

# Sharda Crouther

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[Simply Confident Customer Service Consulting, LLC](#)

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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Sharda Crouther:*

After 10 years as a 911 Emergency Dispatcher, Chicago native and Owner of Simply Confident Customer Service Consulting, Sharda Crouther, moved to the Sunshine State in 2012. Following her move to Pinellas County, Crouther worked for 24-7 Intouch as a Senior Team Lead with 15 direct reports and approximately 90 indirect reports. Her team was directly responsible for email and phone customer service for Airbnb. In the summer of 2015, she joined United Healthcare, first serving as a Customer Service Quality Coach and then as an Enrollment Quality Analyst on the Medicare side of the business. With a career built around customer service, Crouther was well prepared for what happened next.

“I was the unfortunate recipient of a round of layoffs,” she said.

“Fortunately, I was already well into the process of starting my own business. In 2018, I began taking classes through the SBDC on how to start a business. I was also encouraged to start my business by friends, family and former colleagues who know about my passion for customer service.”

At United Healthcare, Crouther was responsible for working with supervisors to help their reps reach certain goals and metrics. If they had specific goals or were getting bad reviews, she’d work with them to reach those goals and improve on their customer service skills. Starting her own business was merely an extension of what she was already successfully doing.

“Our purpose is to help Floridians enter, remain and advance in the workforce,” she said. “We are motivated to provide local businesses with the same premiere training and coaching services that the multi-million dollar companies give to their employees. We understand that each industry requires a unique set of customer service skills. We are Simply Confident that we can equip their staff with the training and coaching they need to accomplish exceptional results. At Simply Confident, we focus on how the employee/employer relationship affects the customer experience.”

Crouther continued, “Employees are the heart of your business. As an employer or member of leadership, how YOU treat your employees has a direct effect on how THEY treat your customers. If you want your employees to perform well and exceed your expectations, then you need to be conscious of how you interact with them. Invest in them by giving them the knowledge, training, and support they need to provide your

customers with an exceptional customer service experience. The end result, happy employees + happy customers = WIN for YOUR business! We give you the tools to help you successfully engage and interact with your employees to create a positive work environment for everyone.”

According to Crouther, one of her biggest initial and ongoing challenges has been convincing business owners that they need her help.

Unfortunately, many owners are often too quick to fire an underperforming employee or become immune to unacceptable behavior.

“Many employers think it’s easier to just fire an employee, rather than hiring a consultant like me to work with them,” Crouther said. “If an employee has been with a company for three or so years and this person knows the processes and procedures, but they’re having a personality issue, it’s worth fixing. It’s a much cheaper solution than having to replace them.”

Crouther, who thoroughly enjoys helping businesses exceed their customer’s expectations and working with individuals to help them discover and reach their true potential, has grown her business through a combination of efforts. She recently joined the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, where she attends regular networking events, and also participates in the Reverse Trade Show through the SBDC. She’s also looking forward to offering her services to the Pinellas County School Board, the Pinellas County Transit Authority and the Tampa International Airport.

“I’m working on getting into the high schools,” she said. “I want to help teach the youth about customer service skills as a way to help prepare

them for life. I've done presentations for Tampa Bay YouthBuild, CareerSource Pinellas and a program for ex-offenders. There's a gap with many of these folks. We're helping them land jobs, but we're not teaching them the proper customer services skills needed to keep and succeed in their jobs. That's where I come into play."

Looking ahead, Crouther has a vision to help businesses of all sizes improve the service they provide to their customers. Her goal is to maximize the staff's performance by giving them customer service skills that are specific to their industry.

What advice does Crouther have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Do what you LOVE to do," she said. "Stay focused and don't be discouraged or intimidated by your competitors. They're not YOU and cannot do what YOU do. Also, use the FREE resources that are available to you through your local Small Business Development Center! It will be the best decision you'll ever make."

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