Delivering High-Caliber Customer Service

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Objectives

- To identify major barriers to providing outstanding customer service
- To learn strategies for working with difficult customers
- To understand customer service as a practice in government service.

Managing Customer Service

In the interest of good customer service, I think I should go home now.

Why does customer service matter?

Customers need to be met with an attitude that shows their government cares and is supportive of their investment.

Am I worth their investment?

Why is this important to you .....  
- Inefficiency (Costly)  
- People/citizens unhappy, therefore not fully supportive of government  
- Poor service leads to low confidence in government officials
Customer Service

- What’s the definition?
- Who are your external customers?
- What do you do for employees in your organization?
- What do other employees do for you in your organization?
- What do you think your customer service philosophy should be? One sentence!
- What are three expectations customers have?

Define Customer Service

- Customer Service is the way your organization “communicates how it feels” about your customers to your customers – Kaset International
- Customer Service is a philosophy and attitude which guides the actions of all individuals and groups within the organization. - Wagenheim

Customers

External
- “One that patronizes or uses the services”- Webster’s Dictionary
- “A person with whom one must deal” – The New American Heritage Dictionary

Internal Customers
- Employees will not GIVE good customer service if they are not RECEIVING good internal customer service
- Must guide a culture that values quality customer service, both internally and externally
Core Service: the “what” of your business (product, good, service, etc.)

Customer Service: the “how” of your business (interaction, delivery, interface, etc.)

Quality Customer Service is...

Meeting or exceeding customers’ expectations.

Do Citizen’s Have a Choice?

- Do citizen’s consider your department/organization as a Service Culture?
Is the Customer…

• Always right?

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Best Customer Service

• In your group discuss…

• What was your best customer service experience?

• When were your expectations exceeded?

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Moment of Truth

• Any instance when a customer comes in contact with some aspect of your organization and has an opportunity to form an impression about the quality of service you provide.

• Creates either a good or bad opinion

• May occur in less than 60 seconds

• Is often something that seems small

• Can come and go without your being aware of it
  - The way the telephone is answered
  - The way a problem is handled
  - Length of time someone has to wait
People Talk

• The average person who has had poor customer service will tell 9-10 more people

• 13% of dissatisfied will spread the bad news to 20 or more people

• You can get 82-95% of these customers back if you resolve the complaint in a timely and thoughtful fashion.

• A well handled problem usually breeds more loyalty than you had before the negative incident.

Customer Service Categories

1. Professionalism
2. Environment
3. General communication
4. Interpersonal communication

Professional and Environment

• Attire & grooming
  • Kind, courteous, polite, respectful
  • Phone etiquette
  • Resourcefulness

• Signage
  • Directions
  • Physical set-up
  • Neatness of work area
  • Noise/temperature
### General and Interpersonal Communication

- Communicating with general public
- Communicating with internal and external customers
- **Messenger**
- **Receiver**
- **Message (content)**
- **Barriers**
- **Filters**
- **Nonverbal language**

### What Customers Want

- To be assisted by a professional
- To be important
- To be given the benefit of the doubt
- To be heard and understood
- To be fully informed

### Keeping customers happy

- Return phone calls and e-mails as soon as possible
- Don’t say “yes” to something unless you can get the job done
- Don’t say “no” without helping the customer to problem solve
- Always share information about what you can and cannot do
- Keep customers informed
- Set priorities - don’t respond only to “squeaky wheels”
- Keep in mind that the people you work with are customers, too
### Customer Satisfaction

- **Outcome**
  - Did I get what I needed?

- **Treatment**
  - Was I treated with respect?

- **Procedure**
  - Was the process reasonable and fair?

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### Customer Service Success Skills

**Acknowledge the customer has been understood**
- Instant reply
- Empathy
- Sincerity, if disagree with needs or feelings

**Giving Information**
- Who/what/when/where/why
- Don’t make a promise you cannot keep
- Focus on what you can do
- Not “it’s the policy” without an explanation why

**Check for understanding and agreement**
- Do you have any questions?
- State your understanding

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### Phrases to Remember

- Please correct me if I am wrong…
- We appreciate your business….
- Our concern is fairness
- Could I ask a few questions to be sure my facts are right?
- Let me see if I understand what you are saying
- It has been a pleasure talking with you
"It is impossible to overemphasize the immense need humans have to be really listened to, to be taken seriously, to be understood. Listen to all conversations in our world between nations as well as those between couples. They are for the most part dialogues of the deaf."

- Paul Tournier-Swiss Psychiatrist

Motivating Your Employees

• People staffing the front lines need to be well hired, well trained, and well treated

• Must haves:
  • Positive attitude toward job & customer
  • Neat & organized appearance of staff & office
  • Staff responsibility for addressing customer concerns

Successful Organizations...

• Realize that employees cannot give good external customer service unless...

• Employees are receiving excellent internal customer service
If External Expectations Are Raised...

Without addressing *internal* systems...

Then the Effort Will... **Fail**

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**Address Service Needs**

- Starting with the top
- Work you way down the organization chart

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**Management Needs to:**

- Walk the Walk
- Talk the Talk
Develop a Culture that

• Values Quality Customer Service

• How do you do that?

What is Your Part?

• How do you create an environment that is conducive to delivering EXCEPTIONAL service?

• How do you make your department better?

• Discuss at your table

• Report out

How Do Organizational Opportunities Tie into Customer Service?

Promotions, are they tied into....

• Technical skills only?

Or....

• Are they committed to customers?
How Do You Reward Great Customer Service?

- Rewards
- Recognition
- Celebrations
- Other ideas?

Recognizing & Dealing with Performance Gaps

- Do you recognize a customer service performance gap?
- What do you do?

Roadblocks to Service Recovery

- Not listening
- Lack of respect
- Poor or inadequate communication
- Lack of training
- Emotional state - e.g., anger
- Indirectness
- Assumptions based on incomplete or inaccurate information
- Inadequate customer service training
- Lack of motivation
Table Activity

- What are some specific situations that you can think of where you would like to empower front line supervisors/employees to present creative solutions for daily problem solving of customer issues?

- Report Out- Each table member explain a situation to the group that is specific to your department.

Activity

- If the fish can do it, so can we...

- What are the 4 concepts of Fish Philosophy?

- In groups, how can these be done each day in your job?

- Report Out

What is Your Top Three Today?