



CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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Customer Service ... It's a Family Matter

Nancy Tippins is Making a Difference

By Rebecca Bolte

Some people just get it. They get people, they love people, and they know how to make people feel appreciated. That's the only way to describe Family Support Worker Nancy Tippins from Healthy Families. With the City for 13 years, Nancy loves what she does and it shows.

Nancy is assigned to pregnant mothers and follows their journey with their child through the fifth year.

"I love being with people during the happiest time of their lives - I have the best job in the world," said Nancy. "Most of the people I deal with are young mothers who just need a little confidence boosting."

Nancy explains that people want to do well and want reassurance from others that they are on the right track.

"You have to find the good in people - even if its something as simple as their hair-do," explains Nancy.

That comment made me chuckle but then she explained that once when she complimented a lady's hair-do the next time she came by for a visit the lady was all cleaned up and looked wonderful.

"People want to live up to compliments - they want to be liked."

So maybe it's as simple as boosting people up and giving them confidence in themselves?

That seems to be Nancy's approach and she proves it's working.



And who wouldn't feel better with a few extra compliments a day? We never know what has happened before a customer comes to us but we do have some control over how they feel when they leave. And isn't that the ultimate compliment to our organization?

Ask Dee

Dear Dee,

I am a new employee (less than 6 months) with the city and my job is to answer the phone and greet visitors to the office. I love people and realize that I am the "face" of the city to those who call and come into the office. The other day I had a call that really threw me for a loop. The caller was very irate as soon as I answered the phone, would not let me get a word in the conversation and cursed me three different times! It really upset me. I eventually got his contact information and promised to have my department head contact him the next day. I felt like I was abused badly by the resident. I am a little scared to talk to my supervisor about it because I am so new and I don't want to be thought of as a trouble maker or someone who can't take it from the public. It has bothered me so much that when the phone rings I hesitate to answer it sometimes. Can you give me some advice on abusive telephone callers and whether I should speak to my supervisor about the incident?

Thanks, Cussed and Confused

Check out Dee Light's response to Cussed and Confused at <http://cityweb/cd>.

The Many Colors of Customer Service

Now that the fall season is just around the corner I want you to imagine the bursts of color we will soon enjoy as Mother Nature puts on her annual fireworks display. The bright reds, brilliant bursts of orange, and the soft golden tones of the season remind me of the many traits of outstanding customer service we talk about in our monthly Customer Delight classes.

That flaming red fall color can represent the trait of listening to your customer, letting them have their say, and asking questions to make sure you know what they really need. That brilliant orange leaf reminds me to deal with a complaint immediately and go the extra mile to satisfy the customer. Of course the bright gold leaf signifies the golden rule and how we want to treat others with respect and put ourselves in their place when solving problems. That soft yellow color stands for the traits of outstanding customer service including following through on every service request to completion and offering unique out-of-the-box solutions to calls for service that are not routine.

Not all of our leaves have shown their dazzling fall colors. What do these bright green leaves symbolize? That's an easy one; green can remind us of the value of our customer and remembering to value both our internal and external customers. Green can also be the color of that good positive attitude which is the cornerstone of providing delightful customer service. Finally, the deep purple found in our fall colors will remind us to know everything we can about our jobs and educate our customers on what we can and cannot do to provide over the top customer service.

Well there you have it; all the colors of fall and all the basic traits of providing outstanding customer service! If you have not taken the Customer Delight training class I invite you to join us as we share the good... and the bad of customer service as we work together to further a culture of service in Hampton. I encourage you to go out on a limb, "leaf" your comfort zone, and immerse yourself in the colors of fall and customer service. You, and your customers, will be glad you did.

Mark your calendars...



for this year's Employee Fest on **Sunday, October 11** at Sandy Bottom. Tickets are now on sale - just \$1 per person. And don't forget to bring your camera for the photo contest.



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>.



Please Recycle

Going Back to School - Going Back To Basics

Summer has finally come to a close...the kids are preparing to return to school and parents are taking a sigh of relief. This is a time for new beginnings, establishing new friendships, and learning new things. What a perfect time for reestablishing our customer service goals and values!

Just as school age children need supplies, we need to supply ourselves with all the tools and skills necessary for providing excellent customer service. We do so through training, research, and most importantly PRACTICE. Just as children learn through repetition, so should we. By providing excellence everyday, this becomes a way of life, a skilled practice, and how we do business. Our customers will always come to expect top notch service because WE practice the golden rules of customer service:

- \$ Put the customer first
- \$ Put yourself in their place
- \$ Remember, the customer's perception IS reality
- \$ Provide the type of service YOU want to receive
- \$ Respect yourself and others



There is a saying that goes "All that you really need to know in life, you learn in kindergarten." So the challenge is to remember all those basic principles that you learned so long ago and apply them to your everyday work life NOW. Practice truly does make perfect so let's all be at the top of our class in customer service!

Teaming Up for Customer Service

Some jobs in the City have more direct contact with customers than others such as the 311 Call Center. Some jobs are naturally more pleasing to customers based on the services they offer such as our Fire Department. And then there are some divisions that have a tough message to share with customers such as Land Development Services.

"By the time they get to us they have already spent years surveying, planning, and designing a project," said Senior Civil Engineer Gayle Hicks. "They have been waiting a long time and can see the finish line and it takes a particular skill set to communicate with the customer at this point in their project."

There are books and books of requirements and codes for each member of the team to adhere to. And every project is different and requires a different team to be assembled from as many as 9 different departments. Customization is the key as every project has different needs. The logistics of gathering all of those folks together is a huge task but also an everyday occurrence for this division.

How do they make it work and please the customer? Well it's not easy but the plans for the American Theatre show it can be done ... and by these amazing folks it was done super fast. And it only takes a look at the Peninsula Town Center to know how many folks came together for that project.

Planning, Zoning, Codes, Central Permits, Public Works, Parks, Economic Development, the Health Department, and the Fire Marshal's Bureau all worked together to expedite the project in a jaw-dropping 22 business days. Why is this so amazing? The review included building design, and materials, colored renderings, lighting, landscaping, construction plans and specifications, infrastructure and site design, plat review, and multiple review meetings with the engineer and architect.

"Telling our story is the only way I could think of to thank the team for all of their hard work," said Gayle Hicks.

So basically it's about customizing and being patient with the external customers, and thanking our internal customers. We're here for the external customers, but it's important to remember we're all in this together and it's nice to know we appreciate each other along the way.

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Higher Purpose Spotlight



"I am a Case Manager with the Division of Social Services, Department of Human Services. I started working here about 1.5 years ago. I thought my only job was to process Medicaid and food stamps for my clients/customers. I work with (the) aged, blind, and disabled. The other day I was speaking with a lady and she stated she was 101 years old and that all of her children have passed away. She thanked me for taking the time on the telephone to talk to her and explain her benefits as well as informing her of other programs within this agency and in the community. She called me her companion. That threw me for a second. Then she told me she called me that because other than her next door neighbor I am the only other person she actually spoke to this week and that young people often don't take time for the elderly. She stated she really appreciated the time I took to talk to her and make her feel special for that moment.

That conversation helped me realize I am not just a Case Manager who processes benefits. **For some individuals I am that person that just might make someone's day, simply by having a conversation with them over the telephone or perhaps conducting a home visit for the elderly who are unable to get out!**

-Phyllis Lane-Palin
Social Services

If We're Lucky, We'll Get Old

Somewhere along the line, we all learned the golden rule: treat others as we would like to be treated. We know it and yet from time to time, we might ask, "How's that workin' for me?"

That's the great thing about customer service. At any moment, we'll get a new opportunity to treat customers as we would like to be treated. Whether we blew it the last time or did ourselves proud like Phyllis Lane-Palin in Social Services, we'll soon get another chance to do it right. It might be an elderly citizen who needs a little extra time from us, or a disgruntled citizen who needs us to keep our cool and not take it personally, or an internal customer from another department who needs our help ASAP. If the tables were turned, how would we want to be treated?

If we're lucky, we'll get old, and we'll be treated with respect. If we're lucky, we'll get great customer service ourselves. But no luck at all is needed for us to give the respect and service we'd like to receive. In that moment, it's our choice. It's our higher purpose.

The Winners

Next Month It Could Be You!

Delightful Dollar Winners

Public Works Facilities:

James Spragan	Lewis Mills
Tyrone Little	Mike McCarthy
Cory Hayward	Ben Lassiter
Duane Wood	James Laffin
Brian Williams	Theodore Hines
Edwin Weisenberger	Paul Hicks
Yvonne Walker	Micah Garner
Stelman Walden	James Fairbanks
James Smith	Richard Blue
Latina Sethman	Terry Barrett
Randy Schaeffer	Milton Tucker
James Ridley	Frankie Price
Alonzo Osby	
George Onks	Parks & Rec:
Mike Newberry	Patrina George
Ronda Moomaw	Police:
	Lt. Roger
	Clements

Got Bling?

If not, come to Customer Delight Training!

All attendees receive a gold Committed to Excellence pin!



Upcoming sessions will be held on November 3 from 1pm-4pm and December 2 from 9am - noon or 1pm - 4pm.. 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.



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