

New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes 11/11/2008

Members in Attendance:

Tracy Dawson	Jennifer Hardison	Kim Roane	Cindy Kee-MacPherson
Dennis Ihnat	Jane O'Brien	Jerome Fennell	Michael Pinson

Summary:

- Welcomed and congratulated newly elected Registrar of Deeds Jennifer Hardison
- Discussed everyday examples of customer service.
 - Property Management has formed a department level customer service committee. One of the items they discussed was recognizing other departments that work with them on a regular basis.
 - Property Management received a call from a customer who had fallen in the parking lot. Randy Tripp helped the customer get up and he wanted to call and personally thank Randy for his assistance.
 - A committee member experienced a good customer service “recovery” at a grocery store. When she approached a store employee, she was rudely greeted. The employee noticed the surprised look on the committee member’s face and apologized for her behavior. She explained that she’d had a bad day, but from that point on delivered good customer service. The fact that the employee recognized her behavior and apologized helped rectify the situation.
 - Another committee member experienced terrible customer service at a local hospital. She was visiting an underprivileged patient who had been there for two months. When she approached the nurse’s station to ask for assistant she was ignored by the staff who continued their personal conversation. The staff did look up at one point and saw the customer standing there, but resumed their conversation. The customer left the station, but mentioned her experience when leaving the hospital. A supervisor took the time to sit down and talk to her about the experience and explain the customer service changes they were trying to implement.
 - The Cape Fear Museum provided free admission to all veterans on Veterans Day.
- Discussed Recognition Program
 - The County Manager will be sending out a countywide announcement this week. As soon as this goes out we’ll have our first meeting of the Awards and Recognition Subcommittee.
- On Thursday November 13th we will be joining an audio conference entitled, “Practical Steps to Successful 311/CRM Service Implementation.”
 - We will hear the experiences of the City of Savanna and DeKalb County in implementing their 311 centers.
 - This creates a knowledge database to look back on and provides a central area to document customer interactions.
 - Helps different people to be responsive even though they may not have spoken to the customer before.

- Discussed the proposed Public Services Area at the Government Center.
 - The idea to put a new “front door” on the public services department is moving forward.
 - Changing the paradigm of service from “What do I need from the customer?” to “What does the customer need from the county to accomplish their goal?”
 - This requires a more interactive approach. Public Service Consultants will serve as a guide and be the point of contact for doing business with the county.
 - Cross training will be very important as will having a “transactional flow chart.”
 - We are looking at survey instruments for people to log and keep track of customer interactions. Examples of this are:
 - 1.) Phone or walk up contact?
 - 2.) Was money exchanged?
 - 3.) Was the customer referred or was their business handled there?
 - Consolidated cashiering will also be part of this plan. To work toward this, we will work from a distributed cashiering system to a colocated cashiering system.
 - The challenge will be the different software packages used by each department. We will use existing department software rather than an entirely new system. The only new software introduced will be Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
 - Taxes will still need to be paid at the Tax Department due to state regulations.
 - Discussed the need for de-escalation training and conflict resolution. There will be a Public Services Supervisor who will be the next level if a Consultant is unable to resolve a customer’s concern.
 - One of the advantages of this new approach will be increased efficiency by reducing the need to send customers from department to department to have their needs met. This way, there will be one place where the customer can have the process explained to them thus reducing their frustration level and streamlining the process for everyone involved.
 - There may also be the opportunity in the future to answer calls for all county departments so customers will never receive voicemail.
 - Discussed the challenges of the current budget on hiring. We will be drawing on existing employees to fill the Public Services Consultant positions.
 - Discussed the need for de-escalation training and conflict resolution. There will be a Public Services Supervisor who will be the next level if a Consultant is unable to resolve a customer’s concern.
 - We will use existing department software rather than an entirely new system.
 - Discussed the security aspects of a central customer center and the possibility of obtaining a security consultant in the set up of the area.
 - Discussed the kiosk concept and customer self service. This is something we have discussed before and will revisit in the future.
 - Discussed the effects of change on employee morale. This is something that will be addressed.

Next Meeting:

Date: November 12th, 2008

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Place: Government Center