

DNR Changes Signs Greeting Customers



The Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division of the Department of Natural Resources is replacing outdated, overly regulatory signs in order to make park visitors' experiences faster, friendlier, and easier. The old redwood signs are being replaced with signs that require less maintenance and feature standard international symbols. Signs at Unicoi State Park, left, near Helen were among the first to be replaced.

“Change Is Good”

DFCS Call Center Improvement Team Scores Big Wins!

After months of intense focus on its call center, DHR's Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) has significantly improved its performance and increased employee job satisfaction at the same time.

Using the same resources, the first quarter 2007 showed significant improvement over the same time period in 2006. Performance results included:

- + Hold time down 3.5 minutes
- + Calls not answered down 8 %
- + Talk time down 4 minutes
- + Cost per call down \$5 per call

= 45,000 or 50% more calls answered

A key factor in this success was the focus on DFCS employees. Job satisfaction among frontline staff increased to 76%, exceeding its previous rating by 38% and beating the industry standard by 10 points. The staff turnover rate is down 25%.

How did this happen? DHR Commissioner BJ Walker and Division Director Mary Dean Harvey enthusiastically supported the effort. Director Erica

Cockfield and her leadership teams in Atlanta and Albany engaged call center employees in decision making. A call center improvement team from the Office of Customer Service was embedded in the call center for six months.

What else happened?

- » Employees spoke and leadership listened through new improvement teams and focus groups
- » Communication improved via instant messaging and daily huddles
- » Customer service training developed employees' skills
- » Performance was measured against a Certified Call Center standard established by Benchmark Portal, a company well-known as a call center industry expert

But more than anything else, the employees adopted the philosophy “Change is Good.” And the change has only begun. Next steps include surveying customer satisfaction, installing new technology, implementing an employee recognition program, and applying to become a certified call center.

Change Agents & Agencies



Building Customer Service

At first glance, the job of managing the state's real estate may not seem a customer-oriented task. But by focusing on the properties' occupants as well as vendors and contractors, Dr. Gena Abraham has heightened awareness of customer service in her agencies.

Building One Team

As the State Property Officer, Abraham oversees the Georgia Building Authority (GBA), State Properties Commission (SPC), and the Construction Division of the State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC). Together they provide a consolidated real estate office for the state with four main focal points: real estate acquisition and disposition, leasing, maintenance, and building and construction.

“My goal was to create a system where all three entities could maintain their uniqueness and still be part of one team,” said Abraham. “As I began this task three years ago, it became clear that in order to get to where we wanted to be, we first had to take an honest hard look at where we were by asking our customers.”

Getting Closer to Customers

Customer surveys and online feedback mechanisms are now part of all three agencies. The site <http://www.howmyservice.ga.gov> allows customers to provide immediate input regarding the services they receive. Comments are categorized and tracked by program area.

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

DFCS Call Center Improvement report

Starts above - For the full story click on “Call Center Solutions.”

Champions' orientation presentation

Click on “Champions” to view.

Knowledge Base administration guidebook

Illustrating Effective Leadership at the May Champions Meeting



Customer Service Champions focused on leading and managing organizational change. Featured speaker Stewart Liff showed how it could be done in government in a presentation called "Seeing Is Believing: Using the New Art of Visual Management to Improve Organizational Performance." Above, Liff draws OCS director Joe Doyle, illustrating how an effective leader must be aware of the relationships between the parts of an organization, just as an artist must be aware of the relationship between the parts of a model's face.

Knowledge Base Administration Training: A Hands-On Experience

The Governor's Office of Customer Service (OCS) has begun Knowledge Base administration training, which will continue into June. The training's purpose is to teach representatives of 126 state entities how to update their individual agencies' information in the Knowledge Base.

The hands-on training takes one-and-a-half to two hours to complete.

A guidebook, featuring step-by-step, screen-by-screen instructions is given to each training participant. OCS recommends that agencies update their Knowledge Base information at least once a quarter to ensure greater accuracy and fewer misdirected calls.



Susan Brown, Banking and Finance, left, and Madeline Mangan, Department of Revenue, take part in hands-on Knowledge Base administration training May 14 in downtown Atlanta.

The Knowledge Base is a database of state services linked to phone numbers and frequently asked questions. It will serve as the primary information database used by the state's new General Information Contact Center, which is dedicated to connecting Georgians to the right place or person on the first call. The Knowledge Base is useful to agencies' staff when conducting research and responding to customer requests for assistance.

"The Knowledge Base will help Georgia respond better to customers - not just in my agency, but across the state - with first-call resolution," said training participant Richie Golden, Deputy CIO with the Department of Natural Resources.

SRTA Amnesty Program

The State Roads and Tollway Authority (SRTA) has reached out to customers who owe the agency money with a 90-day amnesty program running from March 1 to May 31. The amnesty program encourages these special-case customers to settle their accounts by reducing a percentage of their accrued penalty fees.

"In this case amnesty doesn't mean we are not going to collect money due the state," said Rosa Rountree, Executive Director of SRTA.

For more information about the SRTA amnesty program, please contact Lisa Thompson at 404-893-6103.

Building Customer Service...(cont.)

"We must be ready to serve and that service must be faster, friendlier and easier," said Abraham.

Customers of GSFIC are contractors and vendors. For them, faster and easier means an improved web site and an electronic process for approving purchase orders, thus eliminating paperwork.

And GSFIC has exceeded its goals for reducing cycle time for processing contractor pay applications and change orders as well as for completing construction punchlists and resolving complaints.

Most visible to state employees in the Capitol Hill area is the recent outsourcing of food service in the three state cafeterias. "We listened to our internal customers," said Steve Fanczi, GBA Deputy Director. "They wanted more variety at a similar price."

Another customer-oriented focus is applied to building inspections. GBA team leaders make a weekly walk-through of the facilities in order to monitor their condition. Accompanying each leader is someone from a different area to be a 'fresh pair of eyes.' The regular visits also support increased interaction with occupants—the customers.

Not Just a BLLIP on the Screen

An initiative of SPC is the state's new leasing database, the Building, Land, and Lease Inventory of Property (BLLIP). This is a comprehensive centrally accessible capital asset data warehouse system for all state property, improvements and leases. The database currently contains all 1500 leases for the state, sortable by city, county, landlords and lease terms. <http://www.realpropertiesgeorgia.org>

"Originally, we thought approximately 11,000 buildings would have to be entered into the database," said Abraham. "But to date there are over 19,000. Now the state and the public at large have access to every piece of property that is owned or leased in the name of the State of Georgia."

The BLLIP project was recently recognized with an Innovation Award from the National Association of State Facility Administrators.

Governor's Office of Customer Service

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