



Governor's Office of Customer Service  
**FASTER. FRIENDLIER. EASIER.**

August 2007

## Recognize Your BEST in Customer Service

**"People may not remember what you say, they may not even remember what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel."**



Governor Perdue shared this adage from poet Maya Angelou in his meeting with agency heads on Aug. 15. Encouraging participation in the Team Georgia Customer Service Recognition Program, he said, **"Those people who've made you feel well served, we want to be able to celebrate them."**

**Nominations are due Friday, Sept. 14**, for the first annual Governor's recognition event for customer service excellence. A distinguished panel of leaders from public and private industry will select the winners.

Visit [team.georgia.gov](http://team.georgia.gov) for complete details and nomination forms. You can nominate individuals, teams, or even an entire agency – and it's okay to nominate your own! Don't miss this opportunity to

recognize your agency's shining customer service stars!

## You Might be Team Georgia...

**...If you greet your customers promptly and courteously!**

A standard greeting is one of the ways that participants in "The Art of Exceptional Customer Service" learn to provide the best customer service.

This interactive, multimedia training program for both frontline employees and their managers is anchored in our five commitments to customers: to be *helpful, courteous, accessible, responsive* and *knowledgeable*. It ensures a common approach to delivering exceptional customer service across agencies and programs.

A video message from Jeff Foxworthy is just one of almost 30 videos and hands-on learning activities that are part of the training.

To date, 62 state training professionals from 20 different agencies and the Board of Regents have attended the four train-the-trainer sessions and are now rolling out this training through their organizations.

To access "The Art of Exceptional Customer Service" in your agency, contact your Customer Service Champion.



Photo credit: Laura Farr/Zuma Press

## Change Agents & Agencies



### Going From "Good to Great"

Few would put the words "customer service"

in the same sentence with the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), but its commissioner certainly does.

In three years as commissioner, James E. Donald has changed the culture of his organization by focusing on its many customer groups.

"The Department's mission to protect and serve is non-negotiable," said Donald. But, he adds, within that mission "it is possible to share the Governor's focus on the customer and on the many lives affected by the Department."

### Involving the community

Family members of offenders and victims are one of GDC's customer groups. A web site receiving two million hits a day allows them to track locations of inmates and other offenders on a daily basis. In May, GDC added a customer feedback survey to the site.

Family members are also the focus of **"Family Day Events"** where agency leaders and wardens are available for face-to-face conversations.

**"Georgia on the Move"** is a two-and-a-half-day event held in communities housing correctional facilities. State officials from several agencies meet with the public—residents and citizens, local government officials, the faith community and business leaders. The event includes forums, facility tours and educational sessions. These have been held in Forsyth, Savannah, Augusta and Tattall County.

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**More Stories on the Web!** <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

- » Thanks to RPI, Child Support says "R.I.P." to old processes
- » A look back: GTA's Champion reflects on customer service progress

## Workers' Compensation: "We'll make it happen!"

The State Board of Workers' Compensation (SBWC) Settlement Division is working to reduce claims resolution time from several weeks to 10 days or fewer. As Director Craig Henderson describes, the ingredients of the team's success are one part technology, one part process improvement and seven parts staff dedication, topped with caring, committed leadership.

New software will reduce paperwork and has already helped shave days off the turnaround time. The division is enforcing stricter requirements for attorneys, including 48-hour deadlines to provide complete documentation for claims and more detailed itemization of expenses.



Lynne Moon works to settle claims more quickly.

The seven-person team includes Henderson; examiners Lynne Moon (supervisor), Pat Jordan, Doris Faulk, Lakisha Drake; secretary Brenda Render and legal secretary Renae Stamps. These experienced individuals have come up through the organization and share a wealth of knowledge about the business and their customers' needs. The agency is cross-training other staff to support seasonal volume increases.

"Customers ask for our employees

by name, and this is evenly distributed across the group," notes Henderson. "Everyone is someone's favorite!"

Team members are empowered to act, and they take personal responsibility for the claims they handle. They publicize their direct phone numbers to ensure easy accessibility.

"We focus on being responsive to customer needs," says Henderson. "Our internal slogan is 'I'll make it happen!'"

Attorney Ben Leonard sent kudos to the team for their recent improvements. "I know you have put serious effort into the turnaround time on the approval, and the results are both apparent and impressive."

SBWC joined the Governor's Customer Service Initiative earlier this year, naming Deputy COO Kathy Oliver as Champion. Henderson credits Chairperson Carolyn Hall and Executive Director Stan Carter for their support of customer service.

"Their message to staff is that our work makes a difference in people's lives," says Henderson. "For us, this initiative is not a correction of how we've been doing business; it is an underlining of our culture."

## GA Contact Center Solution a Leader Among States

Four large agencies will install the State Contact Center Solution under the enterprise-wide contract for contact centers. In the next fiscal year, call centers in

- » Taxpayer Services, Dept. of Revenue
- » Dept. of Driver Services
- » Division of Family and Children Services, DHR
- » Office of Child Support Services, DHR

will have an opportunity to improve service to their customers.

Teams from the Governor's Office of Customer Service (OCS) and vendors Nortel and Oracle are already working



with technical support staff to plan for the systems installation. All of this will make service faster, friendlier and easier.

OCS has been selected by Benchmark Portal, a leader in call center best practices, workforce optimization and industry benchmarks, to host their quarterly Call Center Leadership Course.

The three-and-a-half-day course is offered through Benchmark Portal's College of Call Center Excellence, and attendees will receive CEU credit from Purdue University. OCS has invited leaders from the first agencies installing the State Contact Center Solution to receive this management training.

## Change Agent...(cont.)

### Moving toward the customer

Of the state's 119 facilities, 92 are located south of metro Atlanta. However, GDC's headquarters is currently located in downtown Atlanta. "We are ill positioned to manage prisons from so far away," said Donald.

The solution is a relocation, currently underway, of headquarters and GDC's Training Academy to the historic campus of Tift College in Forsyth. The long range goal is to provide a "one-stop shop" for customers needing state services in middle Georgia.

Commissioner Donald already spends a minimum of 3 days a week traveling outside of Atlanta. He meets frequently with wardens and inmates. Passionate about helping inmates see alternatives to incarceration, he believes providing additional work opportunities will be a side benefit of the move. GDC already operates farms and a print shop for this purpose.

### Employees are key

Employees are key customers to Donald; he calls them his troops. A former Army Major General, Donald knows he cannot succeed without taking care of the troops. He focuses on listening and enhances communication through an intranet. He also conducts an annual employee satisfaction survey.

Employee recognition is part of GDC's annual awards ceremony. In the next year, Donald plans for every GDC employee to take "The Art of Exceptional Customer Service" training.

"Three years ago, the employees didn't think anything would happen. But because they see physical changes—like the move to Forsyth—they know we are making progress according to our strategic plan," said Donald.

### Going from "Good to Great"

This summer, managers held a two-day retreat to develop GDC's FY08 Customer Service Improvement Plan. The theme for this year is "Going from 'Good to Great.'"

"It is my goal," said Donald, "that this transformational change in the Department be a permanent one."

## Governor's Office of Customer Service

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