Journey to Customer Service Excellence

Rebecca Pousson, RDH, MBA
Executive Associate Dean
Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry
Bad service is easily defined...

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWTMa76BzH0
CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- 6 Basic Principles of Customer Service Culture
- Review Best Practices in Disney and Ritz Carlton
- Share the VCU Journey to Customer Service Excellence
WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?

- Disney calls it “Magic”
- Ritz Carlton has the Gold Standard
- Enterprise Car Rental… “We’ll pick you up!”
LET’S LOOK AT SOME OUTSTANDING SERVICE COMPANIES AND WHAT THEY DO DIFFERENTLY
DISNEY’S
6 Basic Principles of Customer Service Excellence

- Understanding the guest (customer)
- Defining the service promise and delivering
- The Cast (employees)
- The Setting
- The Process
- Putting Quality in the Magic
RITZ CARLTON’S
6 Principles

- Understand the customer expectations
- Define the mission
- Invest in the employees
- Create the perfect canvas
- Refine the process
- Evaluate
UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

Disney

- Guestology
- Demographics – Physical attributes of a group...who they are, where they come from, how much they spend
- Psychographics – Needs, Wants, Stereotypes, Emotions
UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

Ritz Carlton

- Customer Care
- Understanding the customer means building loyalty
- Loyalty is built by understanding each guest's needs
- Loyal customers become less price sensitive
Walt Disney said in the 1950’s, “My business is making people, especially children, happy.”

Disney Mission – We create happiness by providing the finest in entertainment for people of all ages, everywhere.
DEFINE THE MISSION

Ritz Carlton Gold Standard

“Our Gold Standards are the foundation of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. They encompass the values and philosophy by which we operate.”
The Ritz Carlton

The Credo – The Ritz-Carlton Hotel is a place where the genuine care and comfort of our guests is our highest mission. We pledge to provide the finest personal service and facilities for our guests who will always enjoy a warm, relaxed, yet refined ambience.
Measuring the impact of “cast” on the guest experience for 60+ years

The Cast is the reason most often stated as the reason for return visits

Traditions = orientation program

Performance Culture – a set of behaviors, mannerisms, terms and values that are taught to new cast members
Walt Disney created the first corporate university, Disney University

“Each cast contact with a customer is a chance to win over a customer or lose one.”
THE EMPLOYEES

**Ritz Carlton**

- Provides 250 to 300 hours of training the first year
- Staff trained around the Gold Standards
- Motto – We are Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen.
- Daily Lineup
THE SETTING/CREATING THE PERFECT CANVAS

“All organizations, knowingly or unknowingly, build messages to their customers by the setting in which they operate.”

“King of hoteliers and hotelier to kings.” – you have to create a physical environment that feels luxurious and then meet and exceed service expectations.
REFINE THE PROCESS

- Look at all sources of customer discomfort/dissatisfaction and find new ways to address issues
- Create an “Owners” atmosphere
- Ritz Carlton says, “Acknowledge and apologize for your mistakes.”
- Create mechanisms for employees to present new ideas
  - Baptist Healthcare – Bright Ideas
EVALUATE

- Set goals that reflect the outcomes you want
- Evaluate often
- Celebrate small wins (monthly goals reached) and coach small misses
- Reward or dismiss
JOURNEY TO CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
A FEW FACTS ABOUT VCU

- Only looking clinical enterprise
- It is a not for profit 501(c)(3) (Dentistry@VCU)
- Employees in pre-doc primarily state workers
- Employees in grad programs and intramural faculty practice are mostly at will employees
A FEW FACTS ABOUT VCU

- Our corp. keeps 100% of patient care revenue
- Patient care revenue is 37% of total school funds
A FEW FACTS ABOUT VCU

- The new vision for the school is to run the clinical enterprise entirely through the corporation.
- Allows us to bypass state processes for employment and purchasing.
A FEW FACTS ABOUT VCU

- We give incentive pay to our faculty from clinical profits (Last year $3M of faculty salaries were paid by clinical profits)
- Average combined (all sources) DDS salary = $179,580 (High $455,000, low $107,800)
- Average GP salary (all sources) = $126,825 (1/2 do not participate in the intramural practice)
MORE VCU FACTS

- Urban Setting
  - Parking Issues
  - People Don’t Like Traveling Downtown

- We Have Academic Processes
  - Screenings
  - Students are Slow
  - Takes Several Evaluations to Get Treatment

- We are Not Perfect
- We are Continuing to Develop
UNDERSTANDING OUR PATIENTS

- We define our patient demographics and expectations by provider groups
  - Pre-Doc
  - Post Grad
  - Faculty Practices
- We have identified groups who might use our services
UNDERSTANDING OUR PATIENTS

- We have a marketing team
- We have tested “advertising” with large ads on busses and local news papers
- Word of mouth still works best
- Partnering with senior living facilities to be primary source for dental treatment
DEFINE THE MISSION

- Enhance the Quality of Life through Improved Oral Health
- Provide quality oral health care in a learning environment
- Enhance patient success via education
- Touch as many lives as possible
- We are all OWNERS
INVEST IN THE EMPLOYEES

- Training, training, training!
  - All employees receive customer service training
  - All managers receive countless hours of training on managing people and processes
  - Share in-house (Manager’s Study Club)
    - Study together
    - Share Best Practices
INVEST IN THE EMPLOYEES

- Set expectations (brand new)
  - Individual goals, set to unit goals, set to corporation goals
- Reward success
  - All employees received bonuses in August
- Refocus and coach those not reaching goals
- Separate when necessary
CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT

- Physically we are asking for major renovations
- Psychologically we are aspiring to be small group practices within a large group practice
- Every contact or “touch point” is important
- Make every patient feel important because they are!
Refine the Process

- Pre-doc
  - Formed a clinical staff team for each group practice
    - Patient Scheduler
    - Patient Accounts Tech
    - Quality Assurance Tech
- Hired Practice Managers for Specialty Depts.
- Combined the Call Center
- Consolidated Billing and Insurance
MOST IMPORTANT
CONNECT THE DOTS – EVALUATE AND REWARD PERFORMANCE

- We no longer give away non-merited bonuses
- We have always had corporate goals
- Now all units have goals
- All staff now have goals
- Celebrating small wins –
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
- Year end bonuses tied to achievement of goals
EXAMPLES OF EMPLOYEE GOALS

- Dental Insurance Coordinator – Less than 5% in 120 Outstanding Balance
- Call Center – 75% Calls Answered w/in 10 secs, 100% w/in 50 secs
- Patient Check In/Front Desk – 100% checked in within 5 Mins of Arrival; 100% notified of delays
- Dental Assistant – 90% patients seated within 5 mins of appointment time; 100% patients updated
- Pre-doc Schedulers – 100% Chairs Booked; 90% patient shows
EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE SERVICE CREATIVITY

- Pediatric Dentistry Practice
- “Think like a patient, act like an owner.”
- This initiative involves, faculty, staff, residents and dental students.
- Everyone meets at the beginning of the year to inculcate the new residents and refine the service goals.
- Evaluations are based on meeting patient, parent and supervisor expectations.
BEST FOOT FORWARD (BFF)

- Given to the patient accounts staff member (pre-doc) who provided the best all around service
- Based on patient experiences and assisting other staff members
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Doc</td>
<td>$2,159,714</td>
<td>$2,273,287</td>
<td>$3,625,345</td>
<td>$4,356,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Grad</td>
<td>$4,993,915</td>
<td>$4,622,134</td>
<td>$5,595,445</td>
<td>$6,262,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>$5,258,531</td>
<td>$5,018,594</td>
<td>$5,302,231</td>
<td>$5,749,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$12,114,169</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,916,015</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,528,032</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,370,035</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE?

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YG48U5iPESA