Team VCA

Excellent Customer Service

Standards
MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. Define Your Customer
   ♦ Everyone!
   ♦ Alumni
   ♦ Campus Visitors
   ♦ Co-Workers
   ♦ Faculty
   ♦ Parents
   ♦ Staff
   ♦ Students
   ♦ Vendors

2. Attend Connections Training and UCR Staff Orientation
   ♦ These sessions will introduce you to UCR and to the basic concepts of customer service.

3. Initial Contact with Customer
   ♦ Identify yourself by name and department.
   ♦ Include a greeting to establish that you are not an adversary, but a facilitator/helper.
   ♦ Take a deep breath, if necessary, to focus on the conversation at hand.

4. Greet Others with a Smile
   ♦ Acknowledge a customer's presence even if you're talking on the phone, or not at your station.

5. Ask Questions
   ♦ Don't assume answers or interrupt the person's train of thought as he/she speaks.
   ♦ Give the person time to explain the issue so you'll get the full picture (at least from that person's perspective).

6. Parting Exchange
   ♦ End transaction with appropriate farewell ("Thank you," "Enjoy Your Visit," "Goodbye").

7. Assume a Professional Appearance
   ♦ Staff and student employees are encouraged to dress in a professional manner as representatives of UCR.
   ♦ Be aware that others notice your actions. Their perception of you is important, whether or not their perceptions are correct. For example, talking to others about work issues in view of customers may be interpreted negatively as an example of UCR employees wasting time.

8. Professional Behavior
   ♦ Don't smoke in public while in uniform.
   ♦ Customers are more likely to ask for help/information if staff are wearing uniforms, so uniforms are encouraged whenever possible.

9. Take Responsibility for Your Contact with the Customer
   ♦ If you are helping with something that can't be resolved immediately, be specific with the customer about what you're doing and when you'll get back to them.
   ♦ When necessary, pass what you cannot complete to another person who is in a position to provide service to the customer.
   ♦ Make sure when you pass off the issue that you have spoken directly with the next person to confirm they are able and available to help the customer.
   ♦ Give the customer your name, number, and business card (if available), so that they can contact you for follow-up, if needed.

10. Offer Alternatives or Suggestions
    ♦ If you cannot immediately or completely resolve the problem, find someone who can help. Look for solutions or possible pathways to that solution. Show the customer you are doing your best to help them. Avoid "handing" the issue off to another person if you can resolve the issue just as easily.
MOTIVATORS / FACTORS TO MAINTAIN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

MUST DO:

♦ Accountability - Hold Nonperforming Individuals Responsible  Poor performance by co-workers impacts the morale of the team. Staff who are not performing should be held accountable. This motivates other team members to continue providing excellent customer service.

♦ Create And Sustain A Team Environment Of Mutual Respect  This can be accomplished through staff meetings, open communication and the director/manager having an “Open Door” policy. “Open Door” means the front line worker can approach the manager with a problem or issue that he/she believes is affecting job performance.

♦ Development / Training For Excellent Customer Service  To provide excellent customer service, employees need initial training to understand customer service expectations. Follow-up training in customer service keeps people motivated about their jobs and rejuvenates their customer service skills. Ongoing development of job skills encourages people to take a more proactive rather than reactive view.

♦ Recognize Efforts  Management needs to recognize the efforts of those who take risks to do something above and beyond what they usually do when providing excellent customer service, even if the result is not necessarily a success. Having management recognize staff who take risks keeps front line staff motivated and promotes new and creative ways of providing better service. Staff are encouraged to take risks, knowing that management will support them.

♦ Authority To Follow Through & Get Results  Within policy and procedure, front line people need to have the authority to get the customer what they want, even if following through means doing something in an unusual or unconventional way.

♦ Recognition
Reading Letters from satisfied customers at staff meetings;
Pat On The Back — tell the employee “Thank You” for a job well done;
Personal Touch -- handwritten notes thanking a front line worker for a job well done.

♦ Weekly Or Regularly Scheduled Staff Meetings  Regular meetings increase communication among staff, keeps everyone informed, and is a great team builder. Keeping front line staff informed helps them to make informed decisions and increases the quality of their service.
MOTIVATORS / FACTORS TO MAINTAIN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

SHOULD DO:

♦ Employee Get Togethers To Recognize Excellent Service – BBQ's, Picnics

♦ Small Non-Cash Awards  Includes flowers, a book, a sporting or cultural event ticket, a plaque, a non-negotiable gift certificate, a free parking pass, recreation center pass, etc. up to $75.

♦ Catch Up Time  For a specified amount of time each day, have another person in the office provide relief for the frontline person to “complete” their tasks away from the frontline desk. This helps them to catch up with details.

NICE TO DO:

♦ Management Pitch In To Help Staff

♦ Proper Staffing In Departments  Nice, but given budget constraints, not always possible.

♦ Commercial Training By Outside Professionals  Desirable, but not always affordable.

♦ Support Group  If an issue has to do with customer service (or lack thereof), the front line person can speak to a front line person of another department to gain a different perspective about how to handle the issue. This could also include workload issues which affect customer service. The Support Group is for those who, for whatever reasons (justified or not), may feel they cannot go back to their immediate supervisor to communicate frustrations or issues relating to customer service. Success stories could be shared in a common website or at a brown bag lunch.