

A School's Reference Guide for Customer Service Initiatives

1. Hire the best people and train them.
 - a. Use interview questions for establishing priorities.
 - b. Train all staff, especially front line people.
2. Collect information about your practices.
 - a. Utilize face-to-face interactions, such as focus groups.
 - b. Construct open-ended questions, so individuals can share concerns, offer suggestions for improvement, as well as highlight positive aspects of the school's program.
3. Monitor and evaluate performance.
 - a. Incorporate regular status checks. Periodically, use outside sources.
 - b. Live by the knowledge that what gets monitored gets done; what gets rewarded gets done.
4. Praise and reward appropriate behavior by spending public relations dollars and time on internal public.
 - a. Spend 90% of public relationships dollars on internal staff.
 - b. Develop special awards that are accompanied by sincere words of praise.
5. Make facility maintenance a top priority.
 - a. Use digital camera to capture visual images of:
 - i. Things that need attention (budget for facility maintenance)
 - ii. Things to praise
 - b. Outline and share expectations with staff.
6. Give great customer service to your employees.
 - a. Communicate with the staff.
 - b. Demonstrate in words and actions that you care about the welfare of the staff.
7. Look for ways to do the "extra" things and to improve customer service.
 - a. Acknowledge and reward staff for out-of-the-box thinking in all aspects of school.
 - b. Give staff the authority to make common-sense decision.
8. Keep "backstage items" backstage.
 - a. Look at offices, practices, and premises with the customers' eyes. Keep problems out of the public's sight.
 - b. Develop an agreement among councils, staff, board, and committee that the group will not argue in front of the community.
9. Get an A: Acknowledge, Apologize, Affirm
 - a. Have the expectation and mindset that "We are committed to doing it right the first time."
 - b. Share apology guidelines that include: (1) offer apology immediately; (2) make sure apology equals the offense; (3) be empathetic.
10. Make connections and form relationships with customers.
 - a. Share rationale on importance of developing relationships with students and parents.
 - b. Commit that all students in the school system will have an advocate who acts on their behalf.
 - c. Train each staff member in making connections.