



# CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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December 2008

## 'Tis the Season to Provide Excellent Customer Service

Here we are right smack in the middle of the most joyous (and sometimes most frustrating) season of the year.

Shopping for that perfect gift for someone you care about is one of the greatest pleasures we have in life, yet most of us dread it. Why? A lot of the frustration has to do with unhelpful and inattentive sales clerks, eye rolling and smart-aleck cashiers, and crowds of impatient customers and the stores who are ill-equipped to handle them. Just like Scrooge, businesses have forgotten that providing a great customer experience creates loyalty. These businesses take customers for granted.

Providing delightful customer service is a very personal experience that takes energy, effort, and enthusiasm. It takes a lot of work, and the effort can be draining, but the rewards are great when you know you have delighted a customer and turned them into a life-long "raving fan." The energy generated from "doing it right" is amazing and can charge your batteries for days! And a lot of times it only requires that you live by one basic rule of life. Know what it is?

It's simply the Golden Rule of treating others as you would like to be treated or more plainly; mutual respect. Respect the customer at the front counter asking tons of questions you have answered a million times before. Respect your coworkers and recognize that we all have strengths and weaknesses. Respect our customers' property as we work in the back ditch, collect garbage at their home, or clear that sewer stoppage. Respect the caller on the

line who is ranting and raving about how poorly services are provided while reminding you that they pay your salary. But most importantly, respect yourself and realize that you are valuable to this organization and be proud of that fact. You were hired or promoted to the job you hold because you are qualified to do it. Self respect will enable you to offer delightful service.

During this busy holiday season, when we are all running around shopping, overeating, sitting in traffic, waiting in long lines, and stressing out in the process, remember these additional tips related to the Golden Rule.

- Be courteous. Getting mad is not going to make the line shorter or the commute any faster.
- Be polite. Use those words your mom taught you like please, thank you, and your welcome. These are simple words that convey tremendous respect to each other and our customers.
- Be honest and trustworthy. If that bond of trust is broken it will be difficult to reestablish that connection.

- Be someone your customers can count on as the "go to" person. It may cause you to do more than your share of the work but the rewards in satisfaction and job security are worth it.

Your challenge this holiday season is to look for and practice the Golden Rule in your customer service transactions and in general. Put that shopping cart back in the cart corral, be patient as you wait in that line to be ignored, go the extra mile to help a customer even though it is not "your job." Practice respecting all other human beings, and simply follow the Golden Rule. Infect others with your holiday spirit, and make your spot in the world a better place for you and your customer.

### Congratulations!



Chris Gallagher

2008 Employee Fest Photo Contest Winner!

This beautiful serene photo truly captured this joyous event. Thanks to ALL who submitted their photos as well as to those who voted. Look for more fun events coming soon!

## The Winners

*Next Month It Could Be You!*

**October Delightful Dollars Winners**

Annette Knox, PW Solid Waste  
Wanda Johnson, PW Solid Waste

**Turkey Challenge**

Maria Dillon, Library

**Customer Service Challenge**

Lisa Santiful,  
Codes Compliance




### Take-Aways From This Issue

Developing Your Holiday Attitude

James Freas is Making a Difference

Dealing with Scrooges

Customer Service Challenge Could Give You a Free Vacation Day



Interested in Delighting Some Internal Customers? If you are an artist 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](mailto:customerdelight@hampton.gov)

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOSS

### A Season of Giving



*As you know we received a 93% approval rating from our customers. This is no small accomplishment. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their efforts and congratulate you all for the superb rating. In the business of municipal government, this is an outstanding achievement.*

*I would also like to take this time to*

*express my best wishes to you and your family for a very enjoyable holiday season.*



"To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity."

-Douglas Adams



Please Recycle

# The Ultimate in Customer Delight!

## Look Who's Making a Difference

In this holiday season when folks are a little bit nicer, friends are a little bit closer and we take the time to enjoy our families a little bit more, it's the perfect time of year to celebrate our environment where our holiday celebrations take place.

Treating the earth with respect is the ultimate in customer delight for everyone. Our environment is something we often take for granted, but without a healthy one there wouldn't be much to be delighted about.

James Freas's job is about the ultimate in "human delight" for each and every one of us. As a senior city planner for Hampton, James is also tasked with planning Hampton's Go Green initiative which takes the environment into account in everything we do in Hampton. Hampton has agreed to move forward with the adoption of public policy aimed at improving our community's quality of life through enhanced environmental and community design initiatives. Treating the environment better leads to better health, more operational efficiency, and an overall better quality of life.

James first began convening city staff in the fall of 2007 to talk about what would become the Go Green initiative for Hampton. Working with staff from departments throughout the city, an initial report was produced that identified the City's resources for moving forward. The findings were presented to a number of boards and commissions and ultimately to City Council who endorsed the initiative last spring.

James's role is convener and organizer. He gathers information, people, and ideas together and presents them to the City's leadership while working hard to shape the initiative into something that has a meaningful impact on the City and its environment.

"Going green is about innovation, thinking creatively about new ways of doing things that reduce our environmental impacts and make us a more efficient, attractive, and healthier City," said James. "I think one of the most significant results of the summit has been a strong sense from our community leaders that this issue is important and people are very interested in seeing the City make progress on it."

"Since beginning work on the green initiative I have found that there is a lot of support in the community – people seek me out and want to hear more about what we are doing and how they can get involved."

So when you are wrapping your packages, feasting with your family, or exchanging gifts with a friend, remember to be a little nicer to the earth this holiday season and seek the ultimate in customer delight for the many generations to come.

## Customer Service Challenge

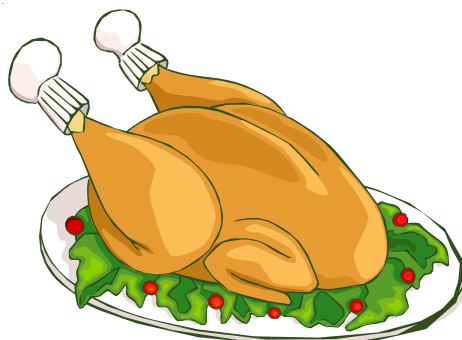
Submitted by Lisa Santiful, Codes Compliance

I recently made a trip to Boston Market and placed an order for a turkey dinner. I received my dinner and proceeded to leave the restaurant. I was ordering dinner for that night because I had to work in the evening. Well once I got to my destination I did not open the bag immediately.

After a couple of hours I opened the bag and pulled out my dinner and the cornbread was missing out of the meal. I looked at my receipt and cornbread was listed on the receipt along with everything that should have been included in the meal. I know it didn't seem like a big deal to most but it was kind of the principal of the whole thing. When you place an order for something you expect to get everything that you pay for. Well I called the store and asked to speak to a manager, Calvin answered the phone and he just so happened to be the manager.

I explained the situation to him very calmly and you could hear in his voice the actual concern. He told me that he wanted me to get my bread and asked when would I be able to come back to the store, I told him once I got off I would come back since I wasn't far.

When I got to the store and asked for Calvin he was very pleasant and apologetic. He said he wanted me to be happy and asked me if I wanted a drink or a dessert and I just said it didn't matter. He then looked at my receipt and said "You know what, I'm just going to fix you another meal." Imagine my surprise. He said he wanted me to be happy and to make sure that I come back, so I left that store with another meal, a bag of cornbread, and a dessert. Now that's what I call wonderful customer service and I will be back!



Submit your own story by December 17 and you will be placed in a drawing to win 8 hours of vacation.

Submit your story by e-mail to [customerdelight@hampton.gov](mailto:customerdelight@hampton.gov) or by calling 728-2020.

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Please Recycle

## Tis the Season Bah-Humbug!

"I would like to purchase a yard sale permit" Bah-Humbug!

"Hello, this is Susie Q – how may I help you today?" Bah-Humbug!



"Good Morning Jim." Bah-Humbug! Jingle Bells, brightly wrapped gifts, fat-men in red suits, grumpy Aunt Ellen and all that fattening food can make any sane person cry out, "BAH-HUMBUG!"

You know them don't you? Those customers that make Scrooge look like a poster child for the holiday season. Or how about a Scrooge of a co-worker that chills the office the moment he/she walks in?

Tis the Season for holiday stress that can really challenge your customer service skills. With customers in a hurry, co-workers concerned about spending during the holidays and family obligations...you may be tempted to say Bah-Humbug yourself. But don't give in to the temptation! This is your chance to shine like a bright ornament and exemplify our customer delight principles. Remember to take some time to relax and enjoy the holiday season. When you begin feeling like a Scrooge yourself, try one of these tips:

1. Sip hot chocolate and watch Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer.
2. Buy a silly nutcracker and crack open some walnuts.
3. Take a walk to look at holiday yard decorations and pretend you are the "holiday light police."
4. Wear bells on your shoes to work and then dance around the office singing Jingle Bells.
5. Sign all your holiday cards with "Guess Who?". (Do this for co-workers)

Take the time to remember what the season is all about and let your customer service skills soften even the toughest Scrooge this holiday season!

## THE WOW FACTOR

Comments from our Customers



"Everytime I call 311 in Hampton the operators are so professional and helpful. I know whatever my problem is they will have the answer or point me in the right direction!"