

## **New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes 5/14/2008**

### **Members in Attendance:**

Tracy Dawson	Jennifer Hardison	Harry Tuchmayer	Christine McNamee
Jerome Fennel	Mark Boyer	Diane Morgan	Melissa Hight
Dennis Ihnat	Jane O'Brien		

### **Summary:**

- Approved 3/12/2008 meeting notes.
- Discussed everyday examples of customer service.
  - There were several examples of great customer service exhibited by the Property Management Department.
    - Their assistance made the groundbreaking ceremony at the new water treatment plant a success.
    - Daniel Hands responded quickly to a call about a leak in the kitchen. He was able to determine the cause, provide an update and have the part shipped overnight.
    - Shirley Davis always shows extra care and attention, going above and beyond her job duties. Her thoughtful behavior has made an impression on the people with whom she comes in contact. She often leaves special surprises and for Mother's Day she decorated the Finance Conference Room and left bookmarks as gifts. Sherry Spencer of the Finance Department took the time to write a poem to show her appreciation and recognize the excellent customer service Shirley Davis consistently shows everyday.
    - The Arboretum needed a way for people to purchase plants, to benefit the Ability Garden, outside of normal work hours. Mr. Linell Josey took the initiative to create and install a special drop slot in a door, so the proceeds could be safely stored until the next business day.
    - Paul Prince was called to the Museum to fix a faucet that was spraying out water when turned on. The part that was needed had to be ordered, but he was able to make a temporary repair so the faucet could be used without any inconvenience.
  - The Property Management Department has regular meetings to discuss customer service. The topic of their last meeting was respect and the next meeting's topic will be trust. Honest discussion in an atmosphere of trust is encouraged during these meetings.
    - The committee discussed the importance of good communication within a department. Engaging employees in an open dialogue and discussing their concerns builds trust. You can see the results of that by the behavior of the Property Management staff. We have to be willing to listen and understand that we all play an important role in the success of a department.
    - People bring to the table all kinds of talents you may not know about, but can add to the organization.
    - Dennis Ihnat recommended reading, Leadership is an Art, by Max Dupree, which discusses this idea.

- Every year, Cooperative Extension holds a lunch for the Property Management staff to show their appreciation of their hard work, reliability and commitment to New Hanover County.
- The Customer Service Speakers Bureau is scheduled to present Customer Service the New Hanover County Way to the Focus Groups. They will also start presenting at New Employee Orientation and at department meetings.
- Discussed recognition
  - DSS is using the Rise to Excellence Posters to recognize their Employee of the Month.
  - Andre' Mallette has requested that all departments create their own recognition program as the first level of our countywide program.
  - We will integrate this into the Customer Service Gallery of Excellence and the "RISE to Excellence" Award.
  - It was recommended that the award be succinct, timely and something important to prevent the recognition program from falling by the wayside.
  - The Recognition Program could be explained at Orientation and the nomination form could be accessible on the internet.
  - It was suggested that a mechanism be in place to notify employees in a timely manner that a nomination has been received for them with a brief description.
  - A recognition committee will meet once a month to review all department level nominations
  - It was suggested that the program be approved and made official and then launched at Employee Appreciation Day
  - By September 1<sup>st</sup> we should have the nomination form available on the internet and intranet and will set up a workflow.
  - Awards should be personal and something that the person wants.
  - Whoever is responsible at the department level should be the person to send forms over to get the program jump started.
  - One measure of the success of this program is the feedback we receive from external customers.
  - DSS receives several letters from citizens that are put into a book for their board. These letters could be submitted for the RISE Award.
- Reviewed training topics submitted by Andy Atkinson
  - Discussed the incentive for employees to attend these classes. We want to elevate the concept of government service through continuing education courses.
  - It was suggested that this could be a condition for merit.
  - Some of the training could be done in house.
  - It appeared some of the classes that have been put together dealt with a large amount of information. We discussed breaking down these topics further so each subject could be covered more thoroughly. It was recommended that to do these topics justice, enough time needed to be spent to get more out of the class than just an overview. Topics such as de-escalation and stress management could be single classes.

- We also discussed the different levels of certification that can be achieved by taking professional development classes. For example, taking Customer Service 100 and 101 would result in certification as a Customer Service Ambassador. The next level to obtain could be a Customer Service Consultant. We will discuss these levels further at our next meeting.
- Discussed Cultural Competency workshop and it was suggested that a follow up would be beneficial to keep it in the forefront.

**Action Items:**

1. Final review of Gallery of Excellence and “RISE to Excellence” Award. Next meeting we will approve final version and get it adopted.
2. Review training topics and how some of the broader categories can be broken down to cover the topics more thoroughly.
3. Bring names of people who can conduct training classes.
4. Think about the concept of professional development hours and how we can provide certification.

**Next Meeting:**

Date: June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Place: NHC Government Center, Conference Room 601