

Miami-Dade County's

Service Excellence

Workshop

Presented by:
Human Resources Department
Training & Development Unit



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Service Excellence

Learning Objectives

At the completion of reading this tutorial, participants will...

1. Understand how Service Excellence impacts the County and the community.
2. Understand the link between Results Oriented Government (ROG) and Service Excellence.
3. Understand the benefits of an effective customer-driven government.
4. Identify the impact and results of service failures on Miami-Dade County.
5. Learn to implement effective telephone skills that will assist your customers.
6. Understand the impact of stress and burnout in trying to provide Service Excellence.

Service Excellence and Results Oriented Government

What does Service Excellence have to do with Results Oriented Government?

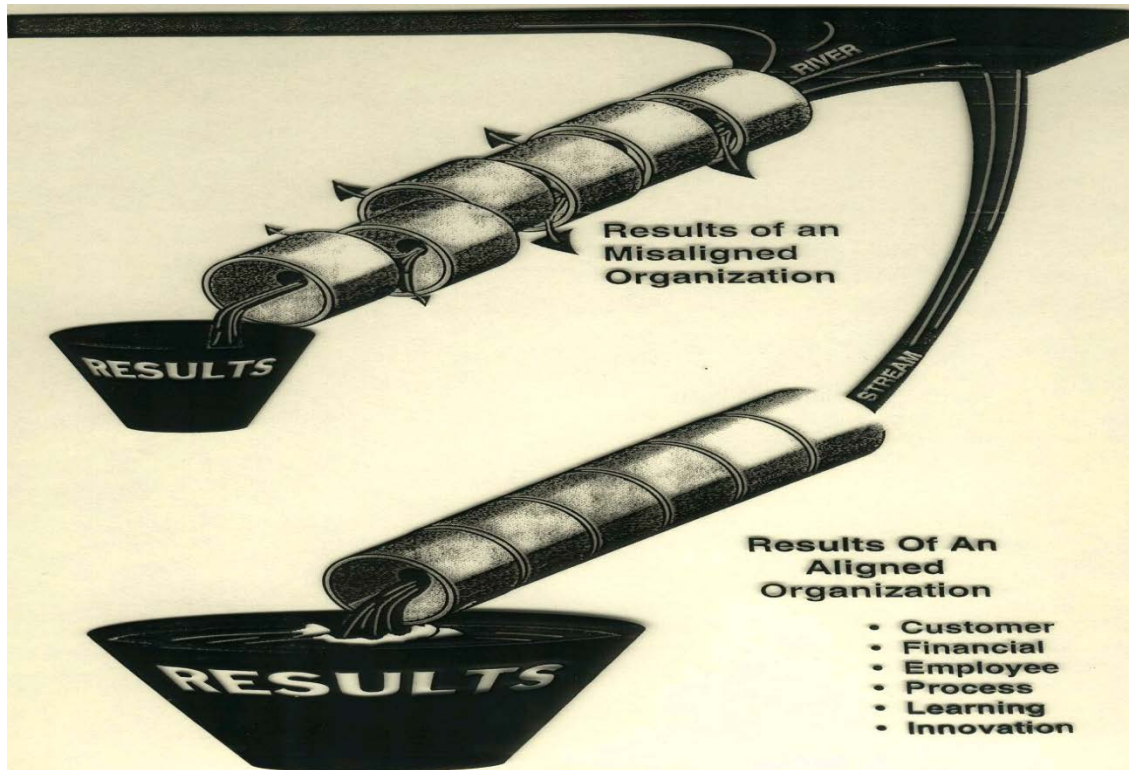
The Results Oriented Government philosophy, championed by the leaders of Miami-Dade County government is comprised of two major sub-components: Delivering Excellence and Service Excellence. Delivering Excellence focuses on meeting the County's goals and objectives with a results-oriented mindset. Service Excellence focuses on the County providing excellent services that exceed customer expectations.

As stewards of the taxpayers' money, the County has a mandate to execute on its vision of "Delivering Excellence Every Day." Exceeding customers' expectations is incorporated in each County employee's job description. We should be the customer's champion for our external customers, Miami-Dade County residents, and also our internal customers, fellow Miami-Dade County employees.

The Results Oriented Government philosophy adopted by our County leaders can only succeed if BOTH sub-components, Delivering Excellence and Service Excellence, are implemented to their fullest potential. There are no half-measures when aspiring toward Excellence of any kind.

Understanding this mandate has helped us implement the first County Strategic plan in 2003 and institute mandatory Service Excellence training for all County employees. You are going through this process right now by taking this course.

Results Oriented Government (ROG) Benefits



The graphic above shows two types of organizations. The top pipeline above shows an organization that is not aligned in achieving its goals and objectives. Possible reasons could be miscommunication, misunderstanding, lack of direction, etc.

The bottom pipeline shows an organization that is working and flowing together in alignment to achieving all of its goals and objectives are being met. Miami-Dade County's goal is to be this type of results-oriented organization.

Case for Change

- Time for reform
 - The only constant is change. The status quo is not enough. We need to evaluate how we can continually do a better job.
- Fulfill organizational demands
 - To meet the community's needs, we need to have the appropriate resources set in place to fulfill their requirements.
- Future cost avoidance
 - Proper planning will help reduce waste and avoid future cost overruns.
- Increase efficiencies
 - On the flip side, proper planning will help increase efficiencies and help reduce any additional overhead.
- Added value
 - As stewards of our community's tax dollars, we need to provide ongoing, added value to substantiate each expenditure.
- Customer self services
 - We need to continue to bring services closer to our community by making it more accessible through local County offices, the internet, and the 311 call center, etc.

Why is Quality Service Important?

- **Growth of service industry**
 - Miami-Dade County is based on a service economy. For example, our two biggest economic engines are the airport and seaport. We need to focus on service day in, day out.
- **Increased competition**
 - The ongoing incorporation movement by communities has increased competition for public services. We need to provide outstanding service excellence to our residents to reduce any potential competitive actions.
- **Greater understanding of consumers**
 - To be successful in providing service excellence, we need to have a better understanding of our consumers. We need to understand their specific wants and how we can address them in an expeditious manner.
- **Economic sense**
 - It just makes plain economic sense if we satisfy our customers the first time around. No extra effort and redundant work needs to be done if we get it right the first time.

Elements of an Effective Customer Service Component

- Total management commitment
 - It starts at the top. The senior management of Miami-Dade County is strongly committed to Service Excellence and understands that we as a team must work effectively in providing outstanding customer service.
- Get to know your customers
 - It is important to know your customers. How else can you satisfy their needs?
- Develop standards of service quality performance
 - Consistency across departments provides a comforting message to County residents. Maintaining a standard of performance that is high is critical in ensuring customer satisfaction.
- Hire and retain good staff
 - It all starts with You. County employees are the primary resource and the critical success factor in rolling out the County's goals and objectives. It is critical that we hire and retain good staff.
- Recognize employees
 - It is important to recognize employees to maintain high morale. If employees are not motivated, customer service suffers.

- Stay close to customers
 - It is important to stay close to customers to get their pulse on what their expectations are. We need to be able to anticipate their needs so that we can react quickly. This is what Service Excellence is all about.
- Continuous improvement
 - We recognize that there is always room for improvement. We need to continually look at ourselves to see how we can do our jobs better. Our community expects that from us.

Management Accountability

The Management Performance Dimensions reflect expected behaviors for all Miami-Dade County employees occupying executive level positions within the areas of: Leadership, Innovation, Creativity, Strategic Vision, Management Skills, Employee Development/Recognition, and Customer Service Focus.

Management/Professional Performance Appraisal -

Dimension

Customer Service Focus-

Promotes and instills a customer service approach to operations and responds expeditiously to service delivery issues in a manner that provides added value for the customer.

The County's Senior Management is being held accountable for their respective organization to provide a customer service oriented culture. They are being measured against this important focus. Miami-Dade County's organizational culture demands a customer service approach that meets the needs of our community.

Organizational Targets

Miami-Dade County's Vision Statement

"Delivering Excellence Every Day"

Vision Statement: a statement that communicates to our organization the hopes and desires for the future of the community we serve.	
Our Vision Statement is	Simply Put
Delivering Excellence Every Day	Some would argue that any government or any organization doesn't deliver excellence every day. And they may be right. But a vision is where we want to be, what we are working toward. There may not be a single County employee who does not want to deliver excellence, but sometimes things don't go as planned. Maybe sometimes excellence is hampered by factors outside of our control. It's hard to deliver excellence every day. But every day we must, because each interaction we have with the public has the potential to formulate their opinion of our entire organization. That may sound odd, but it is true. Most citizens don't deal with government very often. If their interaction is not frequent, and they happen to encounter a County employee who is having an off day, they may be forever cynical of County government. Everything you do matters every time.

Mission Statement

"Delivering excellent public services that address our community's needs and enhance our quality of life."

Mission Statement: identifies overall purpose of organization, identifies customers/stakeholders, helps identify customer and stakeholder needs, expectations, and requirements and leads to the development of performance measures.	
Our Mission Statement is	Simply Put
Delivering excellent public services	Responding promptly with quality services
that address our community's needs	As we carry out our work, our "little voice" inside should be saying: <i>"Okay, now why am I doing this?"</i> <i>"Because Mr. and Ms. Resident said it was important."</i>
and enhance our quality of life.	Make life better, easier for our residents; not more complicated.

Guiding Principles

- Customer focused / Customer driven
- Accountable and Responsive to the Public
- Diverse and Sensitive
- Efficient & Effective
- Committed to Development of Leadership in Public Service
- Innovative
- Valuing & Respectful of Each Other
- Honest, Ethical, and Fair to All
- Action-Oriented

Value Statement: a statement of an organization's core beliefs; doctrine. Also known as guiding principles.	
Our Value Statements are	Simply Put
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer-focused and Customer-driven 	The customer is always at the top of our "to-do" list. Our business and action plans should answer the question: "How does this affect the customer?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honest, Ethical and Fair to All 	We build credibility when we act legitimately. We balance logic with compassion, listening, being attentive to all employees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable and Responsive to the Public 	Own the problem. Return calls. Answer letters. Follow up on complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse and Sensitive 	We recognize and respect and seek out the unique gifts, talents and backgrounds of our workforce. We understand that in order to serve our community, we must understand our community. Our workforce ought to reflect the community we serve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient and Effective 	Understand and carry out our purpose promptly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed to Development of Leadership in Public Service 	Create and foster leadership, understanding that a title is not the measure of leadership potential.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative 	Monitor trends, market forces, technology and apply the good ones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuing and Respectful of Each Other 	Allow for the possibility that an idea may be ahead of its time and that the person offering the idea is a visionary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action-oriented 	Walk the talk. Do more than acknowledge a good idea. It is not enough to ask, "What if?" Make it so.

Strategic Themes

- Ensure Miami-Dade County operates in a fiscally responsible and stable manner
- Improve the quality of life for all Miami-Dade County residents
- Protect the safety and quality of Miami-Dade County's neighborhoods
- Continuously improve the performance and capabilities of Miami-Dade County operations by maximizing technology, fostering innovation, and increasing access to and information regarding services
- Promote responsible and comprehensive policy development through effective planning for land use, transportation, and growth management
- Promote a healthy economy through business development, further economic diversification based on key industries, and by addressing economic disparities in our community
- Develop and maintain an effective transportation system
- Protect and preserve our unique environment
- Promote cooperation and coordination among all government services

Strategic plans have been developed in six service delivery areas and one supporting priorities that support the County's Mission Statement. The six service delivery areas are as follows:

- Economic Development
- Health and Human Services
- Neighborhood & Unincorporated Area Municipal Services
- Public Safety
- Recreation and Culture
- Transportation

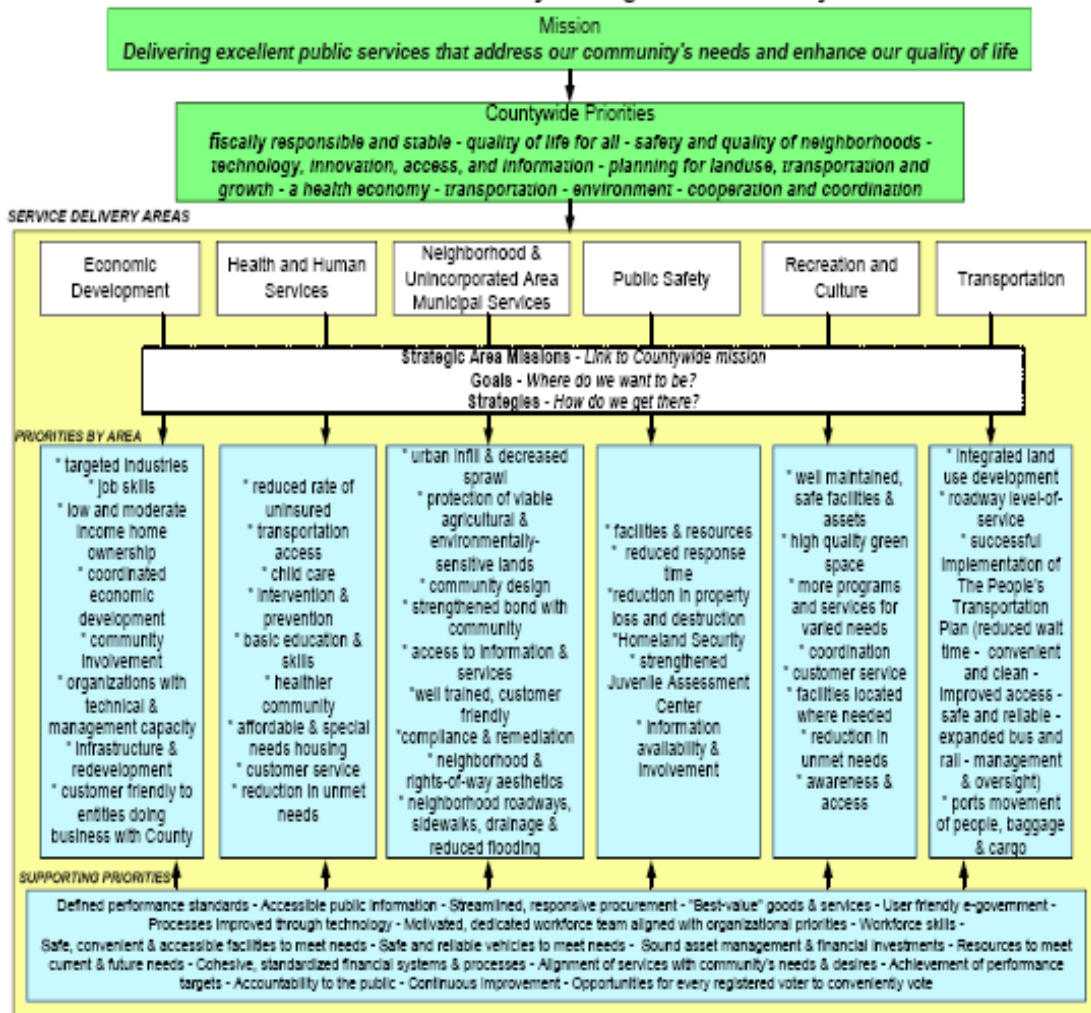
The one supporting priorities which primarily has as its customer base, internal customers, is:

- General Government

These service delivery areas and supporting priorities contain strategic area mission statements, goals, key outcomes, and preliminary performance measures.

Illustrated on the next page is a pictorial representation showing the alignment.

Miami-Dade County Strategic Plan Summary



We All Have A Role To Play

- **County Mayor's Office** - overall coordination & implementation
- **Directors** - creating and supporting department business plans
- **Department Senior Management** - individual performance linked to plans
- **Department PIOs and Facilitators** - assist in communication and outreach
- **Department Staff** - supporting tasks & activities outlined in department mission statements.

Everyone has a role to play in providing Service Excellence!

Organizational Benefits

- **Survival and success**
 - We have no choice. We have to provide Service Excellence or we lose our customers. Our success is ensured if we provide Service Excellence.
- **Energetic and motivated workforce**
 - Realizing we provide excellent customer satisfaction generates a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. The end result, being a more energetic and motivated workforce.
- **More productivity**
 - Getting things done right the first time makes us more productive.
- **Results Oriented Government (ROG)**
 - By providing Service Excellence, we will be Delivering Excellence in our Results-Oriented Government philosophy.
- **Unified workforce**
 - By providing uniform standards of performance, we will be a more unified workforce knowing that what we do on a daily basis makes a difference.
- **More confident taxpayers**
 - Satisfied taxpayers are confident taxpayers!

Five Types of Customers

Miami-Dade County can identify five types of customers that we deal with on a daily basis. They are as follows:

- **Citizens as customers**
 - The traditional external customer, our citizens.
- **Obligated customers**
 - We have a unique set of obligated customers. They are our residents incarcerated in Miami-Dade County Corrections & Rehabilitation facilities. Yes, they are our customers as well and we are obligated to make their accommodations as comfortable as humanly possible.
- **Paying customers**
 - Customers that pay for our services such as passport processing fees, auto tags, animal tags, etc. are our paying customers.
- **Beneficiary customers**
 - Customers that take advantage of the community's offerings such as the County's parks and facilities.
- **Internal customers**
 - Equally important, is our internal customers, our fellow County employees. We work with each other on a daily basis.

Organizational Image

Some questions listed below we need to ask ourselves and if there are any weaknesses, how do we go about addressing them.

- How are we perceived as a County?
- How are we perceived by our residents?
- How are we perceived by our visitors?
- How are we perceived by other County departments?
- How are we perceived by our co-workers?
- How do we perceive ourselves?

Your Department

Questions to ponder over about your own department.

- How does your department measure service?
- What procedures are in place to measure service?
- Does your department have a Service Excellence Action Plan (SEAP)?

First Impressions

First Impressions are critical to any process. Have you ever heard the saying, "First impressions are lasting?" As County employees, we need to constantly keep this in mind. Below are eleven steps to communicating your best image.

Communicating your best image

1. Greet the customer immediately with a smile.
 - Be presentable.
2. Give the customer your individual attention.
3. Make the first 30 seconds count.
 - Understand the person's point of view.
4. Be natural, not phony or mechanical.
 - Let the person tell his/her story.
5. Be energetic, cordial, and respectful.
6. Be prepared.
7. Be the customer's agent.
 - Learn to listen, make the customer feel important.
8. Think, use your common sense.
9. Bend the rules sometimes.

10. Stay positive.

11. Know how to stop an interview and get back on track.

Managing for Moments of Truth

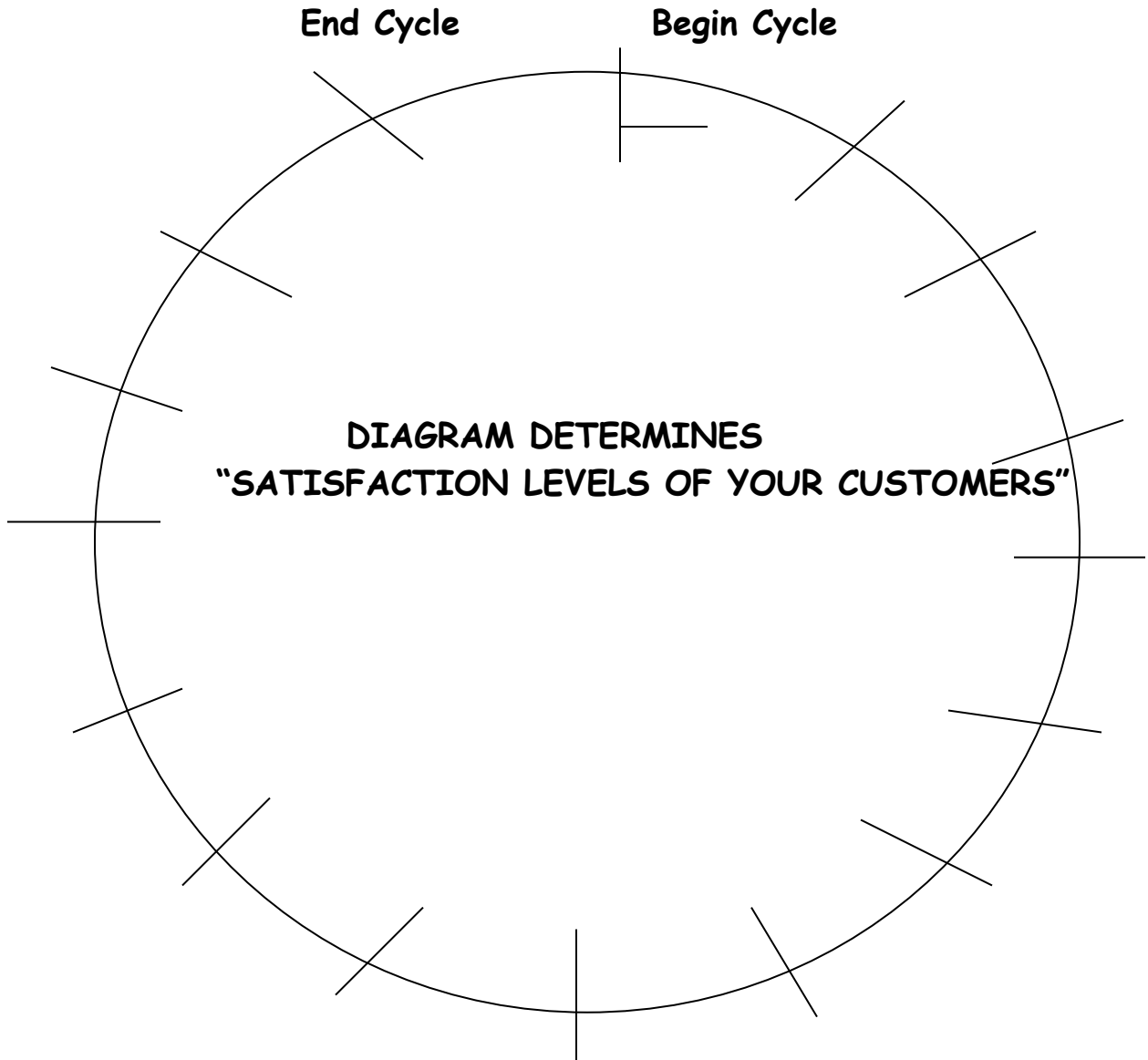
Jan Carlzon, who ran Scandinavian Airline System (SAS), coined the phrase “moments of truth” in regard to customer service, and described the concept in detail in his best-selling book, *Moments of Truth*. Every time a customer comes into direct contact with an employee, he said, it shapes the customer’s perception of the quality of service and products offered by SAS. By managing for these moments of truth, Carlzon was able to turn a near-bankrupt airline into a highly profitable carrier.

Every service business, from an airline to a planning department, has countless moments of truth. Albrecht and Bradford recommend that service providers should develop a graphic illustration of the moments of truth, or the cycle of service, for each product or service.

There is a cycle of service for every product and diagramming the cycle helps identify the various moments of truth which are going to determine the satisfaction levels of your customers. Service managers cannot afford to neglect any of these moments of truth.

When leaders model organizational values at moments of truth, values will become standard operating procedure. Successful leaders structure moments of truth to communicate and reinforce organizational values. When leaders model organizational values at moments of truth, values will become standard operating procedure.

Cycle Of Service In Your Department



Service Excellence Acronyms

Quality Customer Service begins with showing that you care. Caring enough to listen, understand, and resolve a situation by doing *something extra* for the customer. Tell the customer what you can do, not what you can't do.

Care

Appreciate

Recognize

Empathize

Service Excellence Acronyms

BACK - How do our behaviors, attitudes, communication, and our knowledge impact customer service?

Behaviors

Attitudes

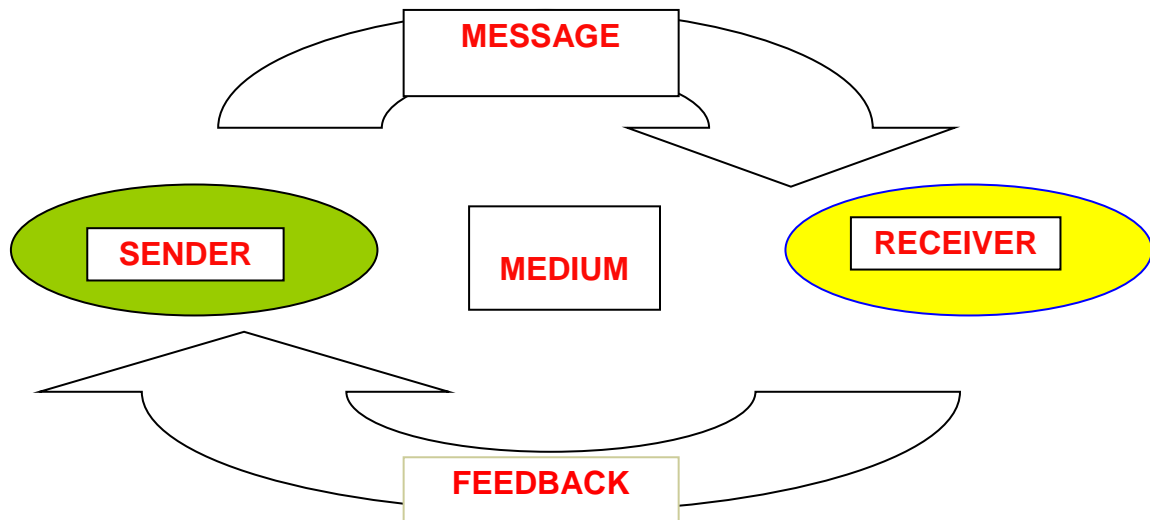
Communication

Knowledge

Miami-Dade County Service Excellence Standards

- The customer is *ALWAYS* right.
- Answer the telephone before the *THIRD* ring.
- Place customers on hold no longer than *ONE MINUTE*.
- Answer the customer's request for information within *24 HOURS* of receipt.
- Act to resolve the customer's complaint within *24 HOURS* of receipt.
- Greet customers within *30 SECONDS*.
- Acknowledge receipt of an e-mail, fax, or telephone call *WITHIN 24 HOURS*.
- Provide quality service that meets or *EXCEEDS* the customer's expectations.
- Respond promptly to requests in accordance with resources and capabilities.
- Be courteous, respectful, responsible, and professional *AT ALL TIMES*.
- *TAKE RESPONSIBILITY* for providing answers to the customer's requests.
- Dress in attire that is professional, tasteful, and appropriate.
- Average or maximum wait time without an appointment should be no longer than *30 MINUTES*.
- Take pride in the trust placed in you by our community, and commit yourself to excellence in the performance of your job while improving the quality of life for the residents of Miami-Dade County.

The Communication Process



COMMUNICATION

Five Elements Involved in Communication

1. **Sender** - The person with a message to communicate.
2. **Medium** - The way the message will travel.
3. **Receiver** - The person who hears the message and interprets its meaning.
4. **Feedback** - The way the receiver indicates the message has been heard or understood.
5. **Physical Environment** - Surroundings, i.e. warm, cold, noisy, busy, etc.

The Communication Process

The sender transmits a message to the receiver and gets feedback from the receiver.

But in order for this process to work effectively, the receiver must understand the message, accept it, and act on it. For all this to happen, the following is required:

1. The message must be clear. This means importance is given to **diction**.
2. The receiver must pay attention to the content and establish good **eye contact**.
3. The source must be **credible**.
4. The receiver must be **able and willing to act**.

COMMUNICATION, *continued...***Types of Communication**

1. **Non-Verbal** - Refers to the transmission of messages by some medium other than speech or writing.
2. **Verbal communication** - is speaking.
3. **Interpersonal communication** - is the exchange of information between people.
4. **Formal communication** - is a written memo or letter, speech or any pre-scripted exchange of information.
5. **Informal communication** - is a casual exchange of information between or among people, co-workers, friends, etc.
6. **One way or downward communication** starts at the top and comes down.
7. **Two way communication** involves a real dialogue - an exchange of ideas.

Managing the Challenging Customer

In every customer service environment, employees will have to face an irate or difficult customer. In managing the challenging customer, we need to give them some **HEAT**. **HEAT** is an effective method which can be used to diffuse or reduce a possible hostile situation.

- **H**ear them out
 - Beyond hearing, listen to what they are saying. Try to get to the root cause of their problem.
- **E**mpathize with them
 - Show empathy and put yourself in their shoes. Understand their situation and let them know that you care. The customer is upset at the situation not you.
- **A**pologize to them
 - Apologize on behalf of the organization for any missteps that your organization created. Let the customer know that you will take care of the problem.
- **T**ake action
 - Give them an acceptable solution and make it right for the customer.

Dealing With Difficult Customers

To deal effectively with difficult customers:

1 Deal with **EMOTIONS** first

- a) Ask *open-ended* questions and listen to bring out the customer's feelings.
- b) Give *empathetic* feedback.
- c) *Summarize* the customer's feelings.

2 Deal with the **PROBLEM**

- a) Ask closed-ended questions to determine the specifics of the customer's problem.
- b) Suggest alternatives that will solve the problem.
- c) Agree on a solution and follow through.
- d) Do something extra, if possible.

WHEN DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS ...

- ... Take things professionally, not personally.
- ... Keep the spotlight on the issue, not the individual.
(i.e. I'll check into this issue right away.)
- ... Kill them with kindness or agreement
(i.e. when customers are angry just keep agreeing to appease their anger.)
- ... Remember, the customer is always the customer.

Service Excellence Failures

Sometimes organizations have challenging management situations which if left unmanaged will lead to Service Excellence failures. Listed below are some of the most common reasons why failures occur.

- No management philosophy
 - If there is no management commitment, there is no involvement, and if there is no involvement, then there is no focus given to Service Excellence.

- No customer service philosophy
 - If there is no emphasis on customer service, Service Excellence will fail.

- No corporate loyalty
 - If there is no corporate culture that embraces Service Excellence, loyalty will flounder.

- No customer loyalty
 - It's simple, no Service Excellence, no customer loyalty.

Impact of Service Excellence Failures

- **Irate Citizens**
 - By not providing Service Excellence, we will encounter more and more irate citizens.
- **Negative word-of-mouth**
 - Without Service Excellence, our reputation will get worse by negative word-of-mouth.
- **Outsourcing / Privatization**
 - An absence of Service Excellence will require looking at other options to resolve these deficiencies. Outsourcing and privatization are likely outcomes to resolve these deficiencies.
- **Secession**
 - The ultimate threat to Service Excellence failure is the drive of communities to incorporate and run their own government.

Startling Service Statistics

- Only 4% of dissatisfied customers complain.
- A dissatisfied customer will tell 10 people about their experience.
- It costs 5 to 6 times more to attract a new customer than to keep old ones.

It can take months to get a new customer and only seconds to lose one forever!

Why Customers Stop Doing Business with You?

- 1% die
- 3% move away
- 5% develop other business relationships
- 9% begin doing business with competition
- 14% are dissatisfied with product or service
- 68% are upset with treatment

Please note that over two-thirds of customers are upset with treatment. This can be easily fixed by providing Service Excellence.



***The customer may not always be right,
But the customer is always the customer***

Strategic Alliances & Partnerships

- **Neighboring Counties**
 - We need to look at our neighboring counties to coordinate services that address our respective residents. Collaboration between counties can only further help in providing excellent services to our communities. For example, connecting transit routes between counties will provide better transportation opportunities for all residents.

- **Municipalities**
 - The same goes for our municipalities. Collaboration is key in meeting our common goal, our resident's needs.

- **Most importantly, "You"**
 - It all starts with You. Everyone in the organization has a vested interest in providing Service Excellence. We live, work and play in the same community and because of that we want the best for our community.

Service-Oriented Culture

- Personal
 - It starts with you. Everyone is a front-line County representative. What we do and how we interact with our customers, reflects on the organization as a whole.

- Departmental
 - Each department has customer service standards that must be abided by to provide a consistent level of service. Everyone needs to be on the same page in providing Service Excellence.

- Organizational (County)
 - The County as an organization must also be consistent in providing Service Excellence. Meeting the needs of our community and our visitors is crucial in maintaining a culture of Service Excellence.

- External (Community)
 - Our community's expectation is that their government provides responsive service at a reasonable cost, no more, no less.

Service Excellence Recognition Programs

- **Employee of the Year**
 - A county-wide employee of the year process was created several years ago to further departmental efforts and reinforce the value of recognizing all employees. Different categories are used to support organization core values like customer service, community service and public safety. Recognition is in the form of cash in an amount up to \$5,000. All nominees receive sixteen (16) hours of administrative leave and a certificate. (Reference A.O. 7-30).

- **IDEA Machine**
 - Started in 1964, Miami-Dade County's ESP (Employee Suggestion Program) was designed to improve the quality of government services. Its purpose is to share ideas, recognize employees, stimulate morale and increase productivity. Employees can earn up to \$5,000 for successfully implemented tangible suggestions. Successful suggestions with intangible benefits are also recognized with up to \$1,000. (Reference A.O. 7-8). The ESP has now transitioned into the IDEA Machine. The IDEA Machine receives suggestions from employees that may be implemented which may provide some tangible or intangible benefit to Miami-Dade County and its residents.

- Executive Service Award Program
 - This program recognized the prolonged, high quality accomplishment of employees in Executive Service Groups 1 through 5. There are two categories of recognition: a Meritorious Service Award of \$2,500 and a Distinguished Service Award of \$5,000. (Reference A.O. 7-26).

- Departmental Employee Recognition Award (DERA) Programs
 - A.O. 7-30 was expanded to empower County departments with deciding the best method for recognizing their employees. All types of employee recognition programs are eligible. Department Directors are authorized to award up to \$500 per employee per instance. The traditional employee-of-the-month and quarter programs have joined by on-the-spot recognition, customer service, productivity and efficiency programs. These different approaches reinforce departmental priorities and motivate employee performance accordingly.

Phone Etiquette

WHEN ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE

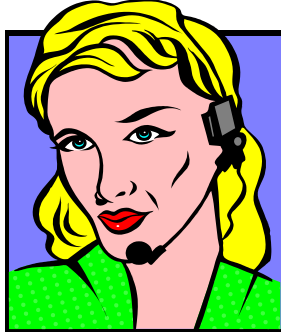


Know the Department standards and apply them.
Everyone should be greeted in the same way.

Consistency is important.
Ask for the caller's name.
Verify the spelling.
Ask for the telephone number.
Repeat the number.

If using voice messages, the quality and relevance of the message should be addressed.

Ten Tips To Providing Over-the-top Phone Customer Service



1. Use welcome words.
2. Use the caller's name often.
3. Treat each call as if it was the first call of the day.
4. Be flexible.
5. Maintain an enthusiastic and personable tone.
6. Avoid negative and controlling words.
7. Take great notes during each call.
8. Let them hear you listening.
9. Keep language simple.
10. Use probing skills wisely.

Other Phone Techniques

FIVE STEP PROCESS FOR TRANSFERRING CALLS:

- 1 *Let the caller know that you are going to transfer the call.*
- 2 *Give the caller the name and phone number of the person you are transferring him/her to.*
- 3 *Monitor the transfer process for the caller.*
- 4 *Thank the caller for allowing you to transfer the call.*
- 5 *If you can, stay on the line.*



WHEN TAKING TELEPHONE MESSAGES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Date and time of message.

Caller's full name.

Company name and caller's department.

Phone number.

Your name.

JUST AS YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE USEFUL MESSAGES, TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY TO RETURN MESSAGES.

MANAGING YOUR TELEPHONE CALLS

DO SAY

"It's so nice to talk with you again."

"Do you have a moment?" or
"Is now a good time?"

DON'T SAY

"Aren't you the person who called complaining before?"

"We need to talk right this minute." (Unless it really is an emergency).

When Taking / Leaving a Message

DO SAY

"May I take your number (or leave my number) for quick reference?"

"She's not in her office (or not available) at the moment."

"She's off site (or working out of the office) this week."

DON'T SAY

"Does he or she have your number?"

"She went to buy another candy bar." (The caller doesn't need to know where she went or why).

"She's out of the state" (play time or work time, it's a bad idea to tell callers that a co-worker is on the road).

When Probing for Information

DO SAY

"Is there anything else that I can help you with?"

"I don't mean to sound uninformed, can you tell me more about this?"

DON'T SAY

"Are you through yet?" or "Is that it?"

"Well, I never heard of anything like that before." (Implying the caller made it up). Or, worse yet, "Sir, that's just not possible."

When Assisting A Customer

DO SAY

"It will be my pleasure."

"I suggest you..." or "I'd like to ask you to ..." or "I think the best way (or the fastest way) to handle this would be ..."

"Here's what I can do for you."

The person who handles that is _____ . Let me get her on the line." (Or some other action that will involve her in assisting the caller).

"Let me find that information for you."

"May I ..." or "Please ..."

DON'T SAY

"No problem." (That implies that it normally would be a problem).

"You'll have to ..." or "You'll need to ..."

"We can't do that." Or "It's company policy, so what can I do?"

"It's not my job."

"I don't know."

Just transfer or put the customer on hold.

Anytime

DO SAY

"I'm so glad you called." Or

"Thank you." Or "You're very welcome."

The customer's name (the way he or she wishes it to be used.)

DON'T SAY

"Are you through yet?"

"Honey" or "Lady" or
"Buddy."

Five Forbidden Telephone Phrases

DO SAY

1. "Gee, that's a good question. Let me check and find out."
2. "Boy, that's a tough one. Let's see what we can do." Then find an alternative solution.
3. Soften the request with phrases like, "Here's how we can help you with that," or "The next time that happens, here's what you can do."
4. "It may take me two or three minutes (or however long it will really take) to get that. Are you able to hold/wait while I check?"
5. If you think before you speak, you can turn every answer into a positive response. "We aren't able to refund your money, but we can replace the product at no charge."

DON'T SAY

- "I don't know."
- "We can't do that."
- "You'll have to ..."
- "Hang on a second: I'll be right back."
- "No" when used at the beginning of any sentence.

Stressors and Burnout

It would be remiss if there was no mention of stress and burnout. Stress and burnout impact Service Excellence. Human nature inevitably can impact how we deal with customers if we are not feeling well. We must recognize those negative feelings of stress and burnout, manage it, and not let it impact our ability to provide Service Excellence. Realizing that you may have these symptoms is half the battle. Addressing them in a positive way is the other half of the battle. Some questions listed below are for you to ponder.

- Stress is...

Stress is different things for different people. One definition of Stress as it relates to our well being is as follows:

A mentally or emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition occurring in response to adverse external influences and capable of affecting physical health, usually characterized by increased heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, muscular tension, irritability, and depression.

- How do people react differently to stress?

People can react positively or negatively to stress. How you react to stress will determine if you will succeed or fail in managing your stress.

- How do you cope with stress?

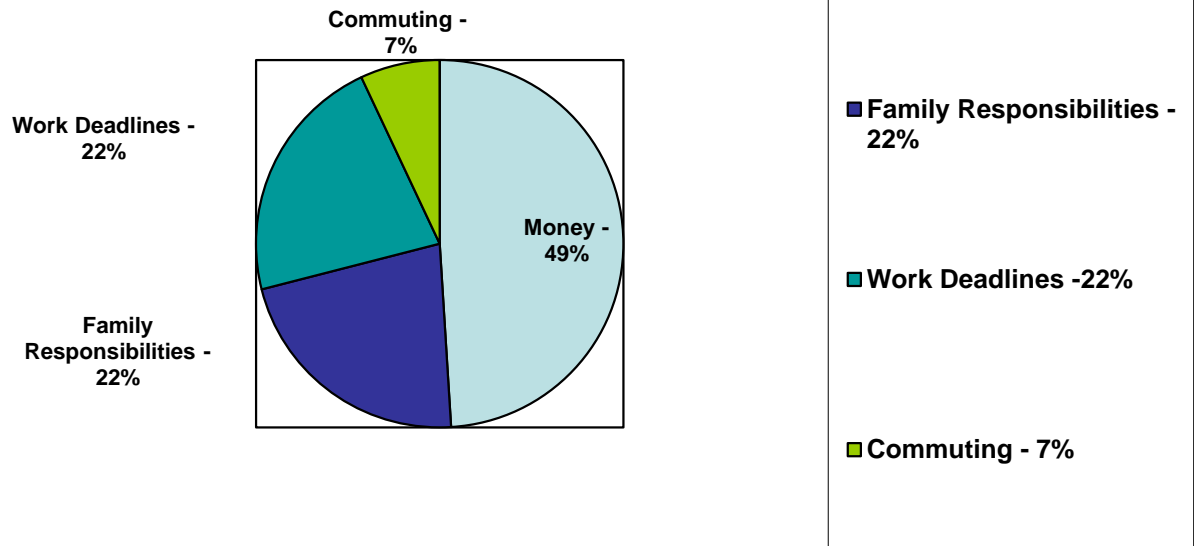
The first step is to recognize that you have stress. You should then identify those sources of stress and try to reduce or eliminate that stress. The goal is to try to maintain a balance life. Too much of anything is not good for one's health. All work and no play is stressful as well as its opposite. A proper balance of work, play, family, and other relaxing activities such as having the right amount of sleep is critical in coping with stress.

- How can we reduce stress and prevent burnout?

Some positive ways to reduce stress include the following:

- Proper nutrition and diet
- Exercise
- Adequate rest and sleep
- Maintaining a proper balance of work and play
- Meditation and prayer

What stresses us out?



One County resource to reduce stress is the availability of an affordable on-site fitness center located at the Stephen P. Clark Center and other County locations.

The Human Resources Department's Training and Development offers a class on stress management.

Another County resource available to all County employees is the Human Resources Department's Employee Support Services (ESS). Please utilize their confidential services if you recognize a problem.

Bringing It All Together... The Components

All of these components bring the Results-Oriented Government Philosophy together:

- Quality Service Importance
- Organizational Benefit
- Recognition Programs
- Strategic Alliances & Partnerships
- Service Excellence Components
- Organizational Targets
- Management's Philosophy

