



CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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De-CODEing Customer Service

Montrez White is Making a Difference

By Rebecca Bolte

Days off of work are days off, right? Well it depends on who you are. For Montrez White a day off of work is a chance to connect even more with the citizens in her community.

Montrez is a Codes Compliance Inspector and has the difficult job of relaying not-so-pleasant information to our citizens. But she sees it as a challenge. When homes become rundown and yards are not cut there is usually a reason and she prides herself on being part of



the solution instead of just citing the problem.

“A lot of times the nicest home on the street can become the overgrown, rundown eyesore. But when we look into the situation it’s because an elderly person has become too feeble to care for the property,” explains Montrez. “In these cases we need to find these people assistance to restore their home and yard.”

And Montrez doesn’t just talk the talk, she walks the walk. Montrez partnered with Liz Tunstall (311 Call Center) and her church to help

an elderly gentleman with many code violations get his home and yard back in top form. Because the residents were a little skittish about strangers, Montrez asked to meet the

church group there on a Saturday - her day off - before they began work. And after introductions did she leave? Absolutely not! Montrez stayed and worked until the job was done. And if you know Montrez you know she did it

with a huge infectious grin and a positive attitude.

“I love driving around Hampton and seeing the difference I make in this community.”

And what is her advice for us on dealing with the public?

“You catch more flies with honey. It’s all about making connections with people and showing them you are there to help.”



Ask Dee

Dear Dee,

I’m a pretty up-beat kind of person and really enjoy providing good customer service and interacting with the customers. However, I have a co-worker that is...should I say...less than enthusiastic? He gives me a hard time about being so up-beat and his ho-hum attitude towards our customers is noticeable. How can I get him to stop making snide comments about my customer service and help encourage him to step up to the plate? His attitude is bringing me down.

**Thanks!
Chelsea**

Way to go Chelsea! I’m very encouraged by your willingness to help another co-worker. I know sometimes it is very hard to work with folks that tend to drag an office or team down.

You never mention what kind of “snide comments” your co-worker is making about your customer service. There’s two ways you can handle the comments. You can deal with your co-worker by directly asking him to stop - but do it in a positive and confident manner. He may not even be aware that it bothers you. Or you can speak with your supervisor and ask for guidance. That would also be a good time to bring up the customer service training the City conducts each month. The training would be a good starting place for your co-worker to learn

the importance of providing customer delight. You could suggest that you and your co-worker attend the training together.

Delightful Dollar Winners

Next Month It Could Be You!

- Montrez White, Codes Compliance
- Sandy Schmidt, Economic Development
- Ernestine Gorham, Information Technology
- Tony Johnson, Public Works, Wastewater
- Brandon Jones, Public Works, Wastewater

Check out the rest of Dee Light’s response to Chelsea at <http://cityweb/cd>

Scare Your Customer with Delightful Service

October is here and soon we will see the trees shed their leaves, feel the crisp cool autumn temperatures, and experience the ghosts and goblins of Halloween who will arrive at our front door. As we celebrate the excitement of the fall season let’s not forget to scare our customers with that delightful service Hampton is known for. It is spooky to realize how the simplest of things we do will conjure up a spell “witch” will create the loyalty we want from our citizen customers.

How about making the response to that service request a treat for the customer instead of a trick? Act with cat-like quickness, do the job right the first time, and here’s a creepy thought; follow up with the customer to make sure they are satisfied. A simple phone call will have them howling with delight and create that “wow” experience we all want to deliver.

Here’s another simple idea; in the spirit of the season make no bones about apologizing if we make a mistake. Don’t mask the fact that we are only human and not a bunch of creepy zombies simply going through the motions with no desire to provide delightful service. It is so eerie to see the appreciation and acceptance on the faces of a customer when they realize that we are gladly accountable for our slip up and willing to correct it.



Try these sweets on for size as ways to frighten our customers with delightful service. Smile like a Jack-o-Lantern both in person and over the phone; a smile will go a long way to win over even the most monstrous of customers. Don’t make the customer think that dealing with the city is like visiting a haunted house. Use your skull and be like the wise owl to streamline our processes and make them as customer friendly as a costume party. Finally, when daddy or “mummy” call for service don’t be Frankenstein, Dracula, or a werewolf when it comes to responding, be a Care Bear who truly wants to make outstanding service happen.

Delivering unparalleled customer service has never been, nor will it ever be easy. It takes a scary amount of enthusiasm, effort, and energy but the end result is well worth the journey. Always remember not to play pranks or games with our customers but provide them with the same the type of service you would want to receive yourself. If we do we can scare them with customer delight they will swear by us, not at us!

Don’t Forget to Bring Your Camera to Employee Fest this Saturday!



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Voicemail Etiquette, What's That?

Have you ever needed to get in touch with a co-worker or client, only to have the phone ring indefinitely? Or worse yet, when you do call, you get their voicemail, only to find that their voicemail box is FULL? Well translate this back to our customers and they will probably share the same frustration and will let you know in so many words.

Customer Delight does not only apply to when you are face-to-face with your customer, but even when you're away and can not be reached. Here are some ways to help people who call you feel more comfortable leaving messages when you are away from your desk or out of the office:

- Update your personal greeting regularly.
- In your greeting, let callers know when you will return their call.
- Include information in your greeting about how callers can reach a colleague who can help them if you are not available.
- If you will be away from the office for an extended period, on business or leave, let callers know and tell them how to reach a colleague who is taking your calls.
- Tell your callers how they can easily reach someone in real time if their call is urgent and make sure an operator or receptionist is available to answer the line during normal business hours.

Also, one key point to remember is that we are here to serve our customers, even after business hours, so do your best to insure that your voicemail is not full. When you are available, don't keep your voicemail on; it is very important that our clients know that they can reach a live person and not just a recording all the time. So let's put a smile on our face, re-record those voicemails, and set a shining example that even when we can not answer the call, we're always available.

Customer Service Week - All Year Long!



Customer Service Week is a national event devoted to recognizing the importance of customer service and to honor the folks who serve and support customers with the highest degree of care and professionalism. In 1992 the U.S. Congress proclaimed Customer Service Week a nationally recognized event, celebrated annually during the first full week in October.

Each year, thousands of companies and organizations across the U.S. celebrate Customer Service Week. Leading financial, healthcare, retail, communication, government, not-for-profit and numerous others take time to recognize the importance of customer service. What unites them is their profound commitment to quality customer service. And Hampton so values customer service that we have a "strategic initiative" dedicated to Customer Delight and it is a key performance factor in our evaluations.

Customer Service Week is a time when we all should recognize our front-line employees that are out there making it happen. It's a time when we reflect on our services throughout the year and consider how we are doing – both as a team and individually.

- Do I remember to treat my customers with respect and professionalism?
- Am I friendly and do I help to make a customer feel welcomed in my place of work?
- Do I strive to become knowledgeable in my job so I can help my customers?
- Are our services customer-friendly?
- What can we do better in the coming year?
- What can we offer or change to create a "wow" factor for our customers?

Although Customer Service Week is a time to focus in on our services, we should always bring that same focus each and everyday of the year. When was the last time you looked at the customer delight vision statement or goals? If you have never seen it you can go to www.hampton.gov/community-plan or ask your supervisor to provide a copy of the executive summary.

Customer Service Week this year is October 5 – 9 and will end with the Employee Fest on Sunday October 11th at Sandy Bottom. What are you doing in your office to celebrate? Take time this year to celebrate, offer a sincere thank you to your co-workers, have a little fun and remember that our customers are the reason we are here.

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Higher Purpose Spotlight



When you see the large white Animal Control truck, most people automatically think dog catcher. It's true that we chase down dogs and return them to their owners, but our higher purpose is to educate the public on proper animal care.

-Angela Taylor, Hampton Police Division

Lift the World: Educate Your Customer

It may not be in our job descriptions, but to do our jobs well, we must teach. This is true whether we are serving Hampton citizens, visitors, businesses, or our fellow employees. We teach because it's often not enough to know our jobs. Sometimes our customers need some of the knowledge that's locked up in our head – locked up, that is, until we teach!

For example, we educate our customers when we:

- Explain how and when a service will be delivered
- Explain why a service *can't* be delivered and offer alternative solutions
- Put useful information on our web pages (and keep it current)
- Let customers know how they can help us in meeting their request

Seeing ourselves as teachers may be a major shift in perspective for many of us, but not for Animal Control Officer Angela Taylor. She could see her job as simply responding to complaints and picking up animals. Instead she recognizes the value of a broader, higher vision: teaching the public about the humane and proper care of animals. When we are clear about our higher purpose, we connect to how we matter to the bigger picture and it adds to the meaning in our own lives.

Whatever your position, you have knowledge and a voice that no one else has. Share it. Who in your life helped you to learn something that was important to you? Was it just knowledge that you gained or were there also other important benefits: a relationship that involved meaningful qualities like trust, appreciation, and respect? Teachable moments present themselves all the time. Offer your knowledge in the spirit of helping and see what happens. You may find your higher purpose. And after all, customers won't know unless we tell them!



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