

## Management of Customer Care in the Public Sector

The public perception is that there is no customer service in public sector agencies. Customer service is the art and technique of matching customer expectations with the customer experience. Like the private sector, public sector agencies adhere to organizational mission, goals, and objectives. Customer service is a resource of the public sector agency, linking the patron to the agency. In this light, the organization needs to integrate customer service into the mission, goals, and objectives for the organization.

Dianna Booher is quoted by John Reh in *Good Customer Service Is No Longer Enough*, "Good customer service is no longer enough. It has to be superior, WOW, unexpected service." Integration of customer service into the organization mission, goals, and objectives requires definition of customer service. Examination of each component of the strategic planning process includes:

- Strategic planning for the organization
- A business model for each service
- Demographic profile
- Resource Allocation and revenue models
- Officer, and Employee Training
- Development of Operations
- Supervision and teamwork
- Product development and marketing
- Advertising and promotion
- Facilities and financial management.

### **Strategic Planning**

The Board of Directors generally defines the organizational mission, goals, and objectives. Directors and department managers define and submit the mission, goals, and objectives for each division or department to support the organizational general plan. An integrated plan would have organizational purpose, direction, and method include the customer service directive within the framework. A strong strategic plan will lead to a successful organization. Part of the strategic plan needs to be the integrated customer service plan across organizational divisions.

### **Business Planning and Demographics**

Marketing research needs to include demographic expectations for the service provided. Certainly specific needs or business opportunities are defined within the demographic to include the customer service model. Interesting enough, customer service generally is not a core component across the organization. Revenue shortage is a result of faulty planning or business plan revision. Cash flow challenges are the result of poor budget analysis and not anticipating coming events. Strong business planning includes resource allocation in terms of employees, training, funding, and business process.

### **Resource Development**

Resource development is part of the business plan allocating resources for the public sector agency. Included in the Resource Development Plan would be marketing, training, customer service, and process audits. The budget process defines resources need to provide the organizational service, estimated costs, and revenue requirements. Resource allocation directly effects customer service: an integrated customer service model requires funding across the organizational

structure. Many organizations struggle to meet revenue targets like public television.

### **Customer Service Development**

Managing customer service as an integrated resource is strategic as developing personnel or budgeting. As part of the strategic plan for customer service is internal audits of process. Included would be auditing the process from procedures manuals to execution. Paramount to the process audit is to determine if the public sector agency is delivering the service set forth in the Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives. Does the Post Office clerk provide the right information and does the patron perceive the transaction as a valuable service.

### **Customer Service Leadership from the Organizational Directors and Board of Directors**

Members of the Board should be selected by the skills, attributes, and knowledge they contribute to the organization. Traditional skills sets are finance, budget, marketing, and production. Integrated Customer Service is not generally part of the required skill set for board members or directors. Managing customer service starts at the top, and intersects every level of the organization. Process audits require evaluation spanning department boundaries to determine the effectiveness of customer service across the organizational segments. Extending Process Audits, Layered Process Audits are "a system of audits performed by multiple levels of supervision and management to monitor key process characteristics and verify process conformance on an ongoing basis."

## References

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