



Hamilton County HRD's Follow-Up Flash: *Customer Service*

Answer the 'Question Behind the Question'

One of our goals with customers is to provide service quickly. So when they ask a question, we answer it, and we're done! That strategy works well many times.

Sometimes, though, customers could use more information than just the answer to the question. There may be details that would be helpful, but the customers don't know to ask for that detail. In those situations, we have an opportunity to provide proactive customer service — to anticipate the customers' needs, even before the customers realize the need. We have a chance to answer 'the question behind the question' — the real reason they're asking the question!

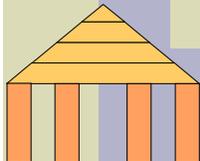
When customers ask you questions, take these steps to proactively help the customers:

- Answer the question that was asked.
- Ask your customers questions to make sure you fully understand their question and their needs.
- Think about extra information the customers may need to know, and share that information, too.
- Listen for underlying issues, and address those issues, too. In some situations, a customer's "question" can be a disguised complaint. For example, a customer might say, "Do you always take over five days to return phone calls?" Rather than just responding, "We try to return phone calls within one business day," you could ask the customer for more information. You might say, "We try to return phone calls within one day. Have you been waiting longer than that for a return phone call?" If so, we've got an opportunity to apologize and to do our best to make things right for that customer.

With just a little extra effort, we can proactively help our customers get all the answers they need when they ask questions.

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Do you have a customer service tip that could help others?
Please contact Laura Maus at 946-4708 or Laura.maus@hamilton-co.org