

Top 10 Customer Service Issues

How does your organization rate?

1. Go the extra mile.

The extra mile doesn't have to cost extra, and it can create good experiences for students, goodwill for Texas Tech, and good feelings for service providers.

Action Step: Gather your team for a brainstorming session. Create a list of things you can do - at no cost - to show students and customers your creativity, care, and appreciation. Implement one new idea at a time. Remember, to be effective, put your heart into it.

"Let no one come to you without going away better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting. Give them not only your care, but also your heart." - Mother Teresa

2. Provide quicker service.

Not much has changed here. Students still don't like to wait in line even though they acknowledge there's not as much of that as there used to be.

Students do want anything that has to be done in person to be accomplishable on the computer screen. This generation is very computer savvy. For example, they've commented that info on university Web sites is hard to find. Multiple sites compound the confusion, and consolidation is a popular suggestion.

3. Answer the phone!

For those offices that do business over the phone, students want a live person to answer.

- Answering systems and automated directories created frustration and dissatisfaction with departments' overall service.
- Students do not know the name of the person they need to speak to, so access to last-name directories is not helpful.
- Correspondence contains a phone number to call, but no name. How do you find the right person when you don't know who you're looking for?
- Another source of frustration for students is staff who do not return phone calls.

4. Communicate clearly and politely.

Poor communication appears to be the chief source of many frustrations, delays, and errors. Students cited lost paperwork, contradictory answers, and rude treatment by office workers.

Students often don't know what questions to ask to solve their problems. They rely on service providers to fill in the gaps in their knowledge and to talk them through their options.

5. Provide more information.

Explain processes and provide detail on routine or computer-generated correspondence.

6. Listen and care.

Show empathy and truly listen to the customer's problems and needs. Students commented that the administration and staff were too interested in image and fund raising and not concerned about providing quality service.

7. Offer more service hours.

Some services are not available when customers expect them to be - they would appreciate late afternoon and evening options.

8. Know your job.

Students complained about staff who lack job knowledge. Again, contradictory and multiple answers created more frustration and time to resolve these issues.

9. Respond to e-mail.

If you offer the option of asking questions by e-mail on your Web site, or paper correspondence, then answer e-mail promptly.

10. Work with other offices to help customers.

Before sending customers to another campus office, call that office to ensure success for the customer. Give the customer a name and office number to minimize the hassle factor.