



CUSTOMER DELIGHT

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June 2009

Surfing the Waves of Customer Service

Anna Famuliner is Making a Difference

Some folks have an office in City Hall, others have a truck as their home away from home, and then there are some lucky folks who spend their days out and about on the beaches and in the parks. Meet Anna Famuliner your friendly outdoor recreation program coordinator and customer service champion!

Anna is out on the front lines team building, guiding canoe tours, hosting leadership workshops and interpretive programs (environmental education in the environment), and more.

"Everyone I meet is a customer," said Anna. And if you know Anna you know she epitomizes friendliness, openness, helpfulness, and she's always ready to chip in and help anyone who asks. Even after hours she lends a helping hand to everyone she meets.

"It's not just about going above and beyond, it's about making concessions

whenever possible to serve and help people, but also putting out that vibe that you are approachable," explains Anna. "Be available for people to say what they need to say when they need to say it."

Anna loves being outdoors and helping people and she shares that infectious feeling with her customers. What are her favorite things about her job? Her top three reasons for loving her job are her office location at the beach, being outdoors, and of course working with people.

And you might think her customers are just of the human variety, and you might be wrong. Sometimes the best way to connect with customers is through their four legged friends.



"I know a lot of people on the beach by their dogs," said Anna. "Recently two of my dog customers passed away and their owners shared their grief with me. It's about listening when people need to talk ... that personal connection."

Don't Let Customer Service Take a Vacation!

It's that time of year again! Time for warm weather, beaches, and fun in the sun. Summer allows us to kick back, wake up leisurely, and simply put, leave all our cares behind. However, when it comes to customer service, we can not afford to let that take a vacation too!

Have you ever asked yourself why do you return to the same vacation destination year after year? Why do you use the same hotel accommodations, or even that same great rental place? It could be the location, it could be the price...but more than likely it is because of the experience and level of customer service that you find impeccable. However, as we all indulge in taking our well deserved getaways; we need to remind ourselves to provide those same qualities to our citizens as these businesses have provided to us.

The reason why so many places such as Disney World and Busch Gardens have such a high return rate is because they have nailed customer service to not only be a staple in how they conduct business, but they offer their customers an experience like no other. Millions of people worldwide visit Disney World and each year they return looking for that same great experience and Disney never seems to disappoint. Families return year after year, and even though the economic conditions may not allow for elaborate spending,



Disney offers so many packages and incentives, they make it affordable for just about everyone to spend their vacation with them. Shouldn't we, the City of Hampton, do the same?

When our customers walk through our doors, call us on the phone, or maybe even pass us in the street, let's remind them that when they are conducting business with us, it's not just our job, but our duty to exceed their expectations. Our citizens are the reasons we are all here; to serve THEM. Let's show them that we have not "retreated" when it comes to customer service, but that we are still here, working tirelessly for them.

Prior to leaving for vacation, let your customers (both internal and external) know that you will be gone, yet still there to service their needs. Send out a reminder e-mail the week before your vacation to remind people when you leave and when you will return. Be sure to set up an e-mail auto responder and a voice mail message to let customers know how long you are gone and that you will respond ASAP upon your return. This is a great way to keep your customers informed even when you're away.

So as you take that long walk on the beach, or ride that roller coaster for the 100th time, when you return, come back refreshed and ready to go! Remember, great customer service is contagious. This is one thing we all would not mind catching... ☺

The Winners

Next Month It Could Be You!

Delightful Dollar Winners

- Pat Ray - PW Drainage
- Quincy Daniels - PW Drainage
- Kebvin Foster - PW Drainage
- Travis Elberfeld - PW Drainage
- Tamytha Lee - City Council
- Greg Pressey - PW Drainage
- Jeff Wingo - PW Drainage
- Jennifer Stevenson - Assessor's Office

Win a Day Off for Customer Service

Submit your examples of great customer service and win a day off of work.

Call 728-2020 or e-mail

customerdelight@hampton.gov

with your submission.



Got Bling?

If not, come to Customer Delight Training!

All attendees receive a gold Committed to Excellence pin!

Upcoming sessions

will be held on Wednesday, July 1 from 9 a.m. until noon or 1 p.m.-4 p.m. For more information or to register contact HRFrontDesk@hampton.gov or 727-6407. All Sessions are held in Human Resources on the 4th Floor of City Hall.



Please Recycle

Laughter Is An Instant Vacation

It seems sometimes like scientists have researched everything! Studies have shown that 12 laughs a day help us stay healthier. Laughter is one of the simple joys of life and it also helps us not take things too seriously.

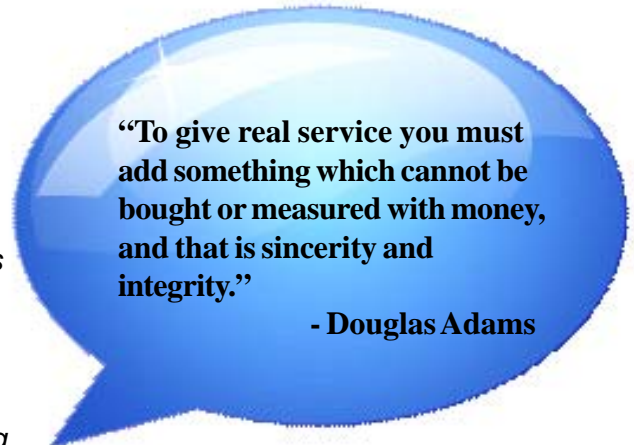
Public service is a serious matter. It is important to consciously aim each day to delight customers and make Hampton the most livable city in Virginia. And it's normal to have times of frustration and low motivation days when we need a vacation but aren't scheduled for time off. In those times, laughter may give us an "instant vacation." Here are a few thoughts to help you get there:

- *I'm not offended by all the blonde jokes because I know I'm not dumb... I also know that I'm not blonde. Dolly Parton*
- *I like work. It fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours. Jerome K. Jerome*

- *A filing cabinet is a place where you can lose things systematically. T.H. Thompson*
- *I'm not going to vacuum 'til Sears makes one you can ride on. Roseanne Barr*
- *Insanity doesn't run in my family. It gallops. Cary Grant*
- *Inside me there's a thin person struggling to get out, but I can usually sedate him with 4 or 5 cupcakes. Bob Thaves*
- *Every day I get up and look through the Forbes list of the richest people in America. If I'm not there, I go to work. Robert Orben*

How do you keep upbeat at work? Tell us and you may win the book and DVD, *Laughter is an Instant Vacation*.

Submit your entry at: customerdelight@hampton.gov or 728-2020.



Customer Service Doesn't Take a Vacation ... But It Can Go On a "Retreat"

If you've read this column before, you know it encourages us to connect to the higher purpose of our jobs.

If you work in Drainage Maintenance, you don't just clean ditches, your higher purpose may be to protect citizens and their property by keeping Hampton from flooding. Or if you work in IT, you don't just work with hardware, software, and systems, you supply critical tools, to internal and external customers, that transfer knowledge. This knowledge allows a citizen to find what he needs quickly or a social worker to ultimately protect a child from harm.

Knowing how your work impacts someone's life – a citizen, a coworker, a supervisor, our community – increases your own satisfaction *and* improves your customer service.

Figuring out their higher purpose comes quickly to some people. But what do you do if you draw a blank? Consider going on a higher purpose retreat. A retreat in the sense of taking time away from the busyness and hectic pace of the normal day. You might take just a few quiet moments to sit, rest, and just...breathe. Or if you need to be more active, step outside for a mindful walk on a beautiful day. Let the busyness fall away. And when it has, ask yourself, "What matters most about the job I've been given to do and how do I make a positive difference in the lives of others?" You absolutely make a difference. Go on a retreat and see what answers come to you.

July Customer Delight Newsletter Contest

Put on that customer delight thinking cap and win the July Customer Delight newsletter contest.

We all know that times are tough in this economy. Money is tight, service demands are higher, and everyone expects a higher return for each dollar they spend. Our citizen customers are no exception and it is even more important than ever for everyone to provide delightful customer service in today's world.

The question for you is **HOW** do you elevate your game to meet the customer service challenges we face in these tough times?

Submit your **How to provide delightful customer service in tough economic times ideas** to customerdelight@hampton.gov or call the customer delight newsletter hotline at 728-2020. If your entry is judged to be the winner, a day's vacation will be coming your way just in time to enjoy some summer fun!

Customer Service Quotes From You

"Customer Service is not about knowing all the answers, but assisting and finding the info for the customer. We have a lot of resources and it is impossible to have knowledge of (them) all. 311 is our greatest asset."

- Cathy Morris-SRP, Northampton Community Center

"Customer service in my job means I have done everything to meet the needs of the parents and children in my programs, and met the needs of the staff that I directly supervise...It also means that I have or can get the answers for the questions that come my way."

- Karen Black-SRP, School Age Programs

"Customer service is going out your way to make somebody happy and satisfied instead of saying, 'I don't know,' I will find the answers for them."

- Susan Elswick-SRP, North Phoebus Community Center

"Treating everyone you meet each day the way you would want to be treated; fairly, with respect, and that they count. Giving them the best possible service for their money and time and making them feel good in the process."

-Elizabeth Linthicum – Program Coordinator, Wellness & Fitness



Kudos from Our Customers

I placed a call to 311 regarding a wastewater drainage issue I was having behind my home. I opened a ticket for service and expected to be waiting for a few days before hearing from them. Mr. Wallace, can you believe I received a phone call from the wastewater supervisor within 30 minutes? When I told him that I had had a previous issue with this same pipe; he probed deeper and stated he would get his best technician on it. In less than 1 hour an entire crew of field techs were in my neighbor's yard addressing the issue. The team leader took me aside and explained how the system was designed, what the crew was doing to rectify the problem, and validated that my own plan of action in my yard was the right thing to do to see proper drainage continue. Needless to say...I was surprised by the rapid response, and exceptional customer service. Please let Mr. Ray and the rest of the team how great they are. What a wonderful place to live.

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Higher Purpose Spotlight Sarah Gabriel, Human Resources



I used to think my job was to make sure applicants met the minimum qualifications of the position they were applying for. Now I know an organization is only as good as its employees make it. **My job is to find and keep the best and the brightest for the City of Hampton.**



Please Recycle