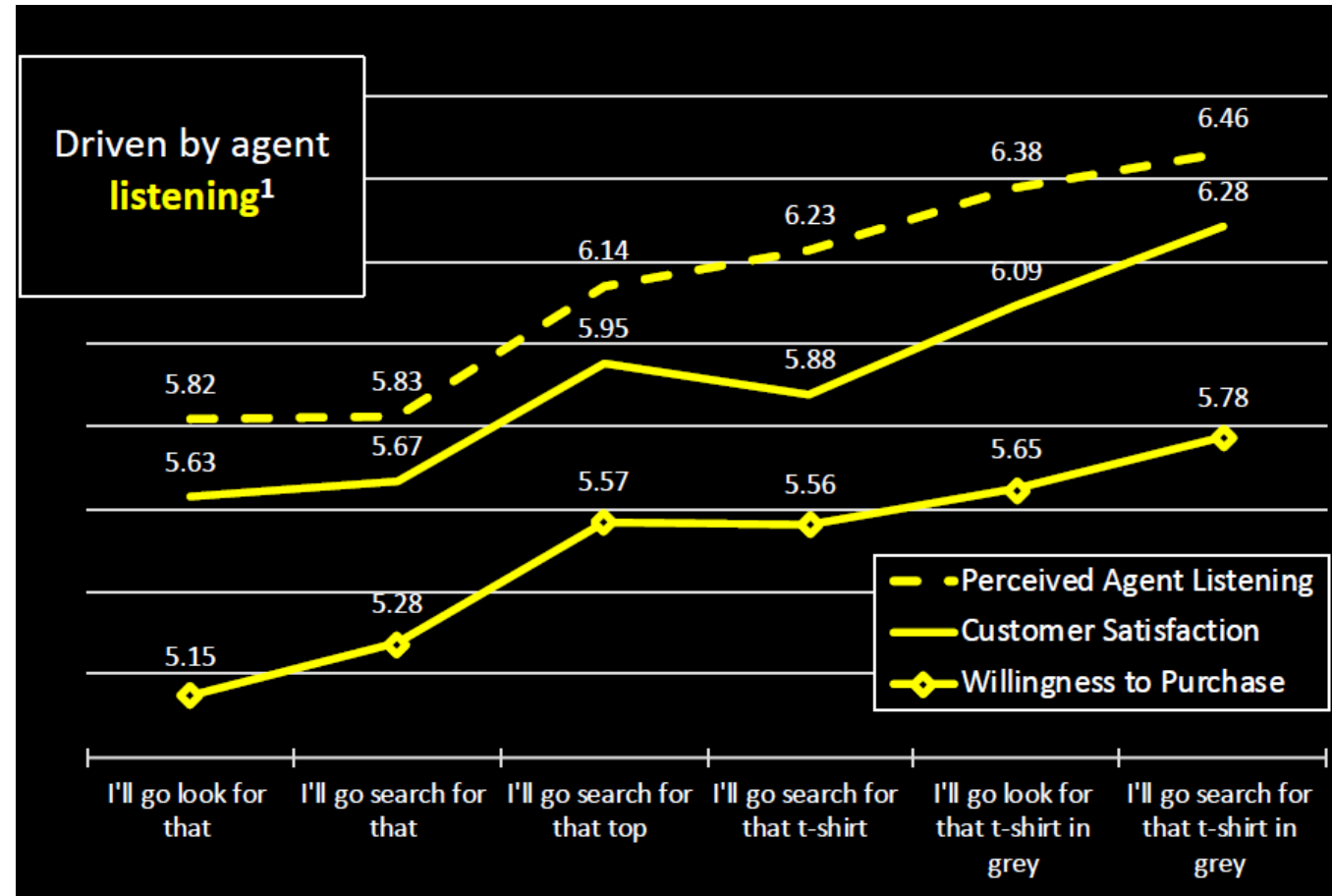
Concreteness suggests listening  
Specific Needs AND Action Verbs

Imagine you're at a clothing store and have found a T-shirt you want to buy but can't find it in the gray color you want. A salesperson approaches, and you tell them your situation. The salesperson replies ...

Condition	Agent Reply	<u>Linguistic Concreteness</u>	
		Participants	MRC
1	I'll go <b>look</b> for that	4.77	295
2	I'll go <b>search</b> for that	5.00	298
3	I'll go search for that <b>top</b>	5.15	328
4	I'll go search for that <b>T-shirt</b>	5.77	353
5	I'll go look for that T-shirt <b>in grey</b>	6.01	366
6	I'll go <b>search</b> for that T-shirt <b>in grey</b>	6.09	368

Adapted from MIT Sloan Management Review: How to Speak to Customers to Build Trust by Packard, Moore & McFerran October 2020

# Concrete Language and Active Listening



Field Results:

Customer Satisfaction = 8% Increase

Purchases = 13% Increase

Adapted from MIT Sloan Management Review: How to Speak to Customers to Build Trust by Packard, Moore & McFerran October 2020  
<https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-direct/2020/10/how-to-speak-to-customers-to-build-trust>



# Concrete Language and Active Listening Examples Higher Education

	Less Concrete (Worse)	More Concrete (Better)	Why?
What (adjectives, pronouns, nouns)	Would you like anything else?	Can I search for another course for you?	“course” is more specific and tangible than “thing”
How (adverbs, verbs)	We can look into that schedule problem.	I can try to fix that schedule problem.	“I” language and fixing something is more action oriented and imaginable

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"To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity." [Don Alden Adams, President Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania](#)

"A lot of people have fancy things to say about customer service, but it's just a day-in, day-out, ongoing, never-ending, persevering, compassionate kind of activity." [Christopher McCormick, CEO of L.L. Bean](#)

"Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier." [Mother Teresa](#)



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