

## BUSINESS MEMO EXERCISE

To: All Staff

From: Robert Owens, President

RE: Recent problems in our Customer Service Department

Date: August 15, 2009

As you are all aware, we have been getting a lot of complaints from our customers regarding our telephone service. To determine if these complaints were the exception or the rule, we sent out surveys to all customers that used our Phone Center in the last three months. The response from our customers was overwhelming. Our response rate from the surveys was 35%, well above the industry average of 20%.

While our response rate for the surveys was good, the results showed that we need a lot of improvement in how our Phone Center performs its customer service functions. The survey results clearly showed that the complaints we were getting from our customers were the rule, not the exception.

Some of the more alarming complaints from our customers were:

- our phone representatives are sometimes rude to our customers;
- our phone representatives often lack the knowledge to solve our customers' problems;
- our customers often wait a long time before their calls are answered or get busy signals;
- when our customers do get through to a phone representative, they are often placed on hold for long intervals.

This is unacceptable! We are implementing a comprehensive plan to correct our poor service. However, to make the plan work we will need the commitment and understanding of our entire staff, especially our phone representatives.

The company will make a significant capital investment in both equipment and staff to correct the problems. But we will also expect more from our phone representatives.

To correct our capacity problem (long wait times before calls are answered and busy signals) we are purchasing a new phone system that will allow us to have more phone lines. We also plan to hire 10 additional phone representatives. We are making this investment to both help our customers and ease the work burden on our staff. However, we are also asking for a commitment from our phone representatives. We are implementing a strict policy for time logged into our new phone system. Tardiness will no longer be accepted. If you are supposed to be at your work station and logged into the phone system at 8:00 am, you must be there at precisely 8:00. 8:01 or 8:02 will not do! In addition, we will track every phone representative's talk time. Your goal should be an average talk time of two minutes. Remember, if you spend ten minutes with a customer you are giving that customer great service, but if three other customers have to wait five minutes before they speak to a phone representative because of that call, we are providing poor service to those three customers. Great service for one and poor service for three is unacceptable. Therefore, manage your talk time.

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## **BUSINESS MEMO EXERCISE (continued)**

To correct the other issues that are directly related to the performance of our phone representatives, we plan to implement a comprehensive training program. The training program will cover topics like correct hold procedures, how to remain courteous even when dealing with angry or rude customers and problem resolution knowledge. The training will be held during your off hours, when you are not scheduled to be on the phone. However, we will pay you double time for attending the training sessions. Once again, this is a situation where we are working together to solve our customers' problems. We are making a financial commitment both in terms of paying trainers and paying our phone representatives for additional work hours at twice your normal pay, but we need a commitment from our phone representatives to give up some of their free time and to take our training sessions seriously.

Finally, since we are a business we need to be sure that our expenditures are worthwhile. Towards that end we will continue to survey our customers and will start a test call and phone monitoring program.

Last but not least, we are implementing a Phone Representative of the Month award. Each month we will give a \$500 check to the Phone Representative of the Month. The award will go to the phone representative with the highest score on our test call and phone monitoring programs who also has an average talk time of two minutes or less and has not been late logging into the phone system all month.

Let's continue to work together to improve the service we provide to our customers so we can remain the best company in our industry.

Thank you.