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Delivering World-Class Service Pt. 3: Company Service Standards

When building a strong service culture, it is important to have an inspiring vision and mission statement; but they only provide the context. Company service standards, on the other hand, are the “nuts and bolts” of how you serve. They are the specific behaviors that you expect from yourself and your team in the ongoing journey to deliver engaging service. Standards such as “I attentively listen to others” and “I will always give a gracious goodbye”, are clear and apply to everyone from the CEO to the housekeeper.

For service standards to be viewed as credible, they must be discussed frequently. They have to be spoken about everyday and used as the basis for recognition, appraisals and constructive feedback. Let’s assume that one of your standards is “Every team member will maintain an impeccably clean

These “personal” service standards are unique to the individual...

work environment”. If one of your employees walks past a crumpled piece of paper on the floor, that is a great opportunity to discuss that particular service standard. The same applies if a service standard is “I will own and immediately resolve customer complaints, then follow up to ensure customer satisfaction”. Talk

about that standard when you are recognizing your staff for taking ownership of customer issues and following through. Also use that standard when providing constructive feedback when the opposite is true. The point is to make the service standards more than just another concoction dreamed up by senior management.

Here are a few easy-to-follow steps when developing or refining service standards:

1. Identify what your customers expect and how they want to be served (Don’t assume!). If you don’t have a market research department, then conduct your own research by informally surveying your existing customer base. You can start by hosting focus groups. The point is to become crystal clear on what your customers expect from you.
2. Be clear on what type of service your company is promising to deliver. Ensure that your advertisements and other branding messages are consistent with the quality of service you can consistently deliver.
3. Assemble a cross-functional team who will review the collected customer data and begin drafting some preliminary service standards. (Note: be sure to have a senior leader as a member or at least a key sponsor/advocate of this cross-functional team).
4. Get senior leadership input on the preliminary service standards.
5. Revise the preliminary service standards based on senior leadership input (if needed).

6. Share the revised service standards with the company to get more input (remember: the workforce is more likely to embrace anything new or different if they are involved in the developmental process).

7. Revise the service standards again (if needed).

8. Determine how the service standards will be deployed to the workforce (new employee orientation, cards, posters, screen savers, etc.)

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9. On a periodic basis, review the service standards for continued relevancy. This is a great exercise during the strategic planning period

10. In addition to the steps listed above, another great resource to find service standards are the personal service standards already written by your staff.

Use these company service standards to dictate how service is provided on a daily basis. Investing the time and resources to develop, implement, and reinforce service standards will reap enormous rewards in the form of higher morale and more engaged customers.

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*Related articles and resources:

- Personal Service Standards: http://bwenterprise.net/uploads/Personal_Service_Standards.pdf
- Personal Service Commitment card: <http://www.engagemenow.com/order.html>
- EngageMe...the voice of your customer: <http://bwenterprise.net/EngageMe.html>

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