



CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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August 2009

Heating Up Customer Service

Sabrina Strykowski is Making a Difference

By Rebecca Bolte

It doesn't get much hotter than August in Hampton. But in some city departments it's always about the heat ... and the fire.

"It's about giving fire the respect it deserves," says Fire Safety Program



Coordinator Sabrina Strykowski. And her take on customer service is all about respect too.

As a fire safety educator, Sabrina interacts with every age group in the community from kids to seniors and she loves every minute of it. She

stresses that everyone needs to receive the message in their own way and her job is to deliver and make it stick. It's about seeing the message click in their minds – making the message make sense and watching it hit home.

"Life is valuable," exclaims Sabrina. "We can replace material things but we can't replace a person and that message is important. If just one or two people hear what I have to say that could be a life saved."

And isn't that the ultimate in customer delight; saving lives?

Sabrina solves the mystery of customer service with a beaming smile and one simple rule ... the golden rule.

"Treat others how you would like to be treated yourself."



And what keeps her spark for customer service burning bright?

"I know I'm making a difference when I see people in the grocery store or Chick-fil-a smile and repeat one of my fire safety messages back to me. I know I'm being heard and I know I could have saved a life."



Nominate a Team for the Customer Service Cup!

The second annual Customer Service Cup will be awarded during our celebration of Customer Service Week. This award is presented to the team who has demonstrated a commitment to provide exceptional service to our customers, exceed citizen expectations, provide innovative solutions, and realize our vision to become a leader in public service.

To nominate a team, please send your nomination to the city manager in writing (via e-mail or sealed hardcopy to City Hall) to include a list of the names of the team members, the team name, division, department and/or section, and a one to two page description of why this team is deserving of the Customer Service Cup.

Nominations may be submitted by anyone, may be anonymous, and teams may self nominate. All nominations are due no later than September 15, 2009 at close of business. For more information visit <http://cityweb/cd>.

Mark your calendars...



for this year's Employee Fest on **Sunday, October 11** at Sandy Bottom. Interested in planning the fun? Call 727-6407 to volunteer. Stay tuned for more details!

Ask Dee



Hello Everyone! My name is Dee Light and I'm here to help you with your customer service challenges. I've been working in the customer service field for over 10 years and I have come across some pretty tough situations! My hope is that I can help you with your customer service challenges and provide you with some useful tips and answers to your questions. You can send me your questions and comments at customerdelight@hampton.gov and each month the newsletter team will pick one or two to publish in the newsletter ... here's our first one.

Dear Dee -

All my neighbors and friends know that I work for the City. They often ask me about a problem that is not my responsibility or complain about something a department has done or not done. How do I handle these comments?

Bob J., Looking for Help

Dear Bob,

I think many of us come across that very same problem on more than one occasion! And as city employees, it is our responsibility to project a positive image at all times - even off duty.

You could educate your neighbor or friend about the 311 Customer Call Center and how they can report a problem or voice a concern anytime by calling or emailing 3-1-1 themselves. That would be pretty good customer service...but what about GREAT customer service?

You can take responsibility and get some basic information about the problem or concern, the persons name and phone number and then follow through with finding out about the situation or report the problem. If you are not sure who is responsible, you can contact the 311 Customer Call Center and they will help you. After you make the report or investigate the issue, be sure you let your neighbor know what you did. This option is getting closer to **GREAT** customer service!

If your neighbor is complaining about a department or another city employee, you should never place blame or talk in a negative light about other departments or employees. Residents see all of us as 'the city' and we have a responsibility to project a positive image whenever possible. Sometimes you just need to apologize for the situation and help resolve the problem instead of laying blame.

Remember at all times, on or off duty, you represent the City. Keep striving at providing great customer service by projecting a positive image we all can be proud of!



Please Recycle

Routine Tasks Aren't Always Routine

Have you ever gone to see a friend who lives in a city that you've never been to? Imagine getting lost somewhere in that city and calling your friend only to have him tell you that, "you just need to look for the gas station where Lawrence always has his car washed and then turn right there' before he hangs up. Suddenly you notice that there are several gas stations with car washes by them, and come to think of it, you're not really sure who Lawrence is.

So you call your friend back, still hopelessly lost and getting more frustrated by the minute. This time your friend's girlfriend answers the phone. Sensing your confusion, she asks you what street you just crossed. After hearing your response, she then tells you to travel in the same direction through four more stoplights, finally taking a left onto their street. She also lets you know that she will have the phone with her in case you need to call back.

As we strive to provide exceptional customer service, we should try to be more like the girlfriend and acknowledge that not everyone has the same knowledge base. We need to assist when we sense confusion by repeating their question to verify that we understand what the customer is asking. We also need to confirm that the customer is comfortable with the information that has been given to them and make available any additional assistance they may need.

Now, how many times have you gone to places and asked what may seem to be a simple question, but the reaction of the person you are questioning gives you the impression that they are totally unwilling to help? For example, you have just received the eye roll, the deep sigh, and/or the vacant stare. Obviously, this is not the first time they've been asked this question, and you now feel incompetent and belittled, wishing you had never asked the question.

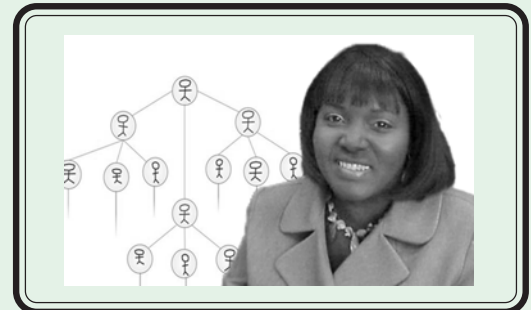
We need to remember that we are here to help people, no matter how redundant the question may seem. A short, bored response will not win over our citizens. If in fact that is their first experience with city staff, our attitude may seem inappropriate and hurtful and we may have turned them off forever. We should exercise tireless patience and politeness regardless of the question or its redundancy.

We simply need to remember that although something may seem routine to us, it can be quite new and overwhelming for the citizen. The goal to strive for is to treat each and every caller like it is their first time calling the city. We should go the extra mile to make sure that they are secure with the information we have given them, whether it's their first call or their 100th.



"In the time your street crew was on-site, they were both professional and hard-working and displayed what I considered an extraordinary attention to detail in executing their responsibilities."

Higher Purpose Spotlight



"I initially thought my higher purpose would be my strong commitment to being a good team worker and assisting our staff, citizens and other departments with IT services. But because our department is named **"Information"** Technology I receive quite a few calls from citizens needing assistance beyond normal IT services.

A few weeks ago I received a call from a young lady who was new to our area, homeless, and pregnant. I took just a few moments and provided her information for our Social Services Department, our local Women's Shelter, and local Churches.

I am reminded once again: **my true higher purpose is to be ready and willing to serve wherever and whenever needed."**

-Pam Alexander
Information Technology

Kindness and Service Pass It On

In the movie, Pay It Forward, a teacher challenges a class of 11 year olds, "What does the world mean to you? ... just a big disappointment? What if you take the things you don't like about this world and flip them upside down? This is your assignment – think of an idea to change the world and put it into action."

One student accepts the challenge. He goes out of his way to help three people, who help three more, who then help three more.

Doesn't it feel great when someone takes the time to help you? And when we do help, like Pam Alexander did, we often don't know the impact it could have. It could be small, or large. Either way, it matters.

In our jobs, we have the chance to pass on kindness and good service to our internal and external customers every day. If we pass it on to just three people, and those three people help three more, then we help 9 people. And if this continues just 20 more times, that one act of kindness turns into...

31,381,059,609 acts of kindness!

That's right. It multiplies out that fast, over thirty-one billion.

How we treat our citizens and each other matters. Let's remember to always pay it forward.

Your depth of
commitment, your
quality of service, the
product of your
devotion -- these are the
things that count in life.
-Scott O'Grady



The Winners

Next Month It Could Be You!

Delightful Dollar Winners

Rodney Kiefert – PW Streets
Frank Christian – PW Streets
Larry Harris – PW Streets
David Jackson – PW Streets
Clarence Pettaway – PW Streets
Patrick Pfeiffer – PW Streets
Thomas Quinn – PW Streets
Rex Reichert – PW Streets
Jimmie Sparkmon – PW Streets
William Stewart – PW Streets
Robert Zasimowich – PW Streets
Billy Fuller – PW Waste Water
Candy Broughman – Finance
Jim Ridley – PW Facilities
James Smith – PW Facilities

Got Bling?



If not, come to Customer Delight Training! All attendees receive a gold Committed to Excellence pin!

Upcoming sessions will be held on September 2 from 9am-noon or 1pm-4pm, and October 7 from 9am-noon or 1pm-4pm, and November 3 from 9am-noon. For more information or to register contact HRFrontDesk@hampton.gov or 727-6407. All Sessions are held in Human Resources on the 4th Floor of City Hall.

Do You Have a Customer Service Challenge?

Not sure how to handle a particular customer situation?
Need advice about providing outstanding customer service?

Ask Dee Light!

Dee is our customer service guru and she is here to help you with your customer service challenges!

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or 728-2020

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