Creating a Culture of Service Excellence

Presented by:
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Introduction

Increasing the community college graduation rate is a matter of national competitiveness and job retraining. It is estimated that 72% of the attrition rate is due to poor service. This is not a touchy-feely subject. Delivering superior service to retain students is an essential business practice for the success of your organization.

A culture of Service Excellence requires knowledge and use of:

- The four key elements of service excellence
- Tools for helping employees see the operation through the lens of the student/client
- A process for ensuring consistent service behaviors across the organization
- A common language for describing service excellence and how to make that language a part of the culture
- Mechanisms for involving employees in ongoing service improvement

Creating a “culture of service excellence” is the method to ensure consistency and sustainability over the long term. The most important factor in creating a culture of Service Excellence is COMMITMENT. Without commitment, a service excellence initiative will likely be a “flavor of the month” program that is here today, gone tomorrow. Commitment is required because changing or building a culture takes time. Your college already has a firm foundation for delivering excellent service, this process is to enhance what is in place now and ensure sustainability in the future.

It is a journey, not a destination. Keep traveling successfully!

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Henry Ford
Most organizations have formal mission and vision statements, as well as stated values. While these are important for guiding the organization, most employees struggle to keep mission, vision, and value statements “top of mind” because they are simply too detailed (and often too complicated).

The **Service Philosophy** of Lake Sumter Community College is a brief, motivating statement that clearly defines what students/clients should experience during any encounter with the college.

**“We inspire confidence through every interaction to empower lives and build futures by providing a caring and supportive learning environment.”**

The **Service Standards** define how employees will achieve the service goal. They provide the consistent, non-negotiable standards of behavior that ensure when the “moment of truth” arrives in a service situation, employees are crystal clear about what to do.

- Respectful
- Competent
- Responsive
- Collaborative
Lake Sumter Community College Service Standards

Respectful is:

- Treat people the way they want to be treated (active listening)
- Be courteous (polite, friendly, caring, honoring personal space)
- Respect hierarchy, procedures and policies
- Appreciate differences (disabilities, socio-economic status, ethnic, gender, age, religion, lifestyles, values, cultures)

Competent is:

- Utilize effectively knowledge, skills and resources
- Exercise active problem-solving and informed decision-making
- Be efficient and reliable
- Follow processes consistently

Responsive is:

- Act in a timely manner
- Demonstrate accessibility (in person, by phone, by email)
- Be dependable by following-up and following-thru on promises
- Be informative by providing accurate information and solutions

Collaborative is:

- Seek and provide help to accomplish goals
- Engage stakeholders for input
- Communicate interdepartmentally
- Build relationships and win-win partnerships with honesty and trust
Many (most) organizations overcomplicate any initiative they undertake. Because of this over complication, these organizations tend to lose momentum and never finish what they start. Employees and management become disillusioned by the never-ending flow of new initiatives that come and go. **The key is to keep it simple!**

The model below contains the four key elements that comprise the student/client experience. It is simple, straightforward and easily communicated to everyone in the organization.

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**“Great customer service is not the result of one big thing. It is the result of many little things done extremely well.”**
The Student/Client

A truly service focused organization sees things through the “lens of the customer.” This approach asks, “How does our customer see us?” Looking at the organization from the student’s and client’s perspective is one of the things that separate outstanding educational institutions from the ordinary.

Most businesses tend to look through the lens of the organization; often resulting in wait lines, voice mail trees, delayed responses, excessive documentation, etc. The customer ends up being disappointed, angry or frustrated. Using the “lens of the customer” in decision-making, increases the likelihood the customer will feel like you care. And isn’t that what Service Excellence is all about?

“Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring back their friends.”

Walt Disney
The Service Environment

Every detail of the service environment is saying something about your organization. Everything the student/client sees, hears, smells, tastes, or touches impacts the experience. Anything that is out of alignment causes a disconnect in their mind. **Everything Speaks!** Students/clients may not consciously notice every detail, but subconsciously clues to your culture are being communicated. What is your service environment saying about your organization? Departments or work groups need to establish and routinely use this tool to ensure the student/client’s interaction with the environment is positive.

### Everything Speaks Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes, materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>• TV/Video visible and running&lt;br&gt;• Entrance Door accessible for handicapped&lt;br&gt;• Sign-In Computer Easy to recognize&lt;br&gt;• Floor no trash, clean&lt;br&gt;• Signs designating service areas clearly visible</td>
<td>• Video not running&lt;br&gt;• Doorsill too high for wheelchair&lt;br&gt;• Sign-in computer lacks signage and directions&lt;br&gt;• Trash or dirt&lt;br&gt;• Obstructed signs</td>
<td>• Check problem and create Help Ticket&lt;br&gt;• Contact facilities to correct the problem&lt;br&gt;• Create instructions and post them next to the computer.&lt;br&gt;• Pick up/vacuum&lt;br&gt;• Remove obstructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Desk</td>
<td>• Clearly visible from Entrance&lt;br&gt;• Desk Free of Clutter&lt;br&gt;• Test File System to date&lt;br&gt;• Test Prep File System to date&lt;br&gt;• Student Support Area Well designated</td>
<td>• No obstacles&lt;br&gt;• Cluttered desk&lt;br&gt;• Test files out of date, unorganized&lt;br&gt;• Test Prep files out of date, unorganized&lt;br&gt;• Signage unclear or missing</td>
<td>• Remove obstacles&lt;br&gt;• Clean/Pick up&lt;br&gt;• Update, organize&lt;br&gt;• Update, organize&lt;br&gt;• Correct/replace signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Areas</td>
<td>• Electrical outlets accessible &amp; working&lt;br&gt;• White Board cleaned w/markers &amp; erasers&lt;br&gt;• Tables clean&lt;br&gt;• Chairs clean&lt;br&gt;• Chairs around tables</td>
<td>• Electrical extensions not accessible, not wrapped to tables&lt;br&gt;• Dirty, missing erasers &amp; markers or dried out&lt;br&gt;• Debris, dirty&lt;br&gt;• Dirty, broken&lt;br&gt;• Chairs askew</td>
<td>• Contact IT and Facilities to correct&lt;br&gt;• Clean, re-supply&lt;br&gt;• Clean/pick up&lt;br&gt;• Create Help Ticket&lt;br&gt;• Rearrange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing Room</td>
<td>• Tables clean&lt;br&gt;• Computers working&lt;br&gt;• Screens clean&lt;br&gt;• Cameras working</td>
<td>• Debris, dirty&lt;br&gt;• Not working&lt;br&gt;• Dirty, smudged&lt;br&gt;• Cameras not working</td>
<td>• Clean/pick up&lt;br&gt;• Create Help Ticket&lt;br&gt;• Clean&lt;br&gt;• Create Help Ticket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Service Delivery

Service delivery is the people element of your organization. No matter what business you are in, service success ultimately comes down to your people. Successful service delivery is driven by employees seeing the operation through the lens of the customer and performing in such a way that they are looking to create “loyal” students/clients. This is accomplished by creating service wows.

When we speak of creating service wows, we are talking about small things, consistently done, that please the students/clients. Most employees have done something that wowed a student/client, and some have techniques they use regularly. Bringing together a group of employees to talk about service best practices provides an opportunity to share, discover, and implement wow techniques throughout the organization.

A great tool for capturing best practices is Service Mapping. This tool helps a team look at any and all aspects of the student/client experience and collectively decide how they can create wows.

The secret to success is to treat all customers as if your world revolves around them.
LSCC SERVICE MAP

Process Analyzed: Work Ticket Request

Step 1: Describe each step of the process through the “lens of the student/client.”

1. The client goes to the web to put in a work ticket
2. The client finds the Help Desk Web page to complete a work ticket request
3. The client enters the information for service needed including selecting the level of criticality
4. The client receives an email message acknowledging request received
5. The client waits for appropriate support service person to make contact
6. The client waits until service support is provided correcting problem
7. The client resumes work because problem is fixed
8. The client receives an email closing out work ticket
9. The client resumes work because problem is fixed

Step 2: For each block identified in step 1, describe what would be considered mediocre service and what would be considered excellent service.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Number</th>
<th>Mediocre Service</th>
<th>Excellent Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knows that its &quot;Help Desk&quot; to find</td>
<td>Change name to “Help Work Ticket” Emphasized in new employee orientation, Helpdesk is clearly identified on website as where to go for computer support, Banner, media and facilities help (currently just listed as helpdesk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knows where to go on web quickly (4 browsing steps)</td>
<td>Choice: Can call in ticket OR complete ticket on web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear and easy to find work order request and technicians request options can be found on the Help Desk web page.</td>
<td>Define and/or give examples of the difference between the work order request and the technician request options to eliminate the possibility of confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Selections/choices understandable; Criticality defined in approx service time</td>
<td>Drop downs have main default setup as the heaviest known selection, then alphabetical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All browser types have been tested, statement on main page about required browser (Firefox doesn’t work properly with current form)</td>
<td>Drop down options have been “client tested” in terms of the ease of understanding of the terms used. Establish glossary with examples if technical terms must be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Okay as is</td>
<td>Would give timeframe of when help would arrive/assist &amp; technician name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If type or subtype is entered on form incorrectly, technician would correct and send to appropriate technician, notifying client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Contacts client on the way or clarifies delay time to arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Informs client of time it will take to correct problem so client can wait or go on to other work</td>
<td>If problem will take hours to a day, offer alternative equipment or service support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Service Map Form & Instructions for Use

Process Analyzed: __________________________________________

1  2  3

4  5  6

7  8  9

Step 1: List process steps in each block

Step 2: Which blocks present immediate areas of opportunity? (List in Step 3)
**Step 3:** For each block identified in step 2, describe what would be considered mediocre service and what would be considered excellent service.

<table>
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<tr>
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**Step 4:** Choose one or two processes to work towards improving student/client service and determine improvement strategies.
The Processes

Processes are the systems and procedures your students/clients must go through in order to do business with you. When was the last time you called your organization and asked to speak to yourself? What was the experience like? Did you get put on hold, could they find you, did they know you?

Most processes were put in place for the ease and convenience of the organization, not necessarily for the student/client. Many systems have been outgrown or outdated but are still in place because “that’s the way it’s always been done”. Some procedures are no longer necessary due to new technology, but are still followed because no one has taken the time to look at them.

“Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed to be simple is to be great.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson
LSCC Service Excellence Team Members

Leadership Actions have Champions who lead work committees responsible for meeting specific goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Action</th>
<th>Champion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Awareness</td>
<td>Pat Landsman (Director, College Relations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation &amp; Training</td>
<td>Tim Kane (Executive Director, HR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Carolyn Scott (Senior Manager, Campus Services-SL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and Celebration</td>
<td>Claire Brady (Director, Student Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Accountability</td>
<td>John Froman (Controller)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>Dr. Kristy Lisle (Executive Director, Planning and IE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Obstacle System</td>
<td>Denise English (Director, Library Services)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership Action: Communication & Awareness

Responsibility - Goals:
1. Keep Service Excellence fresh and interesting
2. Share success stories and best practices
3. Use all forms of media

Leadership Action: Recruitment

Responsibilities - Goals:
1. Model Service Excellence throughout the interview process
2. Learn the unique qualities of your best performers
3. All aspects of the interview process should be structured and consistent.

The recruitment process is key for ensuring that your organization recruits and hires the best possible candidates. During this process, a candidate will experience the culture of the organization. It is your opportunity to make a good impression. Everything speaks during the interview process. Interviewees are picking up subtle (and not so subtle) clues as to what the culture of the college truly is.

Key elements of a good recruitment process include:

- Accurate job descriptions/expectations
- Defined technical and behavioral competencies
- Structured set of interview questions
- Trained interviewer(s) with knowledge of the position
- Appropriate time & location for interview

“Although not every coach can win consistently with talent, no coach can win without it.”

John Wooden
Leadership Action:
Orientation and Training

Responsibilities - Goals:

Provide Orientation
- Pride in LSCC
- Understanding of Service Philosophy
- Clear understanding of what is expected

Provide On-going Training
- Reinforce Service Philosophy and Standards

Education, in all its forms, pays off when it is focused, sincere, and ongoing. The culture of an organization is impacted by each individual. A newly hired employee makes a determination about their choice of position within the first 5-7 days of employment. It is critical that the true culture of any organization take the opportunity to define itself during the orientation process.

Most world-class organizations quickly indicate training and education as key to their success. However, it isn't simply a matter of sending employees to classes and checking training off your to-do list. It is about using educational opportunities to strategically deepen the culture of the organization.

Effective education/training in an organization should accomplish three objectives:

1. **Build pride in the organization** – When employees are proud of what they do and the organization they work for, they will usually go the extra mile when opportunities present themselves. This is because they feel a sense of duty to uphold the image the organization has built. In most organizations employees don’t truly feel a connection to the organization’s heritage and traditions; therefore they have no anchor for an emotional connection.

2. **Communicate the "true product"** – In order to get the highest level of performance, employees need to understand the value of what they do beyond the mechanics of the job. Most people want to know their work is meaningful to others. This is why Disney’s true product is not rides; it is "happiness”.

   One of the best ways to communicate the true product is through storytelling. We all remember the fables read to us in childhood. To say, “We inspire confidence” is nice, but not very effective. Providing examples of how it is done, and celebrating those who do it, provides a model for employees to emulate.
3. **Communicate expectations** – Gallup surveys have demonstrated that one of the top reasons for employee defection is a lack of clarity regarding expectations. When people don't know what it takes to be successful, they do their best to simply stay out of trouble and off the radar screen. Clear expectations provide a template for success. Consistent, non-negotiable service standards may sound limiting at first glance. In reality, consistent standards are liberating in that they allow employees to focus their creativity in appropriate ways. Expectations should not simply be a list of vague values. Expectations should be communicated as behaviors. What does excellent performance look like, sound like, and feel like? The more information provided, the greater the likelihood you the performance will be delivered.

When people are learning, they are growing. When employees feel that they are growing, they are more likely to stay with your organization. When, or if they leave, it will be for a new opportunity, versus dissatisfaction with the job.

To ensure that every new hire understands the service philosophy and standards of an organization, it must be an integral part of the orientation process. This provides the foundation for performance expectations during an employee’s tenure.
Leadership Action: Recognition & Celebration

Responsibilities - Goals:
- Recognize strong performers as you see service excellence behaviors occur
- Relate recognition to Service Philosophy/Standards
- Provide recognition for both individuals and groups

The word recognition actually comes from the Latin “to know again.” Effective recognition should help an employee know again the feeling he/she experienced when providing excellent service. When someone acknowledges our performance we know again the good feelings we experienced when doing a good deed. That emotional connection is the key to successful recognition.

Recognition is about acknowledging good results and reinforcing positive performance; it’s about shaping an environment in which contributions are noticed and appreciated.

Three types of service recognition are valuable:
- Organization-to-employee
  - Builds pride
- Manager-to-employee
  - Builds trust
- Peer-to-peer
  - Builds sense of family
Leadership Action: Measurement

Responsibilities - Goals:
- Help staff decide what to measure
- Encourage display of measurement data
- Help staff set goals

Measurement is a part of everyday life. Everywhere we turn, we see clocks, thermometers, charts, gauges and other ways to take and communicate measurement. It keeps us informed and paying attention to what is important. Measurement establishes a “scorecard” for articulating goals, objectives, and performance measures. It helps us measure progress toward these goals and objectives. Organizational measurements show the results that then help establish benchmarks to judge future performance and measure improvement.

Another type of measurement that is useful in advancing your service initiative is the day-to-day or local measurements. They are less formal and are usually driven by a specific need or objective. They are helpful because they directly involve employees in the measurement and improvement processes.

The power of local service measures is that they’re selected and managed by each workgroup. They should not, however, be random and disconnected. Every department or unit should choose a measure that links to the Service Philosophy and Service Standards.

“Those who measure, tend to analyze. Those who analyze, tend to improve.”

Dr. Demming
Leadership Action:
Service Obstacle System

Responsibilities - Goals:
- Develop a system for communication of service obstacles
- Encourage communication of obstacles
- Involve staff in resolving obstacles

Obstacles that prevent employees from giving great service need to be removed. A service-oriented organization searches for ways to make the customer experience easier and more pleasant. They look at their processes and ask “How can we make this better?”

Employees are the best source for identifying and solving service problems. Students/clients are also a great source of information, but employees see the ongoing, recurring problems. A service obstacle system is a routine methodology for presenting identified obstacles and achieving resolution.

There is a time in every problem where it is big enough to see and small enough to solve.

Source unknown
Leadership Action:
Management Accountability

Responsibilities - Goals:
- Walk the talk
- Keep the vision in front of staff
- Hold everyone accountable for Service Excellence

Accountability is critical to the success of any service excellence process. As leaders it seems that there are a million things competing for our attention. We focus on those items which we are held seriously accountable for. Without accountability, service excellence remains a good idea, but not a reality.

Accountability Tools
- Job Descriptions
- Performance Appraisals/Development
- Recognition
- Coaching and Counseling

“We judge ourselves by our intentions, but others judge us by our behaviors.”
Eric Harvey

- END OF PRESENTATION -