

THE FORT HOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWSLETTER

February 17, 2012



FORT HOOD IS STILL "THE GREAT PLACE" "THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY BEGINS AT FORT HOOD"

The information contained in this newsletter is researched and provided by the Fort Hood Customer Service Officer, a Management Analyst of the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, a Special Staff to the Garrison Commander.

Customer Service: From a Customer Service Representative's Perspective.

Recently, the question was asked "What does Customer Service mean to you and what would you look for in a Customer Service Representative (CSR)?" Below are some of the responses we received:

Teresa Shipman says: "So many businesses say "it's good enough" no it isn't because good enough ISN'T good enough. Excellence is what differentiates a quality business from the ordinary business. Treating each customer as an individual and who has the servicing person's undivided attention. Taking an extra step beyond the expected. Really listening to the customer and understanding what might be behind the stated question for a product or service. Never reacting negatively to any situation but rather taking it in stride."

Fort Hood Broadcasting says: "Customer service means giving the customer all the help you can in using your service or product. It means saying yes to everything you can, but saying no to the things you can't do, so the customer can get the most out of what you have to offer."

Angelica M. Eger says: "I believe customer service is one's ability to listen empathetically to a customer's needs and wants in order to deliver the service or product they require. The individual providing the customer service must put their own feelings and/or bad day aside to be successful. Customer service is a skill that is refined and perfected over time. It is especially important for customer service representatives to not take customer complaints personally but understand they are the face and front line of the organization they represent. You are the voice of that organization; make it a positive and pleasant experience to make the customer want to come back again and again."

Michael Garrett says: "If my business is to rely on those I serve, then "I Believe" customer service should truly come from within one's own self. To listen to the customer, hear the customer, put yourself in their shoes, then do the best you can for that customer. When most see your dedication to help them, they appreciate your efforts and more if they become a "satisfied" customer thru your efforts. I take customer service personally and treat all customers as I would want to be treated, with dignity and respect."

Vickie Kuk says: "Customer service means I make myself of no reputation and make it about the customers who are seeking my help. Customer service means I am helpful, happy and hopeful to provide the best service to people on a consistent basis. It means I will be consistent, constant and focus on the needs of the customer."

Donna Tomsic says: "Customer service means that the customer is priority number 1! There has been several times when I've experienced standing at the counter waiting for "service providers" to finish their conversations or complete paperwork. I almost feel like I'm interrupting them! It makes me feel special when I get the service providers full attention."

Robert Chadwick says: "Customer service is everything done before, during, and after the product or service is delivered, in order to meet or exceed the customers' expectations. Customer service reps should be personable good listeners first, but must also have the knowledge and authority to enable the customer's needs, or explain why not in a friendly caring way."

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Georgie McAteer says: "Customer service means listening and understanding what someone wants as well as what they need. It means being pleasant even if you are tired and the customer is unreasonable. It means not being afraid to say you don't know, but will find out - not just passing someone to another person."

Nieomi King says: "As a Great Leader once said - and engrained in ME - it is "Doing the right thing" AND "Doing things right!" Are you happy with the service I have provided you? Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Gayle Johnson says: "Customer service means providing a "service" to your customer. That service is ensuring you are meeting the needs of the customer. This means being honest when you say "how may I help you" and actually helping! Take the time to do active listening, and eventually getting resolution. If you cannot help, do not push them off, admit it and let them know you will find someone who can help them. Save them heartburn and introduce the situation to the next person before you the pass off, it's less stressful to the person you tried to help and that's what's key."

The quotes above were received by various Customer Service Representatives across "The Great Place."

What is Customer Service? Thoughts provided by John T. Self, School of Hospitality Management Lecturer

What the heck is Customer Service and why is it so hard to define? When asked to define Customer Service most people get a puzzled, glazed look about them. You can't define it, they'll say. Or when pushed, they'll mutter something about being treated like you want to be treated or it's when you're made to feel at home. Somehow those are not very satisfying definitions. Does Customer Service defy definition because it is so warm and fuzzy that it must be experienced rather than quantified? Asked another way, is Customer Service purely subjective and exists only in the eyes of the beholder or is it objective and exist independently of the person? Whatever it is, most people will say they know it when they see it or experience it. Customer service, whether good or bad, exists whenever there is customer contact or a "moment of truth." We know it when we go into a department store and get ignored. We feel it when we go to a restaurant and the staff's priority is with each other and not their customers. We sense it when we go into a governmental office to ask a question and there is a numbness in answers.

But all those are examples of what customer service is NOT, not what it IS. First, look at the two words: Customer and Service. When the two come together there are two possible outcomes:

- they can form a collision that will leave the customer frustrated and angry or
- it can be a comfortable joining together of two friends that leave the customer satisfied and pleased.

The company is either in synch or out of synch with their customer. Let me offer one definition: Customer Service is any contact, whether active or passive, between a customer and an organization that causes a negative or positive perception by a customer. The perception will be influenced to be either positive or negative by the customer's expectations of the contact having been met, exceeded or disappointed.

Unfortunately Customer Service is so rare nowadays that it could be a tremendous competitive advantage for any organization willing to understand and develop the tools necessary to unleash it. It is amazing that it is utilized so little when the effects are so remarkable.

A second, more service oriented definition of Customer Service is that it must be rampant throughout the organization, starting at the top, rewarded and recognized, admired and emulated and must be sustained by being ingrained into the fabric of the company. That definition reads like a mission statement. When you think about it, maybe it should.

Customer Service Quotes

**Sales without Customer Service is like stuffing money into a pocket full of holes. DAVID TOOMAN*

**Customer Service is not a department, it's an attitude! Unknown*

**In business you get what you want by giving other people what they want. ALICE MACDOUGALL*



Don't Let This Be You!

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The Phone Phunnies:

Agent: Thank you for contacting us about your wireless service, my name is Christina, how can we help today?

Customer: I get free mobile to mobile calling on my current plan but I am getting charged for mobile to mobile calls.

Agent: Well ok, can I get the numbers you're dialing so I can check them in my system?

* Customer provides me with the numbers and I check them to see if they are of the same service provider to qualify as "mobile to mobile" *

Agent: Well there is the problem Ma'am, these numbers are from a different service provider and therefore do not qualify for mobile to mobile.

Customer: But they're my neighbors!!

Agent: Yes, but your neighbors are not one of our customers.

Customer: But they're in a MOBILE HOME!!

I work at a phone company that supplies mobile internet connections. I got a call from a customer one day complaining that her internet wasn't working. After about ten minutes of the usual checks I realised that the customer was connected so I asked her to open an internet browser.

Agent: Can you click in to the address bar and type www.google.com please?

Customer: I've don't this already and it didn't work.

Agent: Will you do it again for me anyway?

Customer: Alright.

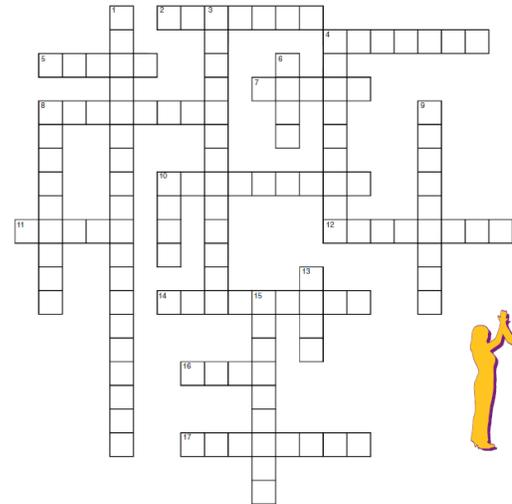
Agent: W-W-W-DOT-G-O-O-G-L-E-DOT-C-O-M and now press "enter".

Customer: Oh, you have to press "enter"?

CAN I GET FRIES WITH THAT?

I am the supervisor of the bank's receptionist. The other day she hung up laughing; she said she just got a call and the caller asked to speak "to the girl at the takeout window". Our receptionist replied back, "Sir, do you know you are calling a bank, not a restaurant?" He said "I know, I was just at your bank and I went to the takeout window". Our receptionist told him she would be happy to connect him "to the teller at the drive-up window". In her 15 years of banking, that was the first time she had someone refer to our drive-up as a "take out window".

Customer Service Week Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- This negative word should be removed from your customer service vocabulary and replaced with situation.
- Understanding and identifying with your customers' feelings is called _____.
- A _____ during a phone conversation can be used to emphasize a point.
- Your most important communication tool when you're on the phone is your _____.
- Another word for internal customer is _____.
- Taking personal responsibility for a customer's complaint is taking _____.
- You sound more relaxed and friendly when you _____ while talking on the phone.
- You start each call with a friendly _____.
- Offering a customer additional products or services is cross-selling or _____.
- With angry customers it's important to let them do this, _____.
- A positive one will make your day better.

DOWN

- The annual celebration of the importance of customer service is _____ (3 words).
- Customer complaints should be seen as _____ to improve service.
- Delighting your customers means _____ their expectations.
- When speaking with customers you should vary the _____ of your voice.
- The people you serve each day.
- Anticipating problems, heading them off and alerting customers is being _____.
- Treat each customer as if they're the _____ one you'll deal with that day.
- Customers who have their complaints satisfactorily resolved tell an average of how many people?
- The most important customer service skill is _____.

Math Square Puzzle

	X		+		-		+		384
+		-		X		X		+	
	+		+		+		X		215
-		-		/		-		-	
	+		+		+		X		241
-		-		-		-		+	
	+		-		+		-		-5
X		-		+		-		X	
	+		X		+		+		362
-134		-42		39		-35		234	

Try to fill in the missing numbers.

Use the numbers 1 through 25 to complete the equations.

Each number is only used once.

Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation.

Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction

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Negative Customer Blues

Life in the customer service lane is [full of stress](#) and [difficult customers](#). This can be an ingredient to employee burnout, negative attitudes, or be responsible for someone leaving the organization entirely. But dealing with negative customers is a fact of service life. The good news is that this seemingly "lose-lose" situation can be turned around. If it's handled correctly, difficult customers can be turned into some of the most loyal, long term customers you'll ever see. So buckle your seat belts, take a deep breath as we look at turning these "service disconnects" into opportunities.

First: Assume the customer is telling the truth.

If you train your employees to always assume the customer is truthful, you have just taken away a major source of stress related to service careers. The employee is not having a confrontation, nor are they conducting an interrogation; they are not looking for the negative, but listening to what is being told to them without having to be a judge that must rule in favor of the company because of a misplaced loyalty.

Second: Let the customer talk.

Let them air out the whole situation. This accomplishes two things. It allows the customer to tell their story with all the details and emotion that they feel is necessary. This step is vital to let the customer drain some of their emotion and anger. Don't say anything, except to give body language that you are listening intently.

A good idea BEFORE you start the listening/information-gathering step is to delegate phone calls and other interruptions to someone else so that your entire attention is devoted to the customer. You want an automatic jump in the level of anger and

frustration for the customer? Just interrupt the story with "excuse me," "Just a minute", or "What were you saying?" You have just entered "lose-lose" territory. Always listen without interruption or comments - just listen. Also remember that listening is the beginning of the information gathering process for yourself, which is vital not only to rectifying the customer's problem, but to avoiding it in the future.

Third: Be empathetic.

This is the step to (finally) begin communicating. Express understanding with how they feel or were treated. You're not admitting guilt. You don't even have to agree with them.

You do have to communicate understanding. Your tone of voice and body language both go a long way to reinforce what you are say. In fact, without the proper tone or body language, your words will sound hollow.

I hate when a manager comes over to my table in a restaurant with their hands on their hips, challenging, "Is there a problem here?" when all I wanted to do was say hello and comment on the wonderful time I was having; emphasis being "was" having a good time.

Fourth: Understanding.

This is the main communication step. This is where you ask any questions that you need to have the complete

picture of the negative experience. Ask relevant questions to clarify your understanding of the facts. Resist jumping to conclusions until you are satisfied that you understand the entire situation.

Fifth: Solution.

Solve the problem. Come to closure that you both feel good about. Remember the customer was telling you the truth. Tell the customer what you will do to rectify the situation. Make the customer feel good about the solution. Do not sound angry yourself or make the customer feel guilty. A good guideline is to deliver more than you promised. For example, if you said you would have the replacement to the disgruntled customer in five days, deliver it in three.

Sixth: Follow-up.

If there is any way to follow-up with the customer after the fact, you need to do it. Whether by e-mail, letter or phone, this step is very impressive.

Seventh: Take steps to fix the problem(s) that caused the problem in the first place.

A good idea to keep a log or journal of customer complaints to enable you to see any trends. Wouldn't you rather prevent problems than fix problems? Or, you can always extract the information from the ICE System. The Fort Hood Customer Service Officer can assist you with this.



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Meet the Plans, Analysis and Integration Team



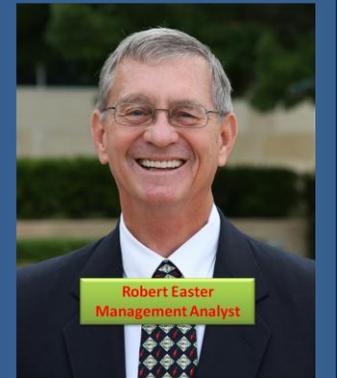
Jim Bondi
PAIO Chief



Donna Tomsic
Lead, Management Specialist



Pat Ncky
Lead, Plans Specialist



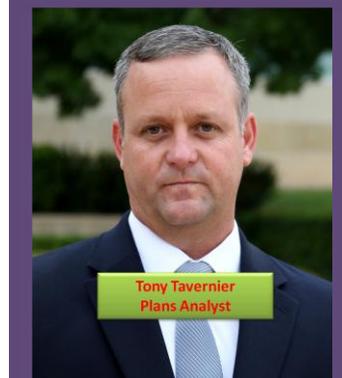
Robert Easter
Management Analyst



Roxanne Smith
Management Analyst



Dale Cowan
Management Analyst



Tony Tavernier
Plans Analyst



Shannon Sauter
Plans Analyst



Who are We? We are the Garrison Commander's principle staff for management control, analysis, business transformation, and the integration of short and long range planning of all programming efforts.

Support Base Operations Requirements

- Installation Status Report (ISR) -
- Infrastructure (Facility Capability, Quality, Quantity)
- Natural Infrastructure (Land, Water, Air)
- Services (Cost)



Measure Performance to Standard

- Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) Packet Preparation and Submission
- Army Stationing & Installation Plan (ASIP)
- Oversee Customer Relations Management (CRM) Interactive Customer Evaluation Program (ICE)
- Deployment Excellence Award (DEA) Preparation and Submission



Business Transformation & Process Improvement

- Administer & Coordinate Lean Six Sigma
- Army Suggestion Program (ASP)
- Identification of Business Process Improvement Opportunities
- Inculcate a Cost Culture



Conduct Strategic Planning

- Strategic Action Planning
- Installation Planning Board (IPB)
- Integrate Functional Sustainability Goals into Future Planning

For more information on what PAIO does, contact Donna Tomsic at donna.tomsic@us.army.mil or call 286-5748.

