Customer Service Training with a Tourism Twist: NC Hospitality

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TourismExtension
NCSU • PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM MGMT



NC State University
A&T State University
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Presentation Goals

- Discuss the Importance of Service Quality
- Outline the NC Hospitality Customer Service Training Program
- Discuss Preliminary Results

What is the most important outcome for businesses?



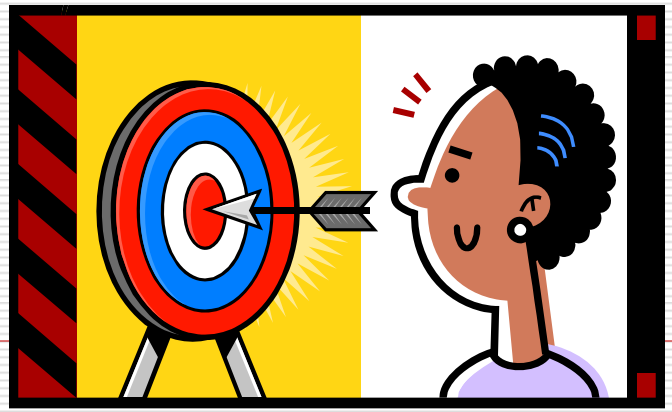


PRODUCING HAPPY & SATISFIED CUSTOMERS!!

- Positive word of mouth
- Repeat customers
- Sufficient customer numbers
- FINANCIAL BENEFITS



How do I produce happy & satisfied customers?



QUALITY

Offer a superior product.



Service Quality

- “The single most researched area in services marketing to date is service quality” (Fisk, Brown and Bitner, 2001)
- Strategy to position businesses more effectively in the marketplace (Cronin and Taylor, 1992)
- “Survival of the fittest” (MacKay and Crompton, 1990)

QUALITY



- ***"Simply Better"***
  - Be the best at what matters most to customers
  - "Generic Category Benefits"
    - Quality products, customer service, appealing setting, convenience, reliability
  - If you can deliver better on these, you have successful differentiation.

Dr. Patrick Barwise (London Business School; written for Harvard Business School Press)

Competitive Advantage

- Charge a lower price
  - Or
- Provide a better product



- Compete on VALUE not PRICE

Customers demand VALUE



- **Value** = **benefits** received for **burdens** endured
  - What customers receive in exchange for what they must endure to receive it
- Burdens (2 components)
  - Monetary = price
  - Non-monetary = long waits, inconvenient location, rude staff
    - Unique experience, hospitality (QUALITY)
- Price is price. Value is the total experience!

North Carolina Hospitality

Making Our State A Better Place to Be

Foster economic development by improving customer service, enhancing North Carolina pride, and strengthening communities.

To improve service delivery to the traveling public.

North Carolina Hospitality

Making Our State A Better Place to Be

- Modeled after the successful Texas CE program “Texas Friendly”
- Developed and delivered by NCCE
  - Steering Committee of 11 agents and one specialist
  - Train the trainer format
  - 100 agents trained
    - Formed regional training teams
  - Over 600 individuals have received training
- Supported by NC Division of Tourism

Program Goals

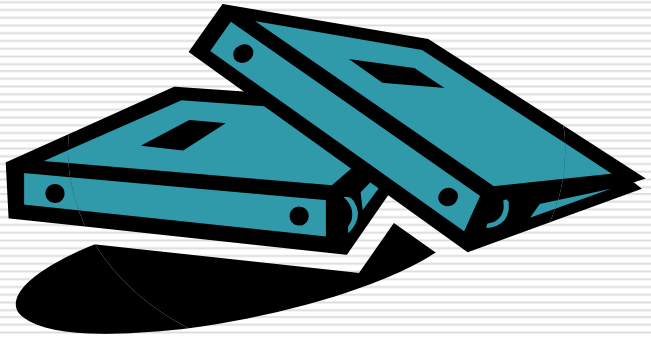
- Participants will understand the role of excellent customer service in their jobs.
- Participants will acquire information and practice skills in customer retention and community pride.
- Participants will learn skills that are personally and professionally beneficial.

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Program Structure

- 8 Hour Curriculum (usually two half-days)
- Seven Hospitality Habits
- Activities
- Worksheets



- **Participants leave training with:**
  - Manual
  - Resources
  - Self Assessment and Professional Development Plan
  - Certificate of Completion

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Hospitality Habit One

- MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION
  - Make the most of the first 6 seconds
  - Start with the right attitude
  - Greet customers promptly
  - Maintain good eye contact



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Hospitality Habit Two

- COMMUNICATE CLEARLY
  - Hearing versus listening
  - Body language
  - Tips for effective listening
  - Avoid slang or technical terms



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Three Ways of Communicating

Guess the percentage of each:

Visual Vocal Verbal

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Three Ways of Communicating

Visual	Vocal	Verbal
55%	38%	7%

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Hospitality Habit Three

MIND YOUR MANNERS

- Why manners matter
- Introductions
- Business etiquette
- Telephone etiquette and netiquette



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Hospitality Habit Four

- KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY
  - What is there to do around here?
  - Attractions, events, activities
  - Visitor information resources
  - Community pride



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Hospitality Habit Five

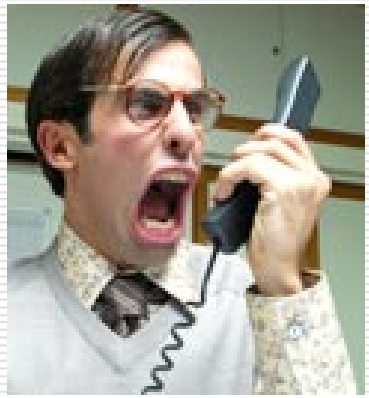
- KNOW YOUR JOB
  - Know products and services
  - Know your customers
  - Know your employees
  - Customers with special needs



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Hospitality Habit Six

- HANDLE PROBLEMS EFFECTIVELY



  - Listen carefully
  - Handling complaints
  - Winning words and soothing phrases
  - Getting feedback

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Hospitality Habit Seven

- MAKE A GOOD LAST IMPRESSION

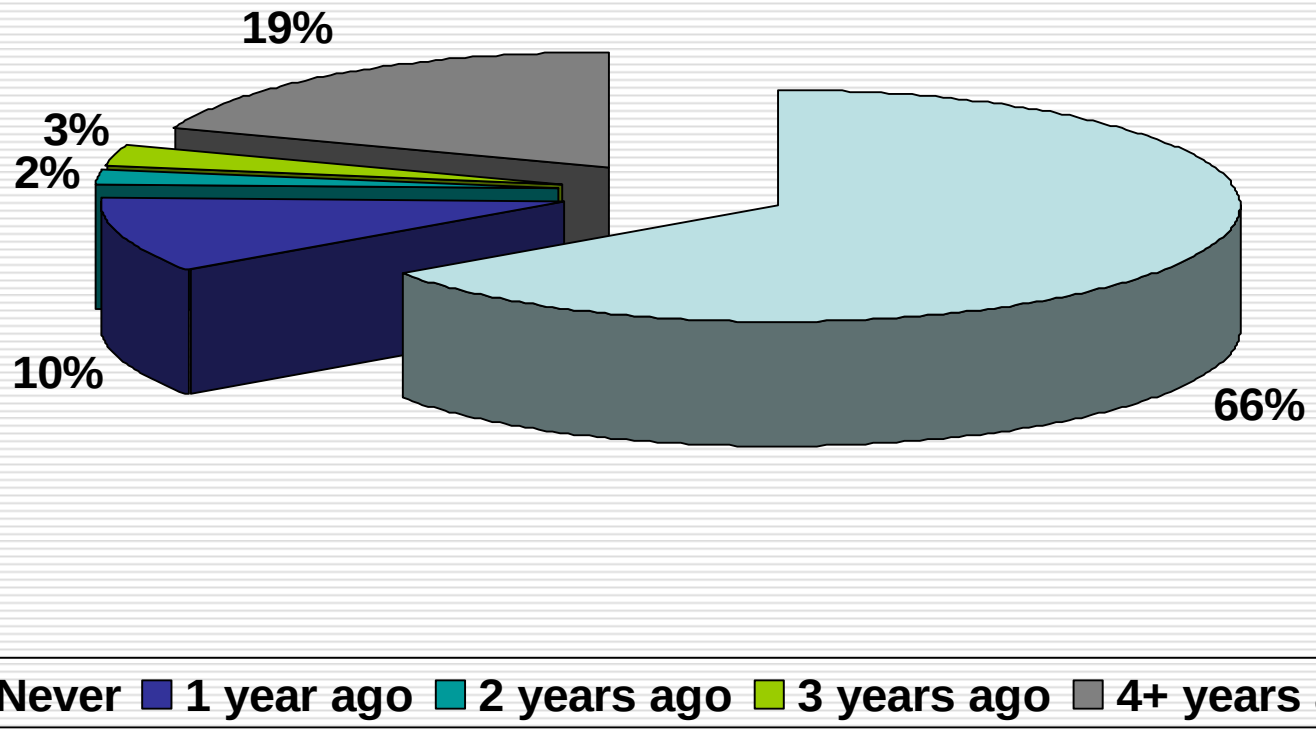
  - Lasting impressions
  - The importance of follow-up
  - Image and professionalism
  - Goal setting and action plan



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When was the last time you participated in a Cooperative Extension Program?



Preliminary Findings

- **95%** of participants said the workshop met (52%) or exceeded (43%) their expectations.
- **99%** said the knowledge gained was useful.
- **93%** rated the curriculum as “very good” (32%)or “excellent” (61%).
- **98%** rated the over all program as “very good” (36%) or “excellent” (62%).

Preliminary Findings

- "**Know Your Community**" and "**Communicate Clearly**" were rated highest by participants.

- Suggestions for related training topics:
  1. Creating a community tourism guide
  2. More in-depth customer service training
  3. Marketing
  4. Web page basics

What did you enjoy most?

- “Learning about all the information we should have available about the community.”
- “The homework.”
- “The handbook, very easy to read and keep up.”
- “Interacting with instructor and peers.”
- “The open discussion & informal setting.”
- “Interactive examples.”
- “Everyone in the group got involved in the discussion.”
- “Different presenters interaction with group, evaluating yourself.”

Participant General Comments

- “You've got it going great! This program far exceeds other programs I have attended with the coop extension.”
- “I really enjoyed the class. It taught me quite a few things I didn't know. It also helped me see what I needed to work on.”
- “Fun and educational. Great that you included participation….Nice to meet so many nice people in neighboring areas and to meet extension staff as well.”

BE on the JOB for your COMMUNITY!

NC Hospitality Helps Businesses Succeed!

- Brings in more customers.
- Increases customer loyalty.
- Reduces employee turnover.
- Increases customer satisfaction.

One business at a time builds communities!

- Fosters economic development.
- Strengthens communities.

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Using the North Carolina Hospitality Program

- Community Workshops
  - Community Leaders
  - Business Owners and Employees
  - Entrepreneurs
- On-Site Proprietor Training
- High School
  - Vocational Ed Classes
  - Youth Groups (4-H)
- Life Skills & Transition Classes
  - Incarcerated & Vocational Rehabilitation
- Community Colleges
- Workforce Centers



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A&T STATE UNIVERSITY
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
Helping People Put Knowledge to Work















THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?



North Carolina State University

Cooperative Extension

Tourism Extension, in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

Supported by:

North Carolina Division of Tourism

North Carolina Hospitality

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