

New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes 07/8/2009

Members in Attendance:

Tracy Dawson	Tony Roberts	Angelina Bernard
Dennis Ihnat	Jennifer MacNeish	Lisa Bohne
Andre' Mallette	Jerome Fennell	Cindy Kee-MacPherson
Kellie Daughtry	Kim Roane	

Summary:

- Welcomed Kellie Daughtry, the representative from the Finance Department, to the Customer Service Committee
- Discussed everyday examples of customer service.
 - Warren Lee, Director of Emergency Management, responded to a customer's request in an extraordinary way. One Friday night, a storm caused power outages in the area. Dr. Rhyne of the Health Department was in her office applying for an important grant when the power went out and all of the documentation was lost. The deadline to submit the grant was 11:30 PM that night. With the assistance of Kim Roane, she was able to recreate most of the information, but was unable to access the password to release the grant application. Warren Lee was called at home at 10:20 pm and left home to go to his office to supply the needed password to submit the grant. With his assistance the grant was submitted and accepted at 11:20 PM.
- Discussed how customer service is everywhere and it doesn't have to be a special occasion. These foundational values can be applied to your work life as well as your personal life. Professional development training for county employees ties into these values.
- Customer Service training will be included in the countywide training program rather than being a stand-alone program.
 - The Customer Service training budget helped fund Point and Click University (PCU) to assure the sustainability of this training. Several customer service courses are included in PCU.
 - De-escalation Training is being presented by in-house trainers using a multiple format approach including online and workshop style classes.
 - Having these options is a benefit to employees who will be able to take part in training without leaving their own work location.
- Discussed the InterTrainers Program
 - Thirteen employees from several departments have volunteered their time to become part of this in-house training group that will present 51 courses to fellow employees.
 - Supervisors' training was also introduced to help with skills training as well as succession planning.
 - On July 23rd, Lloyd Prince will be teaching Customer Service the NHC Way to the InterTrainers and the group will go out and present to other departments.
 - On July 16th, Whitney and Ridout, Inc. will present Change Management. This session is being offered free of charge to the county and is a great opportunity for employees.

- Reviewed the Six Laws of Customer Experience. This article relays many of the ideas of the customer service initiative and can be incorporated into our training.
 - 1) Every interaction creates a personal reaction.
 - 2) People are instinctively self-centered.
 - 3) Customer familiarity breeds alignment.
 - 4) Unengaged employees don't create engaged customers.
 - 5) Employees do what is measured, incented, and celebrated.
 - 6) You can't fake it.

- Discussed how the Customer Service Initiative is doing and what can be done to improve customer service.
 - It was put forward that the current budget situation may be affecting customer service and the cost saving measures that have been taken are affecting morale.
 - Managers need to work even harder to raise morale and offer encouragement and guidance.
 - Management listened to all of the ideas put forth on the blog and implemented some of these suggestions. Employees were given options so they could have a say in these matters that affect them.
 - The Property Management Department sits down with supervisors to get their feedback and make sure everyone is on the same page and the Department Head tries to talk to each employee to hear their concerns. It was noted that management may not have all of the answers, but they cannot at least listen.
 - Discussed the importance of communication in times like these.
 - One way to give back to your employees is to give them the chance to grow. NHC is investing in their employees by offering training programs to assist in employees' personal and professional growth.

- Discussed upcoming projects:
 - Ask Customer Service is a blog being created for customers to write in and ask questions concerning New Hanover County.
 - There will also be a site on the intranet for employees to ask customer service related questions.
 - Mark Boyer and the Public Information Office produced a segment on the Register of Deeds Department. He talked to staff for over an hour and put together a very informative video.
 - We have the capability of putting short videos on the internet to help inform customers. Every department will be highlighted.
 - It was suggested that these features be played on NHCTV, which is already in the works.
 - NHC is also on Facebook.
 - It was suggested that posters highlighting employees be rotated more frequently so all employees have the opportunity to be featured.
 - Discussed a previous program called getting to know you that featured an employee and showed their interests and their job at the county.

Action Items:

1. Take a look at bringing customer service back to the county. Do what you can to increase morale and build on our core values. (all)
2. Create new posters highlighting employees. (Tracy)

Next Meeting:

Date: September 9th, 2009
 Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM