

# City of Dallas Strategic Customer Service Plan

Quality of Life Committee  
December 12, 2005



# Presentation Outline

- Vision
- Guiding Principles
- Message & Slogan
- Communication & Buy in
- Coordination
- Training
- Timeline
- Comments



# Vision

- The City of Dallas is committed to quality customer service. We value and respect our customers.



# Guiding Principles

- ***Commitment to the Customer :***

We promise to do everything in our power to provide a positive experience for those visiting, living, or working in the City of Dallas.

- Tie to the City's Values: Commitment & Accountability

- ***Professionalism:***

We expect honesty and ethical behavior from all who represent the City of Dallas. We accept responsibility for the quality of our work.

- Tie to the City's Values: Integrity & Leadership



# Guiding Principles

- ***Communication:***

We actively listen to our customers. We treat everyone with dignity and respect. We ask for feedback on our services and respond to the customer.

- Tie to the City's Values: Sensitivity

- ***Teamwork:***

We work together with our customers and each other to share our knowledge, resources, and ideas. As a team, we seek innovative solutions within and across departments to assist our customers.

- Tie to the City's Values: Teamwork & Innovation



Every interaction should have customer service at the core. Our customer service is characterized by:

- *A welcoming attitude...*
  - We respect and care about our customers.
  - We help our customers feel comfortable.
  - We listen to our customers.
  - We are calm and professional.
- *A commitment to deliver value...*
  - We give the right information.
  - We provide innovative solutions.
  - We keep our promises.
- *A desire to follow up and build relationships...*
  - We reach out to our customers.
  - We ask our customers for feedback.
  - We admit our mistakes and correct them.
  - We thank our customers.



# Customer Service Pledge

- Every employee will sign pledge to support the Vision for quality customer service.
- Each employee will add a personal statement to the pledge saying what he/she will do to give better customer service.
- Examples of employee's possible commitment:
  - I'm going to smile more.
  - I'm going to follow-up on citizen complaints.



# Message & Slogan

Mission First, People Always.

or

A New Dallas - At Your Service!

or

? ? ?

- Hold an employee contest to create the slogan





# Communication & Buy-in

- Who are City of Dallas Customer Service Providers?
  - Elected Officials, Mayor & Council staff
  - All Commissions, Committees, etc.
  - All Employees
  - Vendors and Contractors



# Communication & Buy-in (continued)

- Who leads the staff charge?
  - The City Manager
  - CSI Dallas (Customer Service Implementation Team)
    - 5 Tactical Teams
- Who leads the change?
  - Every Employee



# Communication & Buy-in (continued)

- When does this happen?
  - Build interest/curiosity in December before kickoff.
  - Hold kickoff event in January or early February.
  - City Manager will speak to each department about customer service between Jan. & June 2006.
  - Send out informal and formal reminders on an ongoing basis to reinforce the message. Ex.:
    - “Speak to the Director”, tailgate sessions, city publications, CMO meetings, Intranet, etc.
  - Mid-year employee reviews (March-April) will emphasize customer service and become a part of all employee’s performance plan.
  - Plan and hold annual Customer Service Recognition Event.



# Communication & Buy-in (continued)

- How does this happen?
  - CMO and CSI Dallas Team lead.
  - City Manager is primary spokesperson.
    - Meets with each department (smaller ones can be grouped together).
    - A video of the presentation is made for employees who miss Mary Suhm's talk.
    - Specifies her expectations for that department.
    - Ask for input and ideas of how that department can accomplish goal; have department director note all input.



# Communication & Buy-in (continued)

- How does this happen? (continued)
  - Formalized training programs (e.g., City University)
  - Informal and special events
  - Use of videos with reenactments and skits, capitalizing on actual city examples
  - Websites
    - Internet
      - State Vision for Customer Service
      - Provide “QCS employee of the month”
      - Ask customers to complete a customer service survey
    - Intranet
      - State Vision for Customer Service
      - Tip of week
      - QCS story of the week



# Employee Buy-in

- Employees are critical to this program's success.
  - Treat employees like they are the most important thing in the world and they will treat customers the same way.
- Feedback and plan revision
  - Essential to maintaining vitality of plan.
  - Provide structured process for feedback and revision.
  - Coordinate feedback process with “recognition” events.



# Coordination

- CSI Dallas (Customer Service Implementation)
  - 9 members appointed by City Manager:
    - 7 representatives come from: Police, Fire, Enforcers (Code), Eco. Depts. (DDS), QoL depts. (Library), Revenue depts. (CES) , Internal (OEM)
    - 2 outside representatives
  - Includes execs, middle managers, and front line
  - Serve 2 year staggered terms
  - Staffed by Strategic Customer Service
  - Task force will guide the customer service program, provide interim progress reports, findings, and recommendations to CMO.
  - This team should be introduced at kickoff.



# Coordination (continued)

- Tactical Teams
  - Performance Measures
    - Led by Strategic Customer Services
  - Customer Feedback
    - Led by Strategic Customer Services
  - Training & Hiring
    - Led by Human Resources
  - Recognition & Morale
    - Led by Human Resources
  - Marketing & Communications
    - Led by Public Information Office
- Tactical Teams with approximately 13 representatives:
  - Police, Fire, Code, Water, Parks, Sanitation, Streets, Public Works, Library, EHS, EBS, DDS, Rep. from Small Depts.





# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Performance Measures

- This tactical team will undertake the following tasks:
  - Review existing performance measures to determine if a baseline has been set, and whether they align with the customer's definition of quality customer service.
  - If no measure has been developed:
    - Research public and private sector best practices.
    - Solicit employee feedback on performance measures ideas. For example: Intranet survey and focus groups.
    - Develop recommendations for the selection of measure(s) that will determine our success in relation to what the customer wants, and assist departments in developing performance goals for each service.
    - Ensure a balance between measures of quantity and quality.
  - Develop recommendations for establishing the frequency of measurements.
  - Link customer service performance measures with customer feedback.
  - Test performance measures for validity.
  - Orient performance measures to individual work groups for one size does not fit all.



## Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Performance Measures (continued)

- Performance Measures – how we measure success with Customer Service
  - Develop a City Wide Scorecard for Customer Service.
  - Put a Customer Service Performance Measure into every employee's performance plan.

To create customer service performance measures:

- For each service, identify:
  - Who is the customer?
  - How would that customer define QCS?
- Aggregate services by:
  - Like customers
  - Like services
  - Department



# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Customer Feedback

- This tactical team will undertake the following tasks:
  - Review existing citywide customer feedback efforts, such as the National Citizen Survey.
  - Review existing departmental customer feedback efforts.
  - Research public and private sector best practices.
  - Solicit employee and customers input on customer feedback ideas via Intranet survey and focus groups.
  - Develop recommendations for new and/or improved citywide and departmental customer feedback programs, including the use of a single Dallas ‘brand’ and similar format.
  - Develop recommendations for frequency of customer feedback solicitation efforts and ways to increase participation.
  - Disseminate results to employees and develop mechanisms to help employees understand how their contributions affect the customer feedback results from one survey to the next.



# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Recognition & Morale

- This tactical team will undertake the following tasks:
  - Review existing citywide and departmental recognition/morale efforts.
  - Research public and private sector best practices.
  - Determine what “meaningful recognition” means to different employees.
  - Develop draft recommendations for new and/or improved recognition/morale programs.
  - Solicit employee feedback on draft program ideas possibly via intranet survey and focus groups.
  - Finalize recommendations for new and/or improved programs.
  - Develop implementation strategy including “quick wins.”
- Recognition and Morale Ideas
  - Wearing Visible Recognition Designations – stars, or bars, or distinctively colored Name Tags for outstanding service.
  - Prompt feedback from superiors.
  - Directors’ note cards
  - Develop a sense of friendly competition among departments, culminating in annual customer service awards.
  - Council recognition of superior employee efforts.



# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Marketing & Communications

- This tactical team will undertake the following tasks:
  - Hold the employee contest for the customer service slogan in time to unveil it at kickoff event.
  - Produce pre-kickoff event publicity to generate employee excitement and curiosity for the customer service program.
  - Brand the customer service efforts.
  - Review existing citywide marketing/communications efforts.
  - Review existing departmental efforts.
  - Research public and private sector best practices.
  - Develop draft recommendations for new and/or improved communication programs.
  - Solicit employee feedback on communication program ideas via intranet survey and focus groups.
  - Communicate in multiple languages.
  - Develop and oversee the implementation of a detailed internal and external communication plan related to customer service.



# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Training & Hiring

- This tactical team will undertake the following tasks:
- Training:
  - Review existing efforts to implement customer service training, such as the City University
  - Research public and private sector best practices
  - Solicit employee feedback on customer service training needs via Intranet survey and focus groups
  - Further refine key customer service training messages (see key training messages slide).
  - Further refine levels and components of training (Vision, Core and Specialized)
  - Assist in development of the training curriculum for customer service to ensure the consistency of the messages in the 3 levels of customers training:
    - Level 1: Vision Overview
    - Level 2: Core Customer Service Class
    - Level 3: Specialized Classes
  - Develop recommendations to keep customer service training current and continuous
  - Explore “train the trainer” options



# Coordination: Tactical Team Charter- Training & Hiring (continued)

- Hiring
  - Research public and private sector best practices.
  - Develop recommendations to “hire for attitude and train for aptitude,” including the identification of which positions for which this should be done.
  - Incorporate customer service elements into the interview process.
  - Explore ways to emphasize the importance of quality customer service to our new hires and prospective employees, including the use video message from City Manager in recruiting and for orienting new employees.

# Kickoff Event



- Hold kickoff event in January
  - City Manager will speak at a “corporate rally” type event.
  - CSI Dallas and Tactical Teams will be introduced.
  - Tapes of the event will be made for employees that have to miss it.
- Work with theme of “New Year, New Resolutions, New Attitude, New Dallas...”
- Unveil vision and key messages about customer service.
- CSI Dallas is coordinating the event.





# Key Training & Communication Messages

- Everyone is a customer.
- Customers are the reason for our work –  
NOT an interruption of our work.
- To the customer, you ARE the City of Dallas.
- Assume ownership for the customer issue. Saying “not my job” is out of our vocabulary.
- Make service personal.
- Treat customers as you would like your family to be treated.
- Try to say “Yes.”
- When in doubt, before you say “No” – Ask!
- When the answer is “No”, explain why.
- Offer a solution, if possible.
- Be proud of what we do.
- How the Customer feels is always right.
- Treat employees like they are the most important thing in the world and they will treat customers the same.



# Customer Service Training

- Create Certifications for Customer Service Training
- Three Levels of Training as a part of City University:
  1. Vision for Customer Service
    - Overall training for all employees
  2. Core Customer Service
    - Four types of training
  3. Specialized Customer Service
    - Courses specific to a department or service area



# Level I: Vision Training Outline

- Overview of the Customer Service Program
- Vision Training
- The Customer Service Message:
  - Emphasizes the importance of the employee
  - Must be clear and easily understood
  - Must not be cluttered
  - Addresses for the employees:
    - Why is it important?
    - How can I fit in?
    - What is it?
  - Covers basic etiquette
  - Ends with employees signing the pledge and making an individual promise.



# Level II: Core Customer Service Training Outline

- Core Training covers:
  - Vision Review
  - More Detailed Telephone Etiquette
  - Greeting/Demeanor
  - Management of Hostile Calls
  - Effective Communication & Listening
- Adapted and Modified for the four types of Core Training:
  - Administrative/Office
  - Field/Operation
  - Police
  - Fire



# Level III: Specialized Customer Service Training Outline

- Think across departments, not restricted only to one's own department
  - Working interdepartmentally (Ex. Service Area Coordination, Building Inspection Expediter)
  - Customer Service Training for Enforcement
  - Customer Service Training for Front line
  - Business Training
    - Understanding your customer's culture
  - New Employee Orientation needs to cover quality customer service
  - Development of coaching skills for managers and supervisors to help them coach employees on customer service skills



# Timeline

- December '05
  - Send out early messages to build excitement.
- January '06
  - Involve Media/Press Conference
  - Employee, Customer, Stakeholder buy-in
  - Late Jan. or early Feb. '06: Kickoff! Use a theme related to “New Year, New Resolutions, New Dallas.”
- February '06
  - Continue employee buy-in
  - Continue media involvement
  - Review and update performance plans with customer service performance measure
- May '06
  - Develop recommendations to improve external customer feedback mechanisms
- June '06
  - Complete Level I Customer Service Training
  - Finalize recognition and morale program for implementation in FY 06-07.
- Summer '06
  - Measure internal customer service satisfaction levels.
- October '06
  - Develop a customer service citywide scorecard by 10/1/06.
- June '08
  - Complete Level III Customer Service Training.



Your thoughts and comments on  
this Citywide Customer Service  
Plan are most appreciated.