

New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes – 12/12/2007

Members in Attendance:

Christine McNamee	Diane Morgan	Jennifer Hardison	David Wittenberg
Bob Glasgow	Leslie Stanfield	Harold Adams	Linda Augino
Angelina Bernard	Andre' Mallette	Tracy Dawson	Dennis Ihnat
Jane O'Brien	Harry Tuchmayer	Trena Ballard	Cindy Kee-MacPherson
Chuck Shiver	Anthony Jinwright	Mark Boyer	

Accomplishments:

- Understanding of benefits of external survey
- Update of CRM pre-pilot program
- Discussion of Customer Service training and handbook

Summary:

- Approved 11/14/2007 meeting notes with amended date.
- Introduced the Customer Service Advisory Team to the Committee. The team was formed as an advisory group to assist with the Customer Service Initiative and has assisted in making progress with our customer service program. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.
- Discussed everyday examples of Customer Service.
 - David Wittenberg of Property Management responded to the request of the Library in repairing a large crack in the sidewalk that was a safety hazard. Dave took ownership of the problem and worked with the City of Wilmington to ensure the necessary repairs were performed.
 - The Tax Department has received several compliments by the Board of Equalization and Review appellants. The professionalism and courteousness of the front line employees who answer the phones was especially appreciated.
 - Daniel Hands of the Property Management Department responded quickly to concerns about the temperature in the Atrium area of the Government Center. He was able to get the heating system repaired and followed up several times to keep everyone informed of his progress.
 - Discussed the effectiveness of a Verizon commercial showing good customer service.
- Discussed obtaining Spanish signs at the Government Center
 - Tracy Dawson spoke with Max Maxwell to determine the most effective way to assist people.
 - Instead of hanging duplicate signage, it was proposed that a map or pamphlet could be created with the Spanish translations of the department names at the Government Center. These pamphlets could be kept at the Greeter Desks to be handed out when needed and would be placed in a visible location.

- Discussed the need for people to assist customers who are not fluent in English. One idea was to send an Exchange Everyone e-mail asking people who were bilingual to volunteer their service as an interpreter on an as needed basis.
 - Trena Ballard will send Tracy a card and pamphlet to look into Language Line.
 - Central Latino also provides Spanish interpreting and is a possible resource.
 - DSS has a laminated sheet with different languages listed so the customer can choose their language.
- Discussed External Surveys
 - Andy met with Malissa Talbert, Communications Manager of the City of Wilmington. The City worked with ETC Institute to complete a comprehensive external survey. With their assistance, the City was able to obtain the demographics and percentages they needed to provide the desired benchmarks.
 - Discussed the cost of hiring an outside company, but there would be a guarantee that the statistical data would be met, as well as the benefit of experience and knowledge in survey methodology.
 - One goal of doing a survey is to understand citizens' needs and concerns.
 - A survey could be done in house and the County has access to demographic data, but we would have to ask participants for information such as age and gender.
 - If we try to do it ourselves, but are unable to obtain the needed information, we would have the proof that we do need the assistance of a professional
 - Reviewed Customer Service Snapshot survey. The questions asked dealt with such subjects as appearance, cleanliness, lighting, greeters, friendliness and phones.
 - Discussed transactional surveys and their benefits. Some companies used web based technology for these, but the majority of them are difficult to get to on their website. A suggestion was made to put the URL on posters and NHCTV.
 - We need to make sure the person taking the survey actually used a county service.
 - The best strategy appears to be multi-leveled surveys using a combined approach to capture all transactions and perceptions.
 - A question arose concerning what we would do with all of this data.
 - Using a professional company can help us compare our results with other government agencies
 - Taking a survey at the beginning can help us see where we are and where we need to go
 - Does it have to be done in a finite period of time or can it be open indefinitely?
 - If we don't measure, how will we know if we need to improve?
 - It was proposed we prioritize our needs to fit our budget. If we have limited resources, we need to use them for what would produce the best results. Training is also an important component, but a survey would help us determine what areas should be addressed by training programs.
 - The City of Wilmington's hope is the survey will tie into their strategic planning.

- Reviewed internal survey on customer service results. We learned that the majority of employees know that we have an elevated focus on customer service, are aware of the core values and believe customer service should be part of their work plan.
 - We need to make sure we follow up on comments so employees know we are trying to address their concerns.
- Discussed CRM (Customer Relationship Management) pre-pilot program. This product has a great deal of potential, but we are trying to find out how we can use it to benefit our customer interactions. It allows centralized access that can be shared among different groups to track citizen concerns and inquiries. It is currently being tested by a small group with a larger rollout planned in the future.
- Reviewed the first draft of the Customer Service Handbook. We are working with Henry Chisholm of the Cape Fear Museum and Carolyn Carter of the Register of Deeds Department to develop a handbook that gets the word out about customer service. We want to show what we've done so far and what we're trying to accomplish. The target audience is all county employees and the handbook can be used for new employee orientation. This will tie in with the training topic, Customer Service the New Hanover County Way, and with the Speakers Bureau presentation.

Action Items

1. Tracy will follow up on obtaining a countywide translation service and Spanish map for the Government Center.
2. Tracy will work with the comments of the internal survey to put them into broad categories in order to send them to the appropriate people to address employees concerns.

Next Meeting:

Date: January 9th, 2008

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Place: Fire Station 51 on US 421