

WEEK ONE: SHOW OUR COMMITMENT MAY 23, 2011 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

This week our focus is on the Service Principle “Show Our Commitment”

We are all members of a team and we need to make sure that we are all working together towards the common goal of providing excellent customer service.



1. I Proudly Represent MLS I am an ambassador for the MLS by actively: -Displaying a positive attitude -Talking enthusiastically about my Library System and its services -Contributing to an inviting environment	2. I Show Respect for Others I treat everyone with respect by: -Being sincere & Kind -Being considerate of individual differences -Acknowledging contributions -Practice acceptance of everyone	3. I Practice Teamwork I am a team player working with my MLS teams to achieve: -An inviting, innovative link to the world -The goals of our Strategic Plan -Customer satisfaction -Personal accountability	4. I Practice Safe Work Habits I show I care about my own and others' safety by: -Working safely -Responding appropriately in an emergency -Reporting any unsafe condition	5. I Show Respect for the Library and Community I... -Use resources wisely -Practice preventive maintenance -Report problems and/or defects immediately -am aware of resources for diverse cultural interests
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

If we are going to be successful, we can no longer look at our organization as departments, divisions or branches. We must look at the bigger picture and resolve to work together in ways we may never have before. Teamwork doesn't happen by accident. It requires commitment and effort, a willingness to accept the uniqueness of others and an appreciation of diversity. We build teams in our organization the same way we build relationships with our friends and coworkers. High-functioning teams establish us as reliable, internally and externally. We then project this image to our customers, vendors, competitors and communities.

Something to think about...

Focus on the positive aspects in customer service

There are many situations where the customer cannot have what they want. The product or service may not exist. It may not be possible in the time frame the customer wants. There may be an organizational policy or rule that says no.

In these situations, the response of the customer service person should be helpful, not negative. A simple "no" is not good enough. Customer service is about meeting needs. Sometimes, those needs can be met in different ways to what the customer was expecting.

One of the methods used by Bob Ansett to build the Budget car rental business was his **can do** philosophy. This approach meant that every transaction should be approached with a **can do** response. The important issue is the positive attitude and the interaction with the customer.

What happens if someone says "no" to us. We react negatively. In a customer service situation where we want or expect something, we may even become upset or angry.

If the "no" is followed or preceded by "we can do this", it can significantly reduce the negative impact. Customer service is about meeting needs and sometimes needs are different to wants.

A customer who has run out of widgets walks into a store wanting to buy 100. If the store only has 25, this customer 'want' cannot be met. If the store is expecting a delivery of 300 next week, and the customer only uses 10 widgets a week, the customer 'need' can be met. The customer walks out with 25 widgets today and arrangements are made for the 75 to be picked up next week.

A **can do** customer service person will find a solution that meets the customer needs. A 'no' person will let the customer walk out to try another store.

The **can do** approach is about:

- Being positive
- Separating needs from wants
- Looking for what can be achieved for the customer

Finding complete solutions where possible or partial solutions if that is all that can be done

Can do customer service people:

- Explain what the policy/regulation/law allows the customer to do.
- Think 'outside the square' - sometimes you have to be innovative and flexible.

Use 'work arounds' to get the job done.

Even if the need cannot be met, a **can do** person will leave a far more positive impression on the customer.

Conclusion

"We can't do that" is not good enough. Customer service people should say "I'm sorry, that is not possible, but what we can do is". Positive and helpful customer service requires a positive "we will help you if we can" attitude, even if the help is different to what the customer was expecting or hoping for. Customer service requires constant attention on the positives, not the negatives.

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Customer relationship management involves both external and internal customers. A positive experience by both customer groups is crucial to our success. Whether external or internal, all customers look for a sense of respect, service and safety all the time. All of our contacts with customers need to involve these guiding principles, even when it is difficult to do. Let's take a closer look at what these concepts mean:

- Respect involves treating others with courtesy and preserving their dignity.
- Service involves meeting commitments and maintaining professionalism.
- Safety involves preventing and responding to danger, risk or injury.

DISCUSSION STARTER:

CUSTOMER GREETINGS

The following statements have all been heard in recent weeks:

"I will do that for you sweetie." (Young female counter person)

"No worries love." (Male counter person)

"Sure thing honey. Anything else?" (Male counter person)

Each time I have been surprised by the casualness of the language.

Customer service staff these days are encouraged to avoid standard phrases that are said without meaning. The classic phrase that is overused and often insincere is: "Have a nice day!".

On the other hand, conversations should not be too casual. Customers expect friendly, courteous staff that show some respect.

Although many believe that 'political correctness' has gone too far, the fact that I was surprised by the remarks made above is perhaps a reminder that customer service staff need to take care. I was not offended, just surprised. The remarks took my focus off the transaction.

Staff should use language that is friendly but courteous. It is better to be slightly formal rather than too friendly. Staff should attempt to establish rapport without crossing the 'too friendly' line.

How is your language with customers? Is it appropriate?

Did You Know?

The obligations to ensure the **safety** of staff, **customers** and visitors apply in all work places and not just those which appear to be dangerous. All employers and all staff must take all practicable steps to identify all hazards in the workplace. Once identified then the hazards should be eliminated if possible. If they cannot be eliminated then they need to be minimized or isolated.

Have a quick walk around your premises today and note all hazards that could result in injury. You may be surprised at the number of hazards there are in every work place, no matter how seemingly risk free, such as overloaded shelves or cleaning chemicals in the staff lounge. Each has the potential for harm and should be identified, eliminated, minimized or isolated.

Make sure you take the **safety** of **customers**, visitors and staff seriously and ensure your MLS Safety Manual is current and up to standard.