

2015

PAAO GRANT MANAGEMENT

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# **Opening up the Lines of Communication:**

*Dealing with Internal &  
External Customers*

# AGENDA

- 1. Who are Customers?**
- 2. What is Customer Service?**
- 3. Why is it Beneficial?**
- 4. How can you Improve Internal Customer Service?**
- 5. What is the Organization's Role?**
- 6. What are the Best Practices?**

**PART ONE**

**WHO ARE  
CUSTOMERS?**

## Definition

A customer is the recipient of a good, service, product, or idea, obtained from a seller, vendor, or supplier for a monetary or other valuable consideration.

## Known As

- **Client**
- **Buyer**
- **Purchaser**
- **Employees**
- **Stakeholders**
- **Shareholders**



## Types

- **External** – a customer who is not directly connected to that organization
- **Internal** – a customer who is directly connected to an organization and is usually internal to the organization

## **PART TWO**

# **WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?**

## Definition

The service provided to others within an organization, as well as vendors and anyone else an employee interacts with to get their job done... ***This is the primary path to exceptional customer service!***

## Examples

- When a colleague asks you for information regarding a project.
- When an employee calls HR for info regarding vacation time.
- When someone from marketing ask for addresses of agency contacts.

**PART THREE**

**WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?**

## Impact

“There is a domino effect between internal customer satisfaction and external customer satisfaction...in order to produce happy external customers, it is imperative to build customer satisfaction between the internal customers”. *Terri Yanovitch*

## Why?

- Breaks down barriers
- Lowers employee acquisition costs
- Increases employee satisfaction
- Increases employee productivity and performance
- Happiness starts at home

## So What?

- Saves the organization money!
- Increases employee retention
- Streamlines processes & increases
- Improves agency/company cohesiveness
- Increases internal & external customer satisfaction

## Barriers

- Poor Communication
- Silos and limited team work
- Lack respect and devalue the work of others
- Old way of thinking
- Toxic conflicts disagreements

## **PART FOUR**

# **HOW DO YOU FIX IT?**

## How?

- Set clear expectations
- Define internal customer service responsibilities
- Discuss priorities



## Tips

- Listen to understand
- Watch you body language
- Watch your verbal language
- Facilitate regular brainstorming sessions
- Measure staff's level of satisfaction

## **PART FIVE**

# **WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATION'S ROLE?**

## Steps 1-3

1. It is the organization's responsibility to ensure they have the right people in the right positions...at all levels!
2. Organizations don't need you to be best friends with the employees in the departments 'down the corridor'. However, they do need you to work professionally together, day after day, developing internal customer relationships.
3. Relationships are developed in a climate of collaboration, where the customer expectations are based on organizational requirements (rather than personal). Parties should work together to find optimal program/project solutions.

## Steps 4-6

4. Providing internal customer service should be the **rule** not the **exception**...Don't misuse your position of perceived power.
5. Communication –Communication-Communication!  
Communicate realistic needs and expectations and provide feedback on performance, constraints, and opportunities.
6. Take the professional high-ground!

*“..everybody supports everybody else in the organization...” Shep Hyken*

**PART SIX**

**BEST PRACTICES**

## Strategies

- Have each department identify their internal customer(s) and supplier(s).
- Request that each department talk to their internal customers about what specifically is needed from them to do their jobs.
- Request that each department ask their internal customers what they currently do that disappoints them.
- Request that each department ask their internal customers what they could do that would satisfy them and make their jobs easier.
- **Document all of the above...**

## Tips

1. Begin with your own perspective.
2. Regard fellow employees as your VIP customers.
3. View interruptions not as nuisances, but as opportunities to serve your internal customers.
4. Exceed your internal customers' expectations.
5. **Always say thank you!**

# Manners for the Workplace



- Play nice with others
- Respect the office rules
- Be courteous to everyone
- Do you fair share
- Don't be a “know –it-all”
- Vengeance has no place in an office setting

## End Note

“Stop snubbing your internal customers.... Great customer service isn’t just about serving the people outside your organization.”...

*Shep Hyken*





**Any Questions?**



THANK YOU!

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