

Team Georgia. Ready To Train.

For three weeks in April, the Governor's Office of Customer Service piloted a five-module customer service training program, "The Art of Exceptional Customer Service." Governor Perdue videotaped introductory comments for the first module, which focuses on the culture of customer service.

The program is based on the five key attributes (helpful, courteous, accessible, responsive, knowledgeable) and four standards (GREET, LISTEN, HELP, HONOR) of service expected of all Team Georgia members. The program offers a track for both frontline employees and managers. Each module lasts approximately four hours.

Managers and supervisors from the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) and the Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS), both divisions of DHR, participated in the pilot. Participants used their own experiences as part of the training process.

Michael Warren, an OCSS manager from Dublin, said, "The training validated and confirmed what we already knew - while you can't make every customer happy, you can provide excellent customer service."



Trainer Belinda MacKimm interacts with training participants in a pilot session April 3 in Atlanta.

Althea Smith, a supervisor with the DFCS Call Center in Atlanta, found the tips for call handling especially useful.

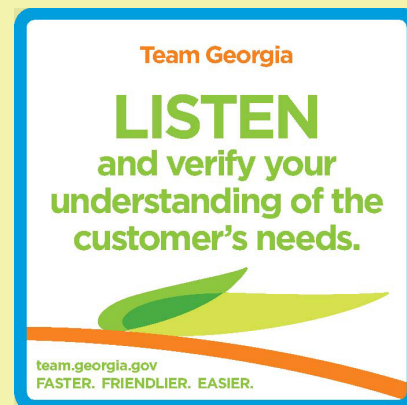
"We sometimes don't realize how we sound over the phone. Our volume, rate of speech, tone, diction, and trying to keep a smile in our voice are very important on each call," said Smith.

A training advisory group representing several state agencies gave their input during the program's development. Focus groups were conducted to find out what types of training would best reinforce the five key attributes and four standards of service.

The training program will rollout in a limited capacity in May and June, with full rollout to all agencies in July. Agencies will send their own facilitators to "Train the Trainer" sessions to learn content and instructional techniques. Trainers will then deliver the program within their own agencies, training management first, and then frontline employees.

For more information about "The Art of Exceptional Customer Service" training program, please contact Katie Christopherson at 404-463-5919 or kchristopherson@ocs.ga.gov.

Call to Action



Lend them your ears

Over the past couple of months, we've focused on the importance of greeting customers promptly and courteously. The next step in delivering the exceptional customer service experience is to identify the customer's needs through listening. Not just hearing the customer speak, but also actively seeking to understand.

Tips for active listening

Focus on the speaker. Turn toward your customer, look him or her in the eye and give your full attention. Don't let busy phones or co-workers interrupt your conversation. (If you must interrupt, ask if it is okay, apologize and explain why it had to happen.)

Show your interest. Acknowledge what the customer is saying through verbal and non-verbal cues.

Listen - and look - for more than words. Sometimes, it's what someone doesn't say that matters most. Notice the customer's body language, and listen for tone, emotions and hidden meanings. In some cases, customers aren't sure what they need, so they're looking to you to help figure it out.

Don't just wait for your turn to talk. By the time you help your tenthousandth customer, you may think you

More Stories on the Web! <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

Your Customer Service "Heroes"

Thank you for recognizing Jerris Robinson, Jan O'Hara and Tammy Drew!

"How's My Service?" Dept. of Administrative Services is Listening

Customer feedback inspires notable improvements and employee recognition.

When Disaster Strikes, GEMA and Team Georgia are Here to Help

Starts on page 2 - Full story on the web.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation: Service from the Inside Out

Starts on page 2 - Full story on the web.

Reserving Facilities at GCSU: A Faster, Friendlier, Easier Process



Atkinson Hall is part of the Georgia College and State University's campus in Milledgeville. Its use is managed by GCSU's Facilities Reservations unit, which handles more than 2,000 requests annually, from simple one-time meetings to complex events. The unit began customer service process improvements in June 2006, adding new technology and a customer satisfaction survey. In less than a year, the response time for facility reservation requests has been reduced from over one week to fewer than 24 hours.

When Disaster Strikes

In the wake of 21 tornados that struck in and around Americus on March 1, the Georgia Department of Emergency Management coordinated several Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) as "one-stop" locations for tornado victims to receive aid and information from government and volunteer agencies.



"As the DRCs opened, it was refreshing to see Team Georgia 'Faster, Friendlier, Easier' posters displayed throughout the locations," said GEMA Director Charley English. "This demonstrated, even during emergency circumstances, that state employees are mindful that

visual reminders of our core values are important."

DRCs in Americus, Camilla, Newton, Reynolds, Roberta, Sylvester and Thomson served more than 2,288 tornado victims. Other federal, local and state partners joined in the multi-agency relief effort, including the Georgia State Patrol, Department of Transportation,

Department of Corrections and Georgia Technology Authority.

Read more about the relief efforts at <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

GBI: Service from the Inside Out

The 800 employees of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation are working to better understand and support one another *internally* so that they may better understand and serve their customers *externally*.

A new program, "Inside Our GBI," highlights the myriad positions and units within this diverse and complex agency. The program serves to bring divisions together and promote teamwork, camaraderie and a service culture across the entire organization.

Since its launch in January 2007, staff have been introduced to several of



GBI's most interesting jobs. Recently, forensic artist Marla Lawson (pictured above) showcased her talents to render composite drawings and facial reconstructions for GBI and local agencies across the state.

Read more at <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

LISTEN...(cont.)

know exactly what the next one will say. But this may be your customer's first time dealing with this issue. Take the time to let your customer speak, and think about what is being said.

Repeat back. To verify your understanding of the customer's needs, respond by paraphrasing what you heard. For example, "What I hear you saying is..." This gives the customer a chance to add, correct or confirm.

Be respectful. Don't allow the customer's emotions (or yours) to get the best of you. Stay calm and courteous, and assure the customer that you want to help.

Agencies are listening!

Here's how some Georgia agencies are taking extra steps to listen to their customers.

"How's My Service?" Agencies like the **Georgia Building Authority** and **Department of Administrative Services** offer online surveys for customers to share comments about the service they have received. Staff include links to the survey in their email signatures.

Read more about DOAS improvements at <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

Employees at the **Teachers Retirement System** believe listening to their customers is paramount to resolving all situations. TRS recommends these steps when dealing with an upset customer:

- » Allow the customer to vent without interruption.
- » Ask the caller about the problem. Probe to understand.
- » Use phrases like "I imagine that is frustrating" or "I understand your point."
- » Use a proactive statement such as "You can count on me to handle this right away."

DFCS Call Center Manager Erica Cockfield shared useful listening tips in "The People We Love To Hate...And What to Do About Them," a learning event co-sponsored by GTA and DCH. View Erica's presentation online at mms://mediam1.gpb.org/ga/gta/GTA_Customer_Service_Training.wmv

Governor's Office of Customer Service

Sonny Perdue, Governor • Joe Doyle, Director

COMMUNICATIONS • Jerri Cloud, Director • Justine Holcomb • Cassie Yoder

CONTACT • 404-463-5914 • success@ocs.ga.gov • <http://team.georgia.gov>