

New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes – 1/09/2008

Members in Attendance:

Tracy Dawson	Andy Atkinson	Bob Glasgow	Cam Griffin
Jennifer Hardison	Harry Tuchmayer	Christine McNamee	Kim Roane
Jane O'Brien	Melissa Hight	Linda Augino	Andre' Mallette
Jerome Fennell	Mark Boyer	Dennis Ihnat	Cindy Kee-Macpherson

Accomplishments:

- Update on Spanish translation service
- Completion of Customer Service The New Hanover Way Program
- Update on Cultural Competency training

Summary:

- Approved 12/12/2007 meeting notes.
- Discussed everyday examples of Customer Service.
 - An experience at a bank provided a lesson in customer service. There was only one bank employee who could perform a desired transaction. When that employee went to lunch, several customers had to wait until the person returned.
 - Airlie Gardens took the time to compliment Property Management for all of the assistance they provide.
 - The Public Safety Communications Center visited a long term care facility during the holiday season. County employees spent time with the residents, sang carols and gave everyone a present. They received a letter from the daughter of a resident saying how much she appreciated their kindness and concern and how much it meant to the residents.
 - This time of year is very busy for the Tax Department, requiring the presence of a Deputy from the Sheriffs Department. Deputy Justin Brown far exceeded his duties by directing customers to the appropriate area, informing them that they could put their checks in an envelope rather than wait in line if they did not want a receipt, and helping maintain order and keep lines moving. His extra effort was noticed by numerous people including Tax Department employees, several customers and an employee from another department who happened to be in the Tax Office.
 - Deputy Brown also assisted in locating an Officer who was to appear as a witness in an appeal hearing. He took the time to make several calls in an attempt to locate him and stopped by the day of the hearing to make sure the appearance had been arranged.
 - The Fire Services Department was shown appreciation by a citizen they had assisted when responding to a fire at their residence. The family brought cookies to all of the Fire Stations to thank them for all of their hard work.
- Continued discussion on obtaining Spanish signs at the Government Center.
 - Tracy Dawson is currently working on a Spanish map of departments at the Government Center.

- We have contacted Language Line to obtain a quote on their services. We will work with DSS and the Health Department, who currently use this service, to obtain the best rate.
- Discussed obtaining a county map from Resort Maps. Many customers at the Government Center have requested a local map. This map is used by many businesses and is popular with tourists and residents.
- Andy has completed the Customer Service The New Hanover Way training program and it is ready to be used with new hire orientation and the Speakers Bureau.
 - Discussed how the presentation would be more effective if done by someone from another department and how this would help open communication between all departments.
- Discussed Marastar Communications videos. This company offers short, customer focused videos that are fun and help raise awareness of customer service.
 - Also discussed having a customer service message appear when turning on computers.
- Briefly discussed External Surveys
 - We have already made some positive changes and may want to measure our progress. The sooner we start, the better benchmark we will obtain.
 - It was suggested that Malissa Talbert of the City of Wilmington be brought in to share the city's survey experience.
- The Cultural Competency classes are approximately half full. We are looking for 100% employee participation and are hoping that once the first session is held, employees will tell their coworkers the benefits of the class.
 - Sheriff Causey has expressed his support of the customer service program and is assisting us in registering his staff.
- We are making progress on the Customer Service Handbook and are close to the final version. Henry Chisholm of the Cape Fear Museum has contributed his time and creativity to the project and his hard work is greatly appreciated.
- We are working on getting more tangible items out including training, the handbook and notepads or mouse pads. This will augment the RISE to Excellence posters, pens and brochure that we have already introduced.
- Discussed the employee recognition program. Andy Atkinson is currently working on this topic. Dennis Ihnat has drafted a RISE to Excellence Award and there has been discussion at previous meetings.
 - Discussed making sure we provide employees with the type of recognition they want and it was suggested that we could survey employees to determine.
 - We will use *The Carrot Principle* as a resource.

- The Library has picked up on the Health Departments praise coupons and started their own starfish program for employee recognition.
- We will discuss this topic in more detail at the next meeting.

- The comment section of the internal survey on customer service has been compiled into 7 broad categories. Each category will be addressed and appropriate follow up will be made with employees.

Action Items

1. Continued work on obtaining a countywide translation service and Spanish map for the Government Center.
2. Fill Cultural Competency Sessions. Send e-mail to departments with openings.
3. Schedule training for Customer Service the New Hanover Way

Next Meeting:

Date: February 20, 2008

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Place: The Watkins Room at the NE Library