Jordan Local Governance Development Program

Management & Supervisory Skills for Municipal Managers

Module 7:
Managing Quality Service

Seminar Objectives

- ◈ To create awareness, understanding and commitment to the concept of service excellence and a customer-focused organization.
- ◈ To introduce ideas and skills of the manager's role in managing the quality customer service within the organization, and to stress the importance of the behavior of managers as role models in moving the organization toward greater service excellence.
- ◈ To discuss the service vision and service strategy that serve as the overarching service direction for the department, and to identify the guiding values necessary to support the service strategy.
- ◈ To explore attitudinal and behavioral barriers (e.g. norms) that enhances or blocks the delivery of truly excellent service in the department.
- ◈ To consider the possibilities of initiating service improvement efforts within the department

Seminar Agenda

- ☐ **Developing a Customer-Oriented Service Culture**

- ☐ **Identifying Key Customers**

- ☐ **Customer Focus Checklist**

- ☐ **Visioning the Ideal Service Organization**

- ☐ **Organizational Norms**

- ☐ **Developing a Service Strategy**

- ☐ **Articulating Service Values**

- ☐ **Some Closing Considerations**

☐ **Next Steps**

Developing a Customer-Oriented Service Culture

What is Quality Customer Service?

In essence, service is the "set of activities" performed in the government office through which it interacts with customers, citizens, and stakeholders. The purpose is to ensure their satisfaction with the agency's operations and services. The term *customer* is used to emphasize the importance of courteous cooperative service that is due the departments, agencies, employees, and outside organizations that use the service of a government agency. Managing quality customer service activities involves a complete spectrum of events.

- o The ***procedural side*** of service consists of established systems, equipment, facilities, paperwork, rules, regulations, and procedures to deliver service.
- o The ***personal side*** of service is how service personnel (using their attitudes, behaviors, and communication skills) interact with customers, citizens, and stakeholders.

Quality government agencies should strive to deliver both the procedural and personal components of quality customer service; both must be equally important. On the one hand:

- The service must be effective, efficient, organized, responsive, and timely
- The service must be courteous, helpful, positive, and professional.
- The quality service should be everybody's business
- The quality service should be organization-wide. This commitment to excellence should start with management and filter down to the various departments and work units.

What Is Service Management?

A total organizational approach that makes quality of service, as perceived by customers and users of the product or service, a critical driving force of the operation of the organization.

Exercise (1)
Brainstorm as a team to conclude at least four actions that the municipality manager should do to build a quality-oriented culture that will encourage the employees to provide their best quality service to the customers 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____

What Managers do in a Service Culture?

- Create a vision and service strategy that mobilizes energy and gives direction in the organization.
- Recognize that employees are their customers and need their support and guidance.
- Function as role models, trainers and coaches for desirable behaviors.
- Create the conditions, i.e. policies, rules and regulations, norms that allow employees to give quality service.
- Continually talk about customers and stakeholders, about quality service, and about continuous improvement.
- Make all important operating decisions with customers and stakeholders in mind.
- Look for ways to improve service and empower employees to take greater responsibility.

Characteristics of Quality Service

Exercise (2)

Put yourself in the shoes of a customer, buying goods and services from the different vendors in the commercial marketplace. What are the qualities, or special characteristics, you look for when you expect good service? How can you tell good service when you're a customer? List several and then participate in the group discussion

Individual List:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Group Discussion:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Memorable Customer Experiences

As customers, we may sometimes have what might be called "memorable experiences". These are the positive experiences in which we feel good about the service we've received, and increase our regard for the agency that delivered the service. We often share these experiences with others around us. Broad-based customer research indicates that customers, particularly in government agencies, generally expect four attributes of treatment in any interaction.

1. **Friendly, Caring Service** – People want to feel as if their needs are important to the organization serving them, and that they are treated in a friendly, respectful manner. This includes such simple things as giving timely and accurate information, answering questions, returning phone calls, etc.

2. **Flexibility in Delivering Service** – People want the agency to act in their interests, to be their agent almost, to be able to work within the system to assist them in satisfying their needs. While this is not always possible from the standpoint of an organization's rules and regulations, the attitude of flexibility, of trying to make the system be responsive to each customer's needs, is critical in the eyes of the customer.

3. **Problem Solving** – When people have problems that need some attention, they want to know that the agency can figure out a solution. They want to know that they will not be "put off", unnecessarily transferred, or shuffled around the organization. Even worse is the customers feeling that *they* are responsible for taking care of the problem, that the agency cannot or will not help them solve their problem. And even worse yet is if customers feel that the agency is conning them, or lying to them to avoid taking responsibility.

4. **Recovery** – When a mistake is made, people want it to be taken care of quickly and to their satisfaction. It's not as if people expect perfection, actually many people are quite considerate of the realities of human systems and the potential for honest mistakes being made. What they want is some kind of quick and sincere response that recognizes a mistake or error has been made and every effort is being made to correct it, and that the agency is determined not to let it happen again.

Recall an occasion when you've observed what you might call a "memorable experience"? Identify which of these four attributes were most vital to making that experience memorable.

5

Continuous Quality Management

Many government agencies around the world are engaged in a continuous effort to improve quality. There are two key approaches that are necessary for management to consider:

First: Know key customer requirements

Second: Identify the critical indicators of quality.

Continuous Quality Improvement Indicators
1. Streamline processes at all levels
2. Remove redundant and non-value added tasks
3. Enhance customer satisfaction (as perceived by them)
4. Measure progress and recognize staff's efforts
5. Gather greater customer input on their real needs and how well the organization serves them
6. Shorter cycle time or turn-around time
7. Decisions made faster and closer to the customer
8. Problems are mediated quickly and at the proper level
9. Policies/procedures/forms are customer-friendly and continually reviewed
10. Continuous information sharing and education of customers
11. Timely internal communications and coordination systems

Customer Requirements (example)
- **Credibility** - Provider is trustworthy, reputation, promises kept
- **Tangibles** - Physical facilities, forms, appearance of staff and offices, signage
- **Reliability** - Dependability, uniformity and accuracy in performance over time
- **Responsiveness** - Timeliness, promptness, accessibility, provider wants customer feedback
- **Performance** - Primary operation characteristics – conformance, work quality, knowledge, skills, legality
- **Features** - Secondary operational characteristics – ease of use, customer understanding, customization, clear rules and guidelines
- **Courtesy** - Friendly, politeness, respect and consideration
- **Security** - Confidentiality, privacy, safety

Exercise (3)
As a group discussion, what are the potential added-value services that the municipality can provide to enhance its quality customer service from the customer's perspective

Customers and Stakeholders

Customers

A customer is anyone for whom your work, your products (results, outputs) or services (expertise, knowledge, advice, audits, etc.) are produced or intended. Another definition is anyone whose success or satisfaction in their work depends on your actions towards them.

Four Types of Customers

Direct
Individuals or organizations that avail themselves of your products or services for their personal or organization's use.

Indirect
Individuals or organizations that benefit from your products or services through another party or from a direct customer

Internal
Another person, your supervisor, a group of peers, another division or department within the organization that depends on products or services that you provide.

External
An individual, a group of individuals or another organization outside your organization that depends on products or services you provide.

Who are the Stakeholders?

They are people or groups who have a real and sincere interest in your organization and in whether it is successful or failing, whether:
- The municipality provides good service or poor service
- The municipality is helpful to their efforts or it is a hindrance
- Stakeholders are satisfied with your organization's products and services

Another definition is any organization, group or individual that has a special or vested interest or expect certain levels of performance or compliance from the organization.
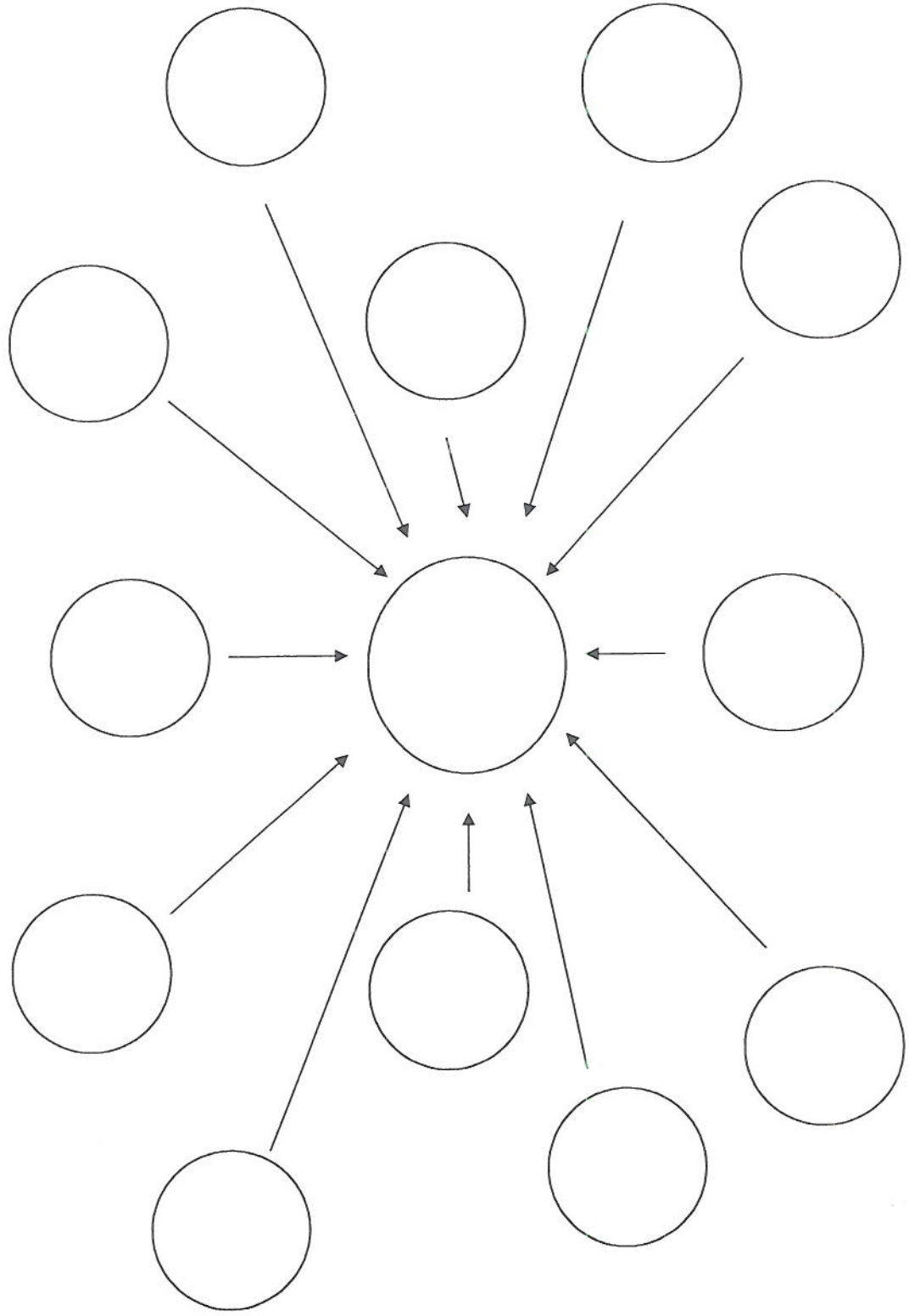

Exercise (4)

As a team, choose one department at the municipality and draw it in the middle circle of the customer map then fill the surrounding circles with the name of customers.

Draw (⭐) for the most important customer
Draw (⬤) for the customer whom you deal with the maximum
Draw (⬛) for the customer whom in need to your services the maximum

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MUNICIPALITY CUSTOMER MAP

Exercise (5): Give your customer a voice

Referring to the municipality customer map and as a team of two, assume you are interviewing the customer who got the highest number of (circle, star, and rectangle) then write at least two characteristics about what should this customer expects about the quality of service provided.

Customer _____

_____

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Customer _____

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Customer _____

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Customer Focus Checklist

Please complete the checklist from your personal perspective on how the Auditor's General Department functions according to the following customer service elements.

	YES	NO	Let's Do It
1. Customer surveys are periodically conducted to establish satisfaction with existing services?	___	___	___
2. Customers receive questionnaires asking for suggestions about the services they receive from the Department?	___	___	___
3. Customer panels periodically monitor service levels?	___	___	___
4. All complaints from customers are replied to within a prescribed period of time (one day, two days)?	___	___	___
5. New forms, notices, and other written materials are market-tested for understanding by prime users?	___	___	___
6. Key managers spend some time each year listening first-hand to customer concerns?	___	___	___
7. Key managers spend time visiting locales where service is delivered, observing services provided and listening to the customers?	___	___	___
8. Official language on signs and forms has been translated into understandable language for customers?	___	___	___
9. Forms have been designed for easy completion and have been field tested?	___	___	___
10. Buildings and offices have been reviewed for ease of access?	___	___	___
11. Reception areas have been designed and staffed for helping customers who come to our offices, especially first-timers?	___	___	___
12. Work methods and procedures are designed to meet customer needs, not only organizational requirements?	___	___	___
13. Key managers are close to the customers as opposed to being isolated by the organization hierarchy?	___	___	___
14. Service to the different customers is emphasized in the departmental budgeting process?	___	___	___

15. The organization emphasizes its customer service commitment in newsletters, meetings and other communications to employees?   ____ ____ ____

16. Quality of service to customers is a major criterion in deciding pay increases and promotion?   ____ ____ ____

17. Employees are recognized and rewarded for delivering excellent service?   ____ ____ ____

18. Performance evaluations for all levels take customer relationships into consideration?   ____ ____ ____

19. Training courses have been implemented for improving customer skills?   ____ ____ ____

20. Front-line employees who service the customers directly are selected for service skills as well as technical skills?   ____ ____ ____

21. The organization's orientation program and ongoing employee information emphasizes quality service and a customer focus?   ____ ____ ____

Organizational Norms

Organizational norms are *unwritten* but often determining rules, practices, and expectations related to organizational inter-actions and behaviors. They are often different from the written policies and procedures. They are guides to behavior in the organizational culture which reflect attitudes about what is really important, how people are to behave, and what gets rewarded.

Therefore, norms . . . . .
⇒ Exist for a reason; they *direct behavior*, they maintain behaviors that have been formulated over the years
⇒ Will continue to exert pressure if not acknowledged and changed if found necessary
⇒ Provide *anchors* for group life; employees know what is expected
⇒ Not necessarily "good" or "bad" but are important, and an excellent organization will try to synchronize its values and beliefs with the operating norms of behavior
⇒ Can *contribute* or *impede* group effectiveness

Exercise (6)

In the matrix below, identify organizational norms that you believe are blocking or facilitating quality service behaviors within the department.

Blocking Norms	Facilitating Norms
♦	♦
♦	♦
♦	♦
♦	♦

Visioning the Ideal Service Organization

What is a Vision?

- The market place the municipality would like to be in the future.
- It is built at the municipality level and can be built at the department level as well
- Forms the base for developing the municipality strategic objectives
- Translation to the municipality dreams and anticipated expectations

No matter how technically competent or committed people in a departmental team are, this may not be sufficient to produce the level of excellence the team is capable of achieving. What is needed is a larger purpose that gives meaning to work, especially to the relationship to customers, both internal and external.

A central, agree-upon department vision is important for individual motivation, commitment, and overall work effort. The manager as "developer" must articulate and gain member commitment to an exciting departmental vision – a vision that is a meaningful description of the purpose that captures the unique thrust of the department. A vision has impact, it can motivate employees -- it can also strengthen the relationship with customers. When shared by a group of people working together, it produces powerful and predictable responses from the group.

What a Vision Does
- Tells the "outside world" who the organization is
- Energizes the group and each team member
- Channels positive personal values into the work environment
- Expresses hope and optimism that motivates employees
- Unifies people, inspires them, aligns them
- Sets standards to measure against
- Says "We stand for something"; "We can make a difference"

Peter Block, a recognized writer and speaker on organizational themes, stated the importance of developing a powerful vision in his book "The Empowered Manager".

> *"The initial step toward autonomy for those*
> *of us in organizations is to put into work the future we wish*
> *to create for our own work unit. This is called a vision of greatness.*
> *We describe a preferred future that we are*
> *committing ourselves to and committing our unit to.*
> *The belief is that this vision will be good for the*
> *individual, good for the unit, and good for the organization.*
> *Creating this vision is our essential act of leadership."*

The Act of Visioning

Each manager has an individual vision of what excellent quality service is and why it is necessary to be able to create quality improvements in the department. The function of this activity is to build a shared vision that combines the insights of each member of the management team. This vision is an expansion of the mission of the organization. It is a composite of hopes and dreams for an optimistic future – a customer-focused, quality organization that continually strives to provide for higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Articulating a vision begins the process of bringing it into reality – it begins to build expectations, connections, and commitment. The question to consider when visioning is "What does a quality service organization need to look like 2 – 5 years ahead?" "What does it look like for our department to be recognized as a quality service organization?"

- Short, clear, vivid, inspiring, effective and accurate
- Express it using imaginary words or can be depicted in the memories.

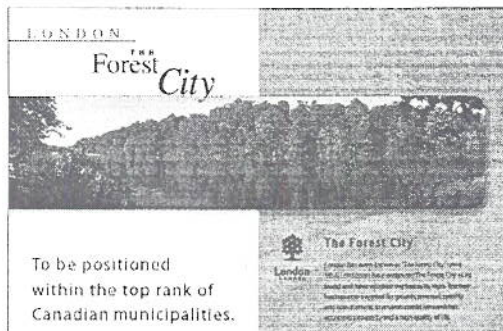| Exercise (7): Vision Brainstorming |
| --- |
| 1) Agree on three departments
2) Write down several ideas of what is your vision for the department in 2 – 3 years to provide quality customer services |

Department (1) _____

_____

_____

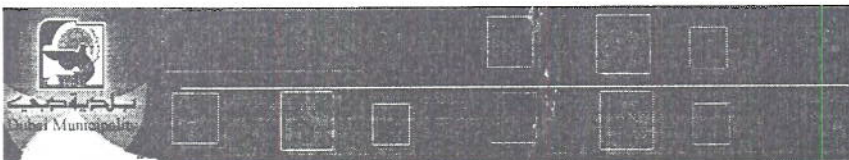Department (2) _____

_____

_____

Department (3) _____

_____

_____

أمانة عمان الكبرى

We seek, in partnership with Amman citizens, to provide exceptional municipal services that far exceed the expectations of service-recipients, while keeping up with modern conveniences and preserving the city's heritage and spirit"

LONDON
Forest City

To be positioned within the top rank of Canadian municipalities.

The Forest City

We are a caring, responsive community committed to the health and well-being of all Londoners. The actions we take will be socially, environmentally and fiscally responsible so that our quality of life is enhanced and sustained for future generations. Our people, heritage, diverse economy, strategic location, land and resources are our strengths

Creating an excellent city that provides the essence of success and comfort of living

Formulating a Department Service Strategy

A *Service Strategy* is:
- A distinctive formula or statement for delivering service by concisely defining and articulating your vision of service for your organization.
- It is a succinctly stated plan for delivering the products and services in ways that customers see as valuable and which differentiate the organization from others.
- It is the promise the organization makes to itself on behalf of its customers.
- It represents what the organization is trying to do, how it's trying to do it and how well it commits to doing it.

Why Have A Service Strategy?
- It provides a common focus and unifying direction for managers and employees.
- It is a simplified and direct way to present your message of service to your customers, both internal and external.
- It lets front-line staff, those who are directly servicing the customer, what management expects.
- It raises expectations in the eyes of the customers, putting pressure on staff to reach those expectations.

An Effective Service Strategy:
1. Is simple and easy to understand – generally a sentence

2. Is nontrivial; it has weight. It must be more than simply a "pretty words" statement or slogan.

3. It must be reasonably concrete and action-oriented.

4. It must inform people of what is deeply believed by the organization in terms of service to its customers.

5. Conveys a concept or a task which people in the organization can understand, relate to, and somehow put into action.

6. Focuses energy on something that is important to the customer, and if at all possible, it should be simple, unitary, easy to put into works and easy to explain to the customer.

7. None of the terms or phrases should be subject to interpretive arguments among the team members. It should be free of qualifiers and value modifiers, ambiguous statements, and unrealistic promises.

Department Service Strategy

1) Review your notes on the vision exercise. Think about a simple and easy to understand statement that meets the indicators listed above.
2) Write down some notes below on what you think would need to be included in a service strategy. Then, in teams of 2 – 4 people, draft a suggested service strategy for the department on a flip chart sheet provided by the trainer.
3) Review your statement and the others in the group. Ask yourself the following questions about the service strategy.

   o Is it clear and to the point?
   o Can you commit to it in a real way, or is it just "pretty words"?
   o Does it say something significant to you and others in the department?
   o Can you manage your staff to make it become real?
   o Can you communicate it to your staff and customers?
   o Does it hold you accountable as a manager of quality service?
   o Do you feel challenged by it?

Draft consensus by group on Department Service Strategy:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Service Values

What are Service Values?

Service values make up the service delivery philosophy of the organization. They define the service beliefs, responsibilities, and priorities of the organization. They also describe how the organization chooses to do business and treat others – customers, employees, suppliers, other departments, political officials, outside organizations.

Service values are relatively permanent and do not change much over time. They are the *glue that holds an organization together*, in terms of service. Sometimes these are very obvious, other times these are quite unclear. When they are written down and communicated to employees and customers, values become a powerful management tool If strong service values are ingrained in the service culture, decisions are made differently, performance improves, and overall the agency functions more effectively.

What are Service Values For?
- ✓ Service values support the service strategy
- ✓ Define the character of the organization
- ✓ Encourage employees to work together for the organization's good
- ✓ Determine which matters and issues are to be taken seriously
- ✓ Tell customers what they can expect from the organization

Guidelines in Crafting Service Value Statements
- ✓ Objective statements of deeply held beliefs about service excellence
- ✓ Represent a commitment to employees from management
- ✓ Tell customers what they can expect from the agency
- ✓ Significant not peripheral, primary not secondary
- ✓ Give guidance for all that the organization says or does
- ✓ Has impact and depth, not just jargon or pretty words

Areas Usually Reflected in Value Statements
- ⇒ What is truly important to the organization
- ⇒ How the organization expect employees to behave, to act
- ⇒ How the organization wants their customers to be treated
- ⇒ How employees relate to each other, and how managers and employees interact
- ⇒ Guidelines for empowerment, responsibility, and authority.

18

Some Examples of Value Statements

The following is from a mid-size municipality in the United States.

Vision Statement: Our Commitment

In our second century the City of Flagstaff, Arizona
remains committed to enhancing our partnership
with the citizens of our community.
Through this partnership we remain committed
To protecting the values held by our community
while responding to the challenges and opportunities
of our future!

Our Organizational Values

1. **RESPONSIVENESS** - _We Value_ immediate addressing our customer's concerns in a fair and quick manner.

2. **PROFESSIONALISM** - _We Value_ employees who are honest, responsible, accountable, highly trained, and cost conscious.

3. **QUALITY OF WORK** - _We Value_ providing high quality public services.

4. **TEAMWORK** - _We Value_ a term effort in partnership with citizens and other agencies for a better Flagstaff.

5. **RELIABILITY** - _We Value_ providing dependable service, the first time, all the time.

6. **PROBLEM SOLVING** - _We Value_ an atmosphere where our employees are encouraged and willing to solve problems in a creative, open minded, and professional manner.

Exercise (9): Crafting Guiding Values

Brainstorm as a group and write several guiding values that you believe are most crucial in your organization and write them on the colored cards provided.

Draft of Municipality Administration Service Values

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

    6.

    7.

Some Closing Considerations

Employee Incentives

To engineer an attitudinal and behavioral change within an organization is a daunting task, and one that is not easily completed successfully. There must be the complete commitment of management, and continuing communications and modeling of the new attitudes and behaviors associated with providing excellent customer service. One way to consistently re-enforce the new service paradigm is for management to create an internal system of incentives, both tangible and intangible, to support their employees in making the changes necessary. The following are some things management can do.

➤ **Get rid of system craziness** -- rules, policies, regulations, procedures that get in the way of providing good service must be removed or changed. Otherwise the institutional incentives are working against the incentives for employees to improve the delivery of services.

➤ **Ensure that Managers are showing appreciation of their people** – the classic management maxim that actions and behavior that gets recognized by managers will more than likely get repeated, that employees will generally try to please their managers, and when managers focus on what they are doing well in servicing the customers, employees will start doing more of it.

➤ **Work with employees to identify service improvements** – Organize special task forces or service audit committees that will analyze the service cycle within different work units and offer recommendations of specific improvements and changes that could be made with relatively low cost incurred. Follow up by making the changes that are feasible and appropriate, and give credit to the employees who are key to the effort. Many times, employees are closer to the customers and can make better suggestions of how to improve the customer's experience of the service cycle within the organization.

➤ **Set up recognition and reward process that honors excellence** – not only the simple "employee of the month" program, but processes and programs that encourage employees to rise to higher levels of quality service. Verbal recognition among employees, what is called "praise" that is done in front of other employees is a powerful motivator. Regular awards, some with monetary gifts or special privileges attached, are also effective.

➤ **Find and nurture the service heroes in the organization** – Management needs to recognize service efforts of "going the extra mile" or "service beyond one's job requirements". Some organizations have instituted regular reward programs that honor individuals and teams that have done

exemplary service, as recognized by an unbiased panel, and they receive public recognition as well as other rewards.

Common Pitfalls in Developing a Service Culture

◈ **Culture/Climate Problems**

When the organizational culture does not support service initiatives. The bureaucratic or hierarchal models dominate, which are both very inwardly focused and not conducive to looking outward toward the customer and serving his needs.

◈ **Quality of Work Life Problems**

Work conditions, pay, benefits, basic employee comforts are not favorable and cause employees to be more focused on their own work situation than helping the customers.

◈ **Executive Credibility Problems**

Upper management, or even political decision makers, are not focused on service quality. Even if they talk service, their actions speak louder than words, and if they're only focused on outputs, employees will know that service is not really all that important in the organization.

◈ **Organizational Arthritis**

Because of leadership issues, or a highly politicized environment, or because of an organizational system that is old and cumbersome, resting on traditional work practices, very reactive instead of pro-active, the organization is just too rigid and weak to make any real changes.

◈ **Middle Management Inertia**

Managers are not willing to exert the extra effort, in communication, in monitoring, in modeling, to support improvements in service. Either they are only concerned about their own advancement, or they really don't care about employees or customers, in both cases they can block any attempt by upper management or interest by employees to focus on the customer.

So What's Next?

For Managers who believe in and are truly committed to service excellence, of serving customers well, of making the organization a recognized leader in service management, there are things that must be done to get the ball moving. In the following lists, write in some of your own ideas of what could be done in your agency.

Things I can do to be more service focused:
 ⇒ Interview my internal customers about their needs
 ⇒ Visit my external customers more frequently to find out what they really expect from my department
 ⇒ Take action to remove or undermine a "blocking" norm

 ⇒

 ⇒

 ⇒

Things I can do for and with my people, my staff:
 ⇒ Visit other organizations, find out "best practices" in customer service
 ⇒ Make customer service a topic in staff meetings
 ⇒ Ask my staff for suggestions on how we can improve our timeliness, our responsiveness to customers

 ⇒

 ⇒

 ⇒

Things we can do at the department level:
 ⇒ Communicate the service strategy and the values
 ⇒ Put up posters with customer and service focused messages
 ⇒ Study the forms used by the department and make sure they're customer friendly

 ⇒

 ⇒

 ⇒