



CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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January 2009

New Year's Night: Resolve to Delight

January is a time for reflection and renewal, and a time for planning. Most of us express these activities in the form of New Year's resolutions. Do you have any?

Resolutions are meant to improve ourselves, whether to rid ourselves of bad habits or to achieve positive goals. Sometimes it is usually a life style change, something dramatic and meaningful. Along those lines, now is a good time to think about the coming year and how we might go about doing business a little differently.

And when we say differently, we don't mean a little better. We're talking **wow!** Are you up for the challenge? Are you ready to "resolve"?

When it comes to customer service, one of the things the Customer Delight training team would like to challenge our employees to do this year is come up with a customer service-related new year's resolution. And of course, this group never does things in a small way, so there is a contest for the best resolution!

To get the ball rolling, our group thought about ways in which employees might wow their customers. We're talking jaw dropping over-the-top WOW! How do you do that?

It's easier said than done. After all, we are a public institution and must be concerned with how taxpayer funds get spent. We can't offer expensive trinkets to basic service, but then again, neither can businesses. But that doesn't mean we can't figure out inexpensive ways to create a customer experience that is memorable and distinctly different from the experience they are used to (or expecting) from most

government services.

You will know you are on track if your customers act startled and say things like, "you're kidding, right?" That's the typical reaction from someone who is expecting a lot less, and they will remember that moment and probably tell several friends. And you will have also earned their loyalty, which is an especially important ingredient in our customer delight efforts.

As you ponder what you might do that is both cost reasonable and still going the extra mile, think about what makes you feel more comfortable when dealing with a company. What makes you feel welcome? What makes you remember them as a step above? What makes you feel valued and thought of? On the other hand, what do some businesses do that make you feel like you're just a name in the computer?

You will find that this challenge is a bit daunting. Some of you work in places that don't "touch" our customers directly, and so it is hard to think about what you might be able to do. But don't give up! Think about what you do and the

entire experience from the customer's point of view. Go beyond friendliness and think about how service is delivered, or maybe even **what** is being delivered. Is it what the customer wants?

Or think about your "higher purpose" within the scheme of things. Think about what your job is on a daily basis, and then think about what that means in the bigger picture. For example, say you are hired to kill vegetation in the drainage ditches every day. Is that your job? Or is it to prevent flooding? If your higher purpose is to prevent flooding, then what other ways might you achieve your role in your day to day activities?

Remember that customer delight is all about exceeding customer expectations – not just meeting them. Average businesses have satisfied customers – great businesses have customers who are **wowed!**

Still stumped? Consider forming a team to brain storm some ideas. Get a work group together of your coworkers during lunch and see if you can come up with some earth-shattering wow moments for citizens and then turn them into a New Year's Resolution! You know what they say, two heads are better than one – and five heads are better than two!

Still stumped? If all else fails and you can't figure out how to wow your customer, consider asking them! You might wow them just by doing that!

Please call the Customer Delight hotline at 728-2020 with your Resolution to be entered into the New Year's Resolution contest. He/she with the most creative delightful wowful resolution will be awarded an extra vacation day! You can also e-mail your special resolution to customerdelight@hampton.gov.

Can You Draw?



Interested in Delighting Internal Customers? If you can draw and have an interest in sharing your work in this publication, please give us a call at 728-2020 or e-mail customerdelight@hampton.gov

The Winners

Next Month It Could Be You!

November Delightful Dollars Winners

Mary Hicks, 311 Call Center

Symphoni Wiggins, 311 Call Center

Florine Gaskins, 311 Call Center

Javon Sneed, 311 Call Center

Liz Tunstall, 311 Call Center



Customer Service Challenge

Glenn Brown, Land Development Service Center

Take-Aways From This Issue

Ideas for Making New Years Resolutions

Sadina Little is Making a Difference

Learn what S-T-A-R stands for.

Why "good enough for government work" is not good enough.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOSS

A New Year of Challenges



As we begin the New Year we will have more challenges in front of us and the economic conditions will probably be the biggest. As we begin to prepare our budget for the new fiscal year that will begin in July, we will be faced with issues of declining revenues. These revenue issues will have an impact on the amount of money we will be able to appropriate for the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. As we work through these budget issues in the coming months, between now and April when I submit the budget to council, we will be communicating to all employees to provide information on the process as it unfolds. In the mist of that, we need to stay focused on our mission of providing services to the public and attention to our principles of customer delight by taking the extra step in the way we conduct our jobs. I appreciate your dedication to the citizens of Hampton in everything you do, and the way you apply your skills and abilities in support of our community.

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Assistant City Manager John Eagle awards the Customer Service Turkey to Maria Dillon, senior library assistant at the Phoebus Branch Library.



Please Recycle

Customer Service Excels at the Library

Look Who's Making a Difference

If you have stopped by any of the Hampton libraries lately you know what good customer service is all about. Sadina Little, circulation supervisor at the main library, is one library staff member who is always delighting her customers.

"Sadina is one of our top performers here at the library," said Robin Carpenter. "She is the epitome of customer delight in everything she does and is a shining representative of what our library staff is all about."

So how should someone seek to delight their customers?

"Patience, a clear and open mind, and more patience," said Sadina. "You have to keep an open mind, be confident in your job and exude that confidence, know what your responsibilities are, and always keep calm."

When asked about a customer service story she mentioned a time when a customer came in and demanded a book refund. Sadina politely but firmly refused the refund because it wasn't owed to the customer. The customer was very angry and caused quite a scene in the library by storming out with the book. The same customer returned a few days later and apologized to the entire staff and even gave Sadina a hug.

"Being confident in your responsibilities, being calm, listening, and being fair will always win over even the toughest customer."

Make Your Resolution to be a Customer Service Star!



As we ring in the New Year, many of us make resolutions about family, exercise, losing weight, saving money and other personal improvements and changes. But have you thought about resolutions that directly impact your performance at work? This is the time of year that we can focus in on our customer service skills and make a personal resolution to improve. Becoming a "customer service star" is a resolution that many of us can achieve. Here are 4 simple tips that can help you on your way to becoming a **Customer Service Star!**

Smile! Smiling is easy and it's FREE! When you greet your customer, have a smile on your face. When answering the phone *SMILE* – your customer will hear it in your voice.

Try to determine your customer's needs quickly. Listening attentively and actively is important to understanding the entire issue. Clarify points if you need to. Try and give the customer more than they asked for – or more than they expected. Try to say YES whenever possible. If the answer is no, then try to give the customer other alternatives or explain why.

Acknowledge the customer. When a customer approaches you or comes into the office and you are busy, on the phone or with another customer, at the very least you should acknowledge them by looking at them with a smile. There is nothing worse than approaching someone and being ignored. A simple nod and smile will tell the customer that you are not ignoring them.

Respond to questions as completely as possible.

Be knowledgeable about your services and policies. Learn about other services within the organization. If you don't know an answer, then know where to find the information.

Great customer service starts with the simple things that mean a lot to your customers. Make your resolution to practice these 4 qualities and you are on your way to becoming a **Customer Service STAR** in the New Year!

Customer Service Challenge

Submitted by Glenn Brown, Land Development Service Center

I took my truck into Wynn Ford for a recall on the Cruise Control system. On the way there I checked my cruise control and it worked just fine. The service department called that afternoon and said my truck was ready for pick up.

A friend dropped me off to pick up my truck. For some reason I didn't check the cruise control after I picked it up. Two weeks later I went on a trip and found out my cruise control didn't work. I made an appointment to take it in. I was called and was told it was going to cost \$136 to repair it. I told them to hold off and I would be right down.

The service writer told me it was a coincidence that the cruise does not work anymore. My answer was you just worked on the cruise control system. They responded by indicating they hadn't worked on the part that was now broken. I responded, "It was not bad when I brought it in for service." I had a talk with the service manager and was told the same thing.

What happened next? Did Glenn yell at the manager and storm out of the facility? Did his problem get resolved? Find out online by visiting <http://cityweb/cd>.

Submit your own story by January 16 and you will be placed in a drawing to win 8 hours of vacation.

Submit your story by e-mail to customerdelight@hampton.gov or by calling 728-2020.

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Please Recycle

You Better Believe We're 'Good Enough for Government Work!'

We've all heard the expression, "Good enough for government work." It calls to mind words like "average," "second rate," and a "who cares" attitude. It's an unfair stereotype that completely misses the true spirit and higher purpose of our profession.

Government service may be seen as a higher calling. Through our work, we have the power to better the lives of our citizens and our community. We all need to know that what we do matters, that we make a difference.

City of Hampton employees like Wynn (Doc) Smith in Public Works-Drainage know this. By knowing his "Higher Purpose," he can see how important he is to the property and lives of Hampton citizens.

Take some time to think about the higher purpose of your job. When you see the connection between your work and a higher purpose, you may find a sense of greater fulfillment and satisfaction. Knowing your higher purpose may energize you to get up, get to work, and aim every day for customer delight. And so the next time someone sneers, "Good enough for government work," you can say, "You bet I am! Let me tell you about the difference I make..."

What is YOUR Higher Purpose?

I used to think all I did for the City was clean nasty ditches and nobody cared. Then I realized ... My real job is to keep Hampton from flooding during heavy



rains and hurricanes and to protect our citizen's lives and property. Wynn (Doc) Smith Public Works - Drainage Watch for more "Higher Purpose" features on your fellow employees in future editions. And send your Higher Purpose to customerdelight@hampton.gov and you will be put in a drawing for a free vacation day!

THE WOW FACTOR

Comments from our Customers



"I've always been pleased with the service and with the privilege of living in Hampton. I think that sometimes we fail to express that, so I am happy to be able to express that at this time.

Thank you."