



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

2nd

Q
U
A
R
T
E
R

2
0
0
9

Hamilton County Employees Show Empathy to Best Serve Customers

Some of Hamilton County's best examples of great customer service involve a common element: empathy.

According to the Telephone Doctor, empathy involves "being aware of and sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of a customer." We need to show customers that we see the situation from their point of view and understand their feelings.

Here are a couple examples, shared by participants during HRD customer service classes, of how Hamilton County Clerk of Courts' employees have used empathy to better serve their customers.

1. An employee who collects bail from customers reported that he's able to provide the best service possible when he puts himself in his customers' shoes. He explained that the way he sees it, we never know what's going to happen in life, and it could just as easily be him bailing out a family member or a friend. So instead of judging the people who are there paying bail, he focuses on treating his customers with respect. He realizes that most people don't pay bail every day, so he's patient with their questions and with the fact that they're often upset about the situation. He said he focuses on providing the kind of service he would want to receive if he were in their situation.
2. When an instructor singled out two Criminal Bailiffs in class and said that they probably don't get thanked for serving arrest warrants, the employees said that actually, they do hear thank you's on a regular basis. They said that people they have arrested do thank them — sometimes even months later, when they run into each other on the streets. Their instructor skeptically asked if that was true. They said it's absolutely true. They realize that it can be scary to be arrested. So when they're driving the person to the Justice Center after serving the arrest warrant, they explain what to expect at the Justice Center and answer any questions the person asks. They said that providing this type of helpful information, and doing so in a respectful manner, typically calms the person down and it helps make a bad situation a little bit better.

We can all follow these examples and use empathy when serving our customers. How? Try to imagine how it would feel if you were in the same situation as your customers. Treat customers with courtesy and respect, use your tone of voice to show caring, and acknowledge their feelings when possible. You can make a positive difference when you take these steps to show empathy.

Do you have a customer service tip that could help others
or a success story to share?

Please contact Lisa Doerger at 946-4713 or Lisa.doerger@hamilton-co.org.

