

# SERVICE PRINCIPLES

## METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

### WEEK TWO: ACT IN THE MOMENT JULY 28, 2014

#### This week our focus is on the Service Principle “Act In The Moment”

A people-centered culture is exactly what is needed to create a customer caring organization.

When people enjoy their jobs, they are more passionate about what they do, and that shows. People want to do business with a company that has a smile on its face.



<b>6. I Respond Positively When Speaking with Others</b>  <b>I respond positively and show I care by:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Concentrating on the customer</li> <li>-Attentively listening while making eye contact</li> <li>-Responding with sincerity and, when appropriate saying “I’m happy to take care of that for you”</li> <li>-Using the customer’s name if I know it</li> <li>-Ensuring complete satisfaction</li> </ul>	<b>7. I L.E.A.R.N. to wow the Customer</b>  <b>I show I care when presented with a customer issue by:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Owning the problem</li> <li>-I use the L.E.A.R.N. process of listening, empathizing, apologizing, reacting and notifying to resolve, wow and build trust</li> </ul>	<b>8. I know our Library System</b>  <b>I can answer customers’ questions because I know about the Library’s:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Facilities</li> <li>-Materials</li> <li>-Services</li> <li>-Procedures and processes</li> <li>-Monthly events, activities, training classes and/or meetings</li> </ul>	<b>9. I Anticipate Needs</b>  <b>I anticipate our customers’ needs by:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Watching for cues</li> <li>-Listening thoroughly</li> <li>-Acting before being asked</li> </ul>	<b>10. I Act on Knowledge</b>  <b>I ensure the success of the system each day by:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Knowing our regular customers by name</li> <li>-Proactively accommodating our customers’ needs</li> <li>-Keeping myself up to date and knowledgeable about sources of information</li> </ul>
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#### DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Details...details...details... They’re critical to the success of every experience you provide for your Customers. Look at the ‘ordering’ experience, the ‘calling’ experience, the ‘returning’ experience, the ‘browsing’ experience.... You get it. Make a list of ALL the details and ask what you can to make them each a little better. Get the whole team involved. Put yourself in Walt’s shoes and create some magic!

## ***Something to think about...***

### ***Responsiveness: A Key To Effective Customer Service***

A customer's worst nightmare when asking for customer service is that the request for assistance will be met with no response. Just notice the upset in these customer statements:

"I called on Tuesday with a request for information. It's now Friday, and I haven't heard a thing. Is your company closed?"

"But you told me you could have that done for me. I don't care if Bill was scheduled out on vacation during that time, and he's the only one who knows the details."

"But I already sent you that information. Why do I need to send it out again? Did you lose it?"

What do all these customers have in common? A lack of responsiveness from the people they've asked for help -- customer service reps. The number one complaint of customers is a lack of information from vendors.

More than anything else, customers want service reps to be responsive. Responsiveness is the process of taking action quickly to meet the specific needs of customers. It means keeping customers informed about ongoing activity to meet their requests and giving them a sense that fulfilling their requests is important. It often doesn't even matter whether or not their request is granted completely. Customers can be quite tolerant as long as:

- *They believe the customer service reps are doing the best they can to help.*

THEY HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF THEIR REQUEST.

#### STAGES OF RESPONSIVENESS

OK, so you agree it's important to be responsive to your customers. How are you going to do it? There are five actions you must take to ensure that you are being responsive. They are:

1. *Understand exactly what each customer needs from you right now.*
2. *Acknowledge the customer's need.*
3. *Think like a consultant.*
4. *Take action.*
5. *Communicate regularly with the customer.*

#### **1. Understand exactly what each customer needs from you right now**

Before you can be responsive, you have to understand exactly what you are being responsive to. Some customers have needs that are simple and straightforward:

"Can you send me an upgrade to my software?"

Other customers have needs that are more complex; some aren't capable of giving you all the information you need to be responsive to their needs because they don't understand the complexity of their own request:

"What's the best way to get to Italy?"

On the surface, this request appears simple, but before you can suggest travel arrangements, you probably need to know what this customer means by the word "best."

When simple requests are anything but, it's your job to figure out exactly what the customer requires before you take any action. This may mean that you have to ask the customer questions to uncover some of the missing details, or that you have to describe in detail all of the factors that impact that request.

## **2. Acknowledge the customer's needs**

Once you understand all of what a customer needs, you need to verify your understanding before you continue to work on a solution. That way, you assure customers you have heard exactly what they were asking for. By acknowledging each customer's needs, you also are giving each one of those individuals a chance to fill in any missing information, which may, in the end, impact your ability to help.

## **3. Think like a consultant**

Now, it's time to build a plan of action. What are all the steps you have to go through to respond to the request? You'll be more effective in helping customers if you think like a consultant. What is a consultant? This is a person who has developed an area of expertise and can apply that expertise to solving problems. There are several characteristics of good consultants:

- *They think flexibly. There might be several different solutions to a request, or several different ways to respond. Consultants think of all the possible options and pick the one that will work best for the situation. Note that being flexible doesn't necessarily mean giving customers exactly what they ask for; rather, it is picking the most appropriate option.*
- *They think long term as well as short term. Sometimes, it's possible to fix a problem today that might lead to a bigger one at a later time. A simple example would be making a repair to a house. Let's say, a spot appears on the kitchen wall. The easy way would be to cover the spot with paint or wallpaper. After all, the spot would be gone. But that ignores that something caused the spot to be there in the first place. Better to remove the cause of the spot first, and then cover it over. Consultants avoid quick solutions that can later cause problems.*
- *They bring in other resources as needed. Consultants also understand the extent of their expertise. They turn to others when they've exceeded their own limits.*

## **4. Take action**

Once you've selected a course of action to respond to the request, you're ready to take action. Responsiveness through this stage calls for being thorough in completing each step and also in being honest with the customer. Tell customers how long it will really take to resolve the question; tell them if you cannot do everything that they are requesting. You have to set customer expectations that are realistic, or you will appear to be less than responsive.

## **5. Communicate regularly with the customer**

If it's going to take time to respond to the request, or if you have to bring in others with special expertise, it's your job to make sure that you communicate progress to the customer. Customers appreciate status reports, even if there is nothing to report. That, by itself, is information. Make it a point to communicate with the customer frequently until the question is resolved

## DISCUSSION STARTERS:

### 5 ‘Positivity Pointers’ To Help Enhance Your Customer Experience

*Discuss one of these pointers each day this week...*

The key to customer loyalty? Creating *consistently positive experiences* time and time again. That involves knowing your customer's expectations, delivering service basics *brilliantly*, and maintaining an upbeat, can-do positive attitude throughout every interaction and at each touch point. Here are 5 ‘positivity pointers’ to keep in mind so you can reap the rewards of creating more awesome experiences for your customers, co-workers and yourself:

#### **1. Positive thinking is a habit.**

Some people are born with a positive outlook; others have to work hard at shifting their focus away from depressing media stories and from the things that are going wrong in their own lives. The great news for those born ‘attitude-challenged’ is: You *can* prevent yourself from being tossed about by the winds of worry and negativity by making positive thinking one of your good habits – it's just like exercise and eating right!

#### **2. Positive thinking is a choice.**

As with the creation of any new habits, the first step is to *choose* to do it, to *commit to and intend to be positive*. At first, learning what keeps you in a positive state of mind and remembering to make time to use those tools can be challenging – especially when you're focused on professional or personal goals that require a lot of your time and energy.

Sometimes it's actually easier to stay stuck in a negative place than to break the cycle, brush yourself off, take a breather and consciously change your state of mind. That's because we all love our comfort zones, even if they're bad for us!

Think back to past commitments you have made and kept to yourself. Think about what motivated you and sustained you as you reached your goals. Can you apply some of your strategies and techniques to becoming a positive thinker? Then think about what you need to do to remind yourself to do frequent attitude checks and, if necessary, adjustments.

Would Post-it® notes help? A timer that goes off every half hour? A daily phone call from a supportive buddy? The extensive pay-offs of positive thinking (which you're about to get a peek at) are worth these efforts.

### **3. A Positive Attitude makes change easier to take.**

Change happens all the time in every aspect of life – and it's happening especially fast in today's business world. If we don't keep up, we fall behind – and no business today has that luxury.

Some changes feel welcome and comfortable; others elicit resistance as they push us out of our comfort zones. The fact is, retaining a positive attitude about change makes it much easier to flow into. Example: Think back to when the Internet began to catch on as a 'must have' form of communication. Those who embraced the technology, or who were at least positive about it, had a much easier time adjusting than those who resisted. They unlearned their old habits and learned new ones more quickly, and benefited from the changes earlier than later.

To stay positive during times of change, remind yourself of past changes in your life that pushed you out of your comfort zone and into an even better situation than you'd imagined. Remain open to the idea that change can continue to create all-new possibilities and opportunities. Think about how your self-esteem and self-confidence have grown every time you've risen to whatever changes a challenging situation called for. Just thinking back to those moments can make you feel *great!*

### **4. Positive thinking is chock-full of benefits!**

Optimistic people – people who believe the world is inherently 'good' - are healthier than pessimists. Let's count the ways:

- They have higher energy levels, stronger immune systems and, no surprise, tend to live longer.
- Their optimistic viewpoint stimulates fresh and creative thinking - it gives the brain the go ahead to stretch and to play with different solutions and options.
- They may feel the fear of change or of trying something new, but they have more energy to act despite the fear. You might say they have more courage!
- Their faith in themselves enables them to more quickly learn from their mistakes.
- They interpret problems as challenges - not obstacles. That means they experience less distress and more easily access the emotional boost they need to get through tough times.

Clearly, we can alter and enhance our lives by altering our attitudes. Positive or negative, it's a choice. Choose the rose-colored glasses, the ones that brighten up the view!

### **5. No one likes you when you're grumpy.**

Sure the people who love you still love you even when you go through a grumpy spell. But that doesn't mean anyone likes you while you're in a foul state of mind. Customers don't like a grump, co-workers don't like a grump, bosses don't like a grump...nobody likes a grump!

Positive, life-affirming, optimistic people attract goodness to their lives. They attract positive people and circumstances, and they achieve great results. And why wouldn't they? They're a joy to interact with! Whether they're waiting on your table, checking you in at the hotel, repairing your computer, writing you a check for your new mortgage, selling you a new network or solving a billing problem at your credit card company, they can make a genuine difference in the quality of your life in that moment if they treat you with a positive, up-beat and can-do attitude. And *you* can do the same for *your* customers. It's so much easier to keep customers and create profits when you give your attitude some altitude!

## DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Creating a more POSITIVE customer experience is the goal. Language plays an important, even if subtle part of the whole impression.

Customers never want to hear the word “No.” And then top it off with that other word customers never want to hear, “Problem.”

Let’s look at all the nice things one can say to a customer in place of those two negative words. “It’s my pleasure.” “Absolutely.” “I’d love to help.” “You’re welcome.” “Certainly.” “Great, I’ll get right to it.”

From today on pay close attention to how many times you hear “no problem,” and how many times you say it. You’ll be amazed!

## *Staff Recognition*

### *Our service Principles at Work*

Research proves that positive feelings reduce stress, build up the immune system and even enable

people to think more holistically – to be open to new ideas and solve problems more quickly, efficiently and intelligently. Happy employees have a broader range of options to draw from; they are more creative and helpful. They are better equipped emotionally to create happy, loyal, referral generating customers. Ultimately, happy employees are more resilient. They help create resilient companies – ones that can withstand the challenges of an ever changing, increasingly competitive marketplace.

Happiness restores humanity to the workplace so that everyone thrives in every way. The emotional well being of employees and customers is directly linked to a company’s profitability and resilience. Be happy and enjoy the rewards!

### *A thought...*

#### **Servant Leadership**

**"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."**

— Albert Schweitzer