



A Simple Solution to Improving Customer Service in a Local Authority



A local council was criticised for its lack of response to customers in many areas of its service.

One of the main problems was found to be that council staff did not feel that the public were 'customers'.

A programme was developed to change staff perceptions of their role in providing a service.

All employees attended customer awareness workshops which:

- * Created an awareness of the public as customers
- * Highlighted the concept of the internal customer
- * Showed everybody that they had a responsibility for customer care
- * Developed customer service skills
- * Introduced a feedback system to senior management regarding barriers to good service and ideas to improve

The feedback from the workshops resulted in real action and response from senior management which was communicated back to staff.

- * Real improvements in the service were experienced by customers
- * The culture of the organisation became more customer focussed
- * A dialogue was created between staff and senior management and as a result communications and relationships improved

A team of volunteer staff from all levels were trained to run the workshops. They received a thorough training in trainer skills and specifically, how to run the customer awareness workshop. This increased staff buy-in to the programme and developed a team of skilled in-house trainers who went on to assist with other programmes.

