

# SERVICE PRINCIPLES

## METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

### WEEK ONE: SHOW OUR COMMITMENT APRIL 28, 2014

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

Putting the interests of others first comes across in our actions and attitudes. When we do this, we achieve our goal of ensuring our customers and co-workers know that we care.



<p><b>1. I Proudly Represent MLS</b></p> <p>I am an ambassador for the MLS by actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Displaying a positive attitude</li> <li>-Talking enthusiastically about my Library System and its services</li> <li>-Contributing to an inviting environment</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. I Show Respect for Others</b></p> <p>I treat everyone with respect by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being sincere &amp; Kind</li> <li>-Being considerate of individual differences</li> <li>-Acknowledging contributions</li> <li>-Practice acceptance of everyone</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. I Practice Teamwork</b></p> <p>I am a team player working with my MLS teams to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An inviting, innovative link to the world</li> <li>-The goals of our Strategic Plan</li> <li>-Customer satisfaction</li> <li>-Personal accountability</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. I Practice Safe Work Habits</b></p> <p>I show I care about my own and others' safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Working safely</li> <li>-Responding appropriately in an emergency</li> <li>-Reporting any unsafe condition</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. I Show Respect for the Library and Community</b></p> <p>I...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use resources wisely</li> <li>-Practice preventive maintenance</li> <li>-Report problems and/or defects immediately</li> <li>-am aware of resources for diverse cultural interests</li> </ul>
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### DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Are you a good listener? It takes practice to be a good listener. Here's a little exercise we used all the time in grad school counseling courses. Sit down with an acquaintance or colleague - someone you don't know too well. Ask him/her 5 questions (questions more complex than “what's your favorite color” or “do you like sushi,” please!) Don't take notes - just listen to what he/she says. After you've listened to all 5 responses, repeat back what you heard. Ask him/her if you got it right. Did you really understand what you were hearing? Did you get it all? Did you pick up the nuances? If so, bravo! If not...do some more practicing. We all need to be better listeners so go out and practice.

*Something to think about...*

## R-E-S-P-E-C-T . . .

### Aretha Knew What She Was Talking About

By Nektaria Hamister

Everybody jabbars about their excellent customer service. Think, however, of all the bad experiences you have had during the past few months. They are probably too many to count. Serving customers with courtesy and dedication is not a difficult concept. So why do so few people seem to get it? It's a lack of respect—for themselves, their companies, and their customers. This lack of respect leads to laziness, poor language, an inability to see customer problems as opportunities, and a pointless concern with being right.

**Laziness.** We all know what it's like to be served by someone who sees customers as an annoying interruption to a coffee break or an unwanted illustration of the fact that they do not really know how to do their jobs. Lazy people and lazy organizations go through the motions of work, but actually spend more time and energy complaining about it than doing it. They do not understand that they would be much happier if they took pride in their work and made an effort to be productive. They lack respect for themselves.

**Poor language.** When was the last time you brought a legitimate complaint or issue to the attention of a customer service person, only to be told that your issue was not very important? Here's an example of one that occurred to me. A pet sitter that had cared for my dog while I was away for the weekend refused to return my key, even though she had been paid in full. I called up the people who had referred her. They started to worry, suspected something un-kosher, and advised me to change the locks as soon as possible.

I went straight to my apartment complex office. There was one staff member present (let's call her Paula) was with a new customer. I told her that I had an urgent issue; she told me to come back later. I excused myself to the new customer and explained my predicament. The first thing that Paula said was that my problem was not a "maintenance emergency."

Aside: Paula loves this phrase. She used it when my shower plug (in a one-shower apartment) broke in the shut position during 110 degree weather, leaving me with an impossible bathing situation. That was on a Wednesday. She thought that classifying my problem as a "non-maintenance emergency" was justification not to fix it until Monday.

Back to the present situation: I started getting angry when I heard Paula's answer, but I knew by then that she simply did not know how to speak. I told her that the problem was serious (and the new customer agreed). I asked when it would be fixed. Tomorrow morning, she replied. That was all I wanted in the first place! Paula, however, did not say this from the beginning because did not respect me as a customer. Speaking properly, however, is not only about respect for the customer. It is also proportionate to one's self-respect.

**Inability to View Customer Problems as Opportunities.** We have seen that magic can happen when we respond positively and respectfully to customer needs, especially emotional needs. Let's continue with the Paula example. Since a person exhibiting suspicious behavior had the key to my apartment, you can guess that I was rather emotional. All Paula needed to do was eliminate that awful phrase "this is not a maintenance emergency" from her repertoire and replace it with. "Oh, that's terrible! The maintenance man has already left for today. If I can take care of it by tomorrow morning, would that be ok?" She would have become my hero *and* have made a positive impression on the new customer. This is about respecting your customer's position and yourself as a problem-solver and service hero.

**Pointless Concern with Being Right.** The customer is not always right. In fact, we all know that the customer is often wrong. But he is still the customer. And, you won't have to worry about who is wrong and who is right if you don't have any customers.

My high school and college employer, a garden shop in Williamsville, NY, gave me a wonderful lesson in this philosophy: one day an older man came to the shop and complained that a plant we sold him had died. This plant was in its original container, which had a size and shape that we did not use. I politely told him that he had made a mistake: the plant had come from somewhere else. The customer became furious and insisted that he had bought it from us. I took the plant to one of the owners and explained the situation. He said told me to replace it and not to mention again that the man had not bought his plant from us. "Why?," I asked. It was from another store. "It doesn't matter where he bought it. If he believes that he bought it here and we don't replace it, he'll tell people about his bad experience." This is about respect for your company and your paycheck—which you won't have if your company turns away all of its customers.

There are times when being right is important. We must be right when dealing with laws, brand standards, company liability, etc. Most customer concerns, however, are not related to such issues.

**RESPECT.** Respect yourself, your customer, your company, and your paycheck. Show that you care at every opportunity. This will make you refreshingly different from bad customer service representatives.

Stop worrying about getting your way because you are right: even if you are right, you can still lose. All customers, right or wrong, can take their business elsewhere.

Show respect when you speak. Word your responses to customers carefully when facing difficult situations. A good answer to a complaint about the way you do things would be: "That's a very good suggestion." Validate your customers' emotions, even though it is best not to validate an unjust complaint: "I understand how you must feel."

Ask positive questions that lead to issue resolution: "What can I do to resolve this for you?" "What works for you?" "What do you think would be a reasonable period of time to get this resolved?" Most people will not give absurd answers. They will appreciate your attention and may even become your most loyal customers . . . all because you showed them, yourself, and your company a small amount of respect.

And when you have a difficult a customer in front of you, just pretend he's Aretha (although you might want to replace "kisses" with "services"):

"Ooo, your kisses  
Sweeter than honey  
And guess what?  
So is my money  
All I want you to do for me  
Is give it to me  
R-E-S-P-E-C-T"

## DISCUSSION STARTERS:

## ***Encouraging Words...***

### **Compassion**

**Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others**

### **Tolerance**

**Realizing that everyone is at varying levels of character development**

### ***A Thought...***

Did you ever stop and think what is the basis of every relationship in no matter what community, whether small or large, starting with the family, the friends, the neighbors and ending with the town or your whole country?

Respect plays an important part in our lives. We have to respect others so that we can be respected.

### **DISCUSSION STARTER:**



Here is a lesson.

I don't care if it is security or groceries. Always show respect – not just to customers – to all people. You have to be helpful, not a hindrance. No matter what you do, you must think of yourself as a solution, not a problem.

## ***Did you Know?***

### **WHAT IS RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE?**

Respect can be defined as consideration for self and of others.

Respect includes consideration for other people's privacy, their physical space and belongings; and respect for different viewpoints, philosophies, physical ability, beliefs and personality.

In order to earn the respect of others, one must first have respect for themselves. One must recognize they are a person worthy of respect. They refrain from making jokes or negative remarks that demean their abilities, skills or other aspects of them. They don't make jokes or negative comments about the ability, skills or other attributes of others. One earns respect by giving respect to ones self and to others.

## ***Staff Recognition***

### ***Our service Principles at Work***

Unfortunately, disrespect for one's co-workers (or subordinates) isn't that uncommon. And it often causes people to leave their jobs. For employers this means losing good people, and then having to hire and train new ones. For co-workers it means having to get used to working with new people, and picking up the slack until new employees can be found. The saddest part of the lack of respect in the workplace is that many people don't realize they are being disrespectful. They aren't trying to hurt someone's feelings. They just aren't trying to not do that.

How can we avoid offending the people we work with? It seems as if it should be blatantly obvious. But unfortunately, it's not to everyone.

Let's take a look now at actions that may offend your co-workers.