

Daily Links and Service Principles

From Executive Director Donna Morris

"The entire team at Miramax who did a brilliant, brilliant job selling it. Thank you to all of them." Scott Ruden, producer

"There are too many people to thank for this." Joel Coen, director

"So many people to thank." Daniel Day-Lewis, actor

Oscar™ "thank you" speeches have become a cliché, and as is the case with most clichés, that's because there's truth at work. It does take a lot of people working together to make a movie. Each contributes in his/her own way and each has a legitimate claim to whatever success the film achieves, and if every member of the team doesn't deliver on service to their customers — both internal and external customers — the entire production hits the side of the mountain.

Sure, an emphasis on a culture of good service is important to an operation with a multi-million dollar budget—and don't forget that that's what MLS is—but it's also important on a smaller, personal level as well.

What is the MLS Service Culture? It's our vision statement to be an "inviting and innovative link to the world". At MLS, good service isn't the extra step or the first step.

It's the whole journey. At MLS, good service is considered a natural way of life.

In an attempt to measure our customer's opinions of our System, we are currently conducting telephone and online opinion polls. We will use the results of these polls as our baseline to which we will compare the results of other polls conducted throughout our Five-Year Strategic Plan. We will measure our success through increases in positive responses of the public in the survey. To do this, we all have to work on our individual responsibility in achieving the vision and the goals.

The concept of a Service Culture requires a unifying approach to defining expectations of service. To help establish that "expectation of service," every MLS team—every office, department, public service shift, etc.—will gather for a brief meeting called the "Daily Link". During this meeting, we will explore a different service principle for demonstrating good customer service. Leadership of the Daily Link will rotate between all members of each team. The entirety of MLS will focus on the same principle and then each employee is expected to practice that principle for the day.

The Daily Link is designed to create a unified focus by having each team review the same principle on the same day. Beginning Monday, March 3, 2008, each location and shift will participate in the Daily Link.

The entire organization will be reviewing the



same principle each day on a 20 day cycle.

The information about the principles and activities for the Daily Link will be on the Intranet very soon. Or, ask your supervisor for the information s/he discussed at the most recent X-Change meeting.

Each Department Head is accountable for ensuring that his/her location holds the Daily Link.

Every day, a different member of the team will lead the review of the principle of the day.

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Because team gathering and interaction is essential, it is crucial that this meeting take place in person and as verbal communication.

This time must include reading verbatim the principle of the day and a motivational comment(s) to encourage others to practice that principle for the day. During this time, create awareness among the staff of events, happenings, meetings, etc. While the principles must remain consistent throughout our organization, add your creativity in how you present the principle when it is your turn to conduct the Daily Link.

This entire process will take no more than 15 minutes and may be as short as 5 minutes.

If we're good providing the basic customer service principles, customers will tolerate almost anything else. Mess up on the principles and nothing else matters. Customers won't return. Period.

By practicing a principle each day, staff will improve their ability to make a difference. Each day that you practice the principles, actively participate in the daily link meeting, and share stories that help others learn. By practicing these every day, you will improve your customer service and enable MLS to come closer to achieving its vision and mission.

Public libraries are public service institutions. Learn and practice the principles. Know them – Show them—Live them!

If you have a question for Donna, send it to ShelfLife (dbentin@metrolibrary.org) and we will pass it on to her for an answer in the April issue.

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