Developed for
Boise State University

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Introduction

A University strategic planning effort has been underway and has resulted in a slate of campus wide projects. Data collected from the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicates that compared to peer institutions, some students do not feel supported academically or socially and do not engage in many faculty or staff interactions. A common complaint and experience that contributes to students feeling they do not matter is “getting the runaround.”

Student-Centered Service Model

Based on these results, the University is adopting and implementing a customer service model to positively impact and contribute toward improved satisfaction goals as noted below.

1. Shared responsibility for student support and success as indicated by the implementation of a student-centered service model.
2. Alignment of performance standards and behaviors associated with the student-centered service model.
3. Increased scores on NSSE on the “supportive campus environment” indicator.
4. Improved student satisfaction with service and information delivery.

In this management briefing, you will learn how to manage and coach employees on how to use the student-centered service skills to provide the highest level of service to the customers at Boise State University. This training will look at the supervisor role in supporting employee understanding and use of the student-centered service skills.

Overview

Students today have elevated expectations around wait/call times, technology, and treatment in customer service. Supervisors set the stage for customer service excellence. Supervisors create the environment that works for your customers and your employees. Your job as supervisor is to clearly set the expectations for the employee performance and behaviors that support student-centered service to ensure student success.

Learning Outcomes

After participating you will be able to:

- Explain the Student-Centered Service standards, link to Boise State University Shared Values, set expectations for employee performance and behavior, and align with the performance evaluation process.
- Coach employees to provide student-centered service based on the communication styles model.

**Student-Centered Service Standards and Expectations**

**Student-Centered Service Standards**

Do you know what is most important to your customers about your service? The Student-Centered Service Standards provide the key elements to focus your employees on meeting the customers’ needs.

These standards include:

- Comprehensive Responsiveness
- Efficiency
- Listening and Clear Communication
- Empathy and Conflict Management
- Respect and Inclusive Practices

Your role as supervisor is to review the Student-Centered Service Standards with your employees and discuss how these standards impact the customers and them. The employees will complete an *Assessment of Student-Centered Service Skills* as part of Student-Centered Service Skills training.

**Boise State University Shared Values**

Boise State University upholds the following values as the foundation for a civil and nurturing environment. Campus community members are expected to adhere to these common values. The Student-Centered Service Standards support Boise State University’s shared values and you as the supervisor should discuss how these standards align. The Boise State University shared values include:

- **Academic Excellence** – engage in our own learning and participate fully in the academic community’s pursuit of knowledge.

- **Caring** – show concern for the welfare of others.

- **Citizenship** – uphold civic virtues and duties that prescribe how we ought to behave in a self-governing community by obeying laws and policies, volunteering in the community, and staying informed on issues.

- **Fairness** – expect equality, impartiality, openness and due process by demonstrating a balanced standard of justice without reference to individual bias.
Respect – treat people with dignity regardless of who they are and what they believe. A respectful person is attentive, listens well, treats others with consideration and doesn’t resort to intimidation, coercion or violence to persuade.

Responsibility – take charge of our choices and actions by showing accountability and not shifting blame or taking improper credit. We will pursue excellence with diligence, perseverance, and continued improvement.

Trustworthiness – demonstrate honesty in our communication and conduct while managing ourselves with integrity and reliability.

Boise State University Performance Evaluation
Student-Centered Service Rubric

The Student-Centered Service standards have a rubric to support your evaluation of the skills related to the Boise State University Human Resource Services performance evaluation and rating guide.

Rating Guide:

(3) EX – Exemplary Performance: This employee performs at a level which results in significant accomplishments that may not have been otherwise achieved.

(2) SS – Solid Sustained Performance (Exceeds Expectations): This employee demonstrates performance that results in significant accomplishments that may not have been otherwise achieved.

(1) APS – Achieves Performance Standards: This employee meets job expectations or this employee is developing new skills and gaining new knowledge.

(0) DNA – Does Not Achieve Performance Standards: This employee’s performance needs improvement and/or is inconsistent or unacceptable.

You as the supervisor should review the rubric. Next, review with your employees so they understand how they will be evaluated.
Managing Employees to Provide Student-Centered Service

Inspire Performance and Behaviors

The supervisor’s role is to model the performance and behaviors that are important for your employees to follow. You set the expectations for service excellence. Lead by example. Develop your people. Focus employees on the customer needs.

Your role as the supervisor is to bring experience and university knowledge to support the employee and the customer. You need to know the policies/procedures, identify resources, offer suggestions and guidance, and if necessary, intercede with the customer.

The Forum Corporation, in its Customer Focus Research project, identified management factors that set customer-focused companies apart. This research concludes that supervisors set the tone for the outcome of delivering excellent customer service for both external and internal customers. As a supervisor, you are the model for your staff. The following actions can enhance the customer service climate in your environment.

External Customers

1. Set customer service performance goals and standards
   - Hold discussions about what putting the customer first means to you and to the University.
   - Communicate clear goals and standards that support high-quality service.
   - Communicate what you expect your staff to do when serving customers.

2. Provide leadership to help solve customers’ problems
   - When there is a conflict between a customer and an employee, listen to both sides of the story.
   - Let the employee know that you appreciate the thought that went into his or her response.
   - Explain your decision and why you made it.
   - Decide together how a similar situation might be handled the next time it occurs.
   - Make an effort to help remove obstacles that hinder serving customers well.
   - Set a personal example of good customer service, using excellent communication skills with internal and external customers.
   - Take some time to interact with customers directly. See how you would solve problems in the kinds of situations that your staff encounters. Discuss your interactions with staff and ask them how they would have handled the circumstances.
   - Help an employee solve a problem with another staff member or by getting information from other departments.
3. Find better ways to obtain customer loyalty
   - Ask employees who have contact with customers for information on customer needs or expectations.
   - Seek opportunities to try new ways of doing things to serve customers better.
   - Ask and consider team members’ ideas about improving the quality of products and services.

4. Help employees enhance their customer relationships
   - Give honest and direct feedback about how well team members are serving customers.
   - Help employees learn from positive and negative experiences with customers.
   - Be sensitive to the “contact overload” syndrome and provide ways for employees to relieve stress.
   - Observe employees’ skills to see if they are in the right role.

Internal Customers

1. Use the systems approach to serve internal customers
   - Identify policies and procedures that interfere with serving customers well, and change them to achieve better customer satisfaction.
   - Provide the support and resources that are needed to serve customers well.
   - Use customer research to improve service.
   - When asked, always help staff with customer problems.
   - Provide staff with the resources they need to serve customers (equipment, tools, and physical space).
   - Insist on cooperation rather than competition within the company, and model cooperative behavior.
   - Keep all staff informed about customer needs and expectations.

2. Increase the ability to serve customers
   - Cross-train staff to maximize use of talents, keep learning interesting, and encourage people to assist other departments.
   - Encourage employees to feel that being responsive to internal customer needs is their personal responsibility, and not someone else’s job.
   - Function as a team in serving internal customers.
   - Ensure that customer relations’ skills are an important factor in deciding who is hired to work with customers.
• Reward employees for doing a good job of serving internal customers.

3. Value excellence
  • Resolve internal customers’ problems to their satisfaction.
  • Personally provide high-quality service to internal customers.
  • Meet the goals and standards for the level of service quality the University expects.

4. Relate with internal customers
  • Regularly ask internal customers about their needs or expectations.
  • Regularly collect feedback from internal customers about the quality of the service received.
  • Employ a “whatever it takes” policy to remedy the situation for a dis-satisfied internal customer or one with a special need.
  • Use information about the needs or expectations of internal customers to identify ways to serve them better.

Coaching Employees to Provide Student-Centered Service

Once the standards and expectations have been established, your role as supervisor is to coach and develop your employee’s skills to help them be successful. Supervisors can attend the Boise State University Human Resource Services management or supervisory training for how to manage performance.

In this briefing, you are going to use the Communication Styles model to coach employees on how to improve their communication with the customers – both external and internal.

Communication Styles Model

So much of what happens with the customer experience is transactional – that is, two people are bringing something to the conversation.

Experienced customer service representatives know that they can’t control what the other person brings, but they can manage and adapt how they respond to it by understanding themselves first. They can then observe the customer’s communication style and adapt their style to be more effective by using the customer’s style. The employee has been trained on the Communication Styles model.

As a supervisor, you can:

• Identify your communication style.
- Identify the employee’s communication style.
- Adjust your style to the style of the person you are coaching to be most effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Style Descriptions</th>
<th>Coaching Strategies</th>
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| Brown | To the Brown style, the main purpose of communication is to **get things done**. Brown style communicators are task focused and results oriented. Brown style communicators send signals that are:  
  - Decisive  
  - Direct  
  - Action focused  
  - Authoritative  
  - Bottom-line oriented |  
  - Be prepared, competent, and straightforward when coaching.  
  - Provide structured, logical, and specific feedback examples with stated clear benefits of improving performance or behavior.  
  - Remind them to respect and consider others’ needs for communication or more detailed information.  
  - Use problem-solving discussions with direct, to-the-point examples and consequences spelled out.  
  - Define outcomes, schedules, and timelines with practical and realistic actions to implement learning plans. |
| Green | To the Green style, the main purpose of communication is to **exchange information**. Green style communicators send signals that are:  
  - Logical  
  - Factual  
  - Analytical  
  - Thorough |  
  - Use observation, example, and hands-on experiences that apply directly to the developmental needs.  
  - Provide logical steps and allow them time to process and ask questions.  
  - Offer feedback that is accurate, timely, respectful and related specifically to the task.  
  - Analyze things left unfinished and help them make decisions and complete tasks.  
  - Monitor for unrealistic expectations of others and thinking that all things should be logical. |
| Blue | To the Blue style, the main purpose of communication is to **connect with other people**. Blue style communicators tend to send communication signals that are:  
  - People oriented  
  - Sensitive  
  - Supportive  
  - Considerate  
  - Relationship building |  
  - Provide understanding and caring coaching allowing for discussion about how they are feeling and can improve.  
  - Incorporate own personal experience or that of others from similar or past situations.  
  - Build an interpersonal relationship to support their need for connection.  
  - Provide encouragement, praise, and positive feedback, especially for new tasks or challenges.  
  - Allow for small-group or personal one-to-one learning.  
  - Discuss how to keep their need for social time in balance with work requirements. |
| Red | To the Red style, the main purpose of communication is to **express a combination of facts, feelings, drama, humor and creative ideas**. Red style communicators tend to send signals that are:  
  - Colorful  
  - Rapid fire  
  - Creative  
  - Fun loving |  
  - Be a humorous, insightful coach who shows you believe in what you say to them.  
  - Use a variety of methods, brainstorming, and “what if” questions to allow them to talk over what needs to change.  
  - Give the overall goal or big picture as to why important.  
  - Allow for their input and active practice with others.  
  - Generate ideas together for solutions.  
  - Provide structure, follow-through, and time to change.  
  - Direct them, when needed, to keep them focused on work requirements. |
Coaching Model

Positive Feedback

The following structure for coaching will allow you to have short conversations that make a big difference. The S/TAR format is easy to use and consists of the following:

1. **Situation/Task**
   Your opening statement will identify the general topic of the positive coaching.
   
   “I want to talk to you about (the category of performance or behavior).”
   - The customer service interaction I observed this morning...
   - Your interaction with your co-worker...
   - Your documentation of the customer issue in our software...

2. **Action**
   Once you have their attention, you present them with a concrete and specific description of some aspect of their performance or behavior. Your goal is to be so specific that they understand the exact reason the action was positive.
   
   “I observed (describe the performance or behavior).”
   “I noticed that you volunteered to help out Jim this morning…”
   “I’ve received positive feedback from some of your customers and they’ve reported…”

3. **Result**
   You have described a specific aspect of performance or behavior. Now you want to make clear why you are bringing this to their attention. What they did or how they behaved had a positive impact on the job in some way – customer service, costs, morale, the University’s image, quality, efficiency, to name just a few.
   
   “The result/impact is (describe the impact on the job being done). This is exactly how I want you to handle this in the future. Thank you.”

S/TAR Practice

   **Situation/Task:**

   **Action:**
Result:
Positive Feedback Examples

Good Job with That Upset Customer:
“Even though he was angry, you listened to her without looking defensive and assured him that you wanted to take care of the problem. You also told him that you were sorry that he had to experience any inconvenience. Then you quickly resolved the problem.”

Good Participation in the Staff Meeting:
“When Brenda made her presentation in the staff meeting, you restated her major argument very clearly to assure her that you understood what she was saying. You were careful to acknowledge the work she had put into thinking through the problem. I also noticed that your tone of voice was very friendly and supportive of Brenda.”

Good Team Player:
“When Mark called for volunteers to work on his project, you volunteered and encouraged others on the team to give him a hand. I’ve noticed that you have been very helpful to new employees and are always willing to spend time explaining parts of the job they are having difficulty understanding.”

You Do Good Work:
“Every assignment I’ve given you this week was done on time and needed no rework or corrections of any kind. I’ve also noticed that your documentation notes are very thorough, clearly written, and that anyone else who has to work with the customer will have a good understanding of what you’ve done.”

Good Attitude:
“I’ve noticed that you add a great deal of energy to this team. You always seem to be in a good mood, you smile at people, and you never complain during crunch time. Your attitude is infectious and I don’t think the team would be the same without your spark, your optimism, and the “can-do” approach to your work.”
Feedback for Improvement

The following structure for coaching will allow you to have short conversations that make a big difference. The S/TAR/AR format consists of the following:

1. Situation/Task
   Your opening statement will identify the general topic of the coaching.
   
   “I want to talk to you about (the category of performance or behavior).”
   • Your relationship with Marie (a coworker)...
   • Your participation in the team meeting this morning...
   • Something I just overheard you say to a customer (or co-worker)...

2. Action Observed
   Once you have their attention, you present them with a concrete and specific description of some aspect of their performance that is not meeting expectations. Your goal is to be so specific that they understand the exact reason the action should be done differently.
   
   “I observed (describe the performance or behavior).”
   “I have some concerns about how you handled that disagreement in the staff meeting this morning…”
   “Your referral to the customer failed to include the contact number for the person who could help.”

3. Result
   You have described a specific aspect of performance or behavior. Now you want to make clear why you are bringing this to their attention. What they did or how they behaved had a negative impact on the job in some way – customer service, costs, morale, the University’s image, quality, efficiency, to name just a few.

   When providing feedback for improvement coaching, you are not attacking this person’s motives or character. This is a conversation about performance or behavior and how that is affecting the work being done by your employee.
   
   “The result/impact is (describe the impact on the job being done).”

4. Alternative Action
   What you have accomplished up to this point is a description of a behavior or performance and its impact on the job being done. Feedback for improvement coaching must also include suggestions on how to improve the performance or behavior.
   
   “From now on, I’d like you to (describe how to improve performance/behavior).”

5. Alternative Result
You have to be clear in your description of the desired level of performance, so clear that the receiver of corrective coaching will know exactly what to start doing differently from now on to make the necessary improvements and understand the impact the change makes.

“The result/impact of using this improved action will be (describe the impact on the job being done). This is how I would like you to do this in the future.”

6. **Employee Solutions**

It is important to have the employee confirm back what they heard and any actions they will take to make the improvement. You want them to take ownership of improving the issue in the future.

**S/TARAR Practice**

**Situation/Task:**

**Action:**

**Result:**

**Alternative Action:**

**Alternative Result:**

**Employee Solutions:**
Feedback for Improvement Examples

Rude:
“You interrupted a co-worker (or customer) as she was making a suggestion and told her that she didn’t know what she was talking about. You used a loud, angry tone of voice and your facial expression conveyed the impression that you thought she was stupid and clueless.”

Needs to be More Proactive:
“On several occasions recently, you have missed opportunities to better serve our customers by waiting for them to call you rather than making a call yourself to find out how they are doing and if there is anything you can do to help them out. I’ve also noticed that failing to call your customers forces them to call back.”

Unreliable:
“Over the past three weeks I have given you six different assignments to complete by a specific time. You missed the deadline on three of them and you failed to provide all the information I requested on two of the assignments, forcing me to send you back with more instructions to complete the task fully.”

Negative Attitude:
“In the staff meeting this morning I noticed that you reacted to the new documentation requirements by sighing and rolling your eyes. On the way out of the meeting, I overheard you complaining to your coworkers that this was another example of management creating needless paperwork.”

Not a Team Player:
“On several occasions recently I have asked for volunteers to help out on busy days. You did not offer to take on any extra work to get things done. In addition, several people have told me that whenever they ask you for extra help, you sigh and look irritated. You help out but you act like you have been imposed on and that you don’t like it, making the experience of working with you very unpleasant.”
Discipline

Coaching should be provided often for both positive feedback and feedback for improvement. The goal is to have the employee continue doing what you told them was the right way and improve the wrong way. It will support the employee’s success in achieving the expected performance and behavior.

However, if the employee does not work to improve and is not achieving the set expectations for performance or behavior you may have to use the formal discipline process.

Discipline should follow the Boise State University’s Human Resource Services guidelines identified in the Performance Action/Improvement Plans.

Step One: Informal Coaching/Counseling (Initial Issue)
Step Two: Formal Reprimand (Second Occurrence)
Step Three: Final Warning/Disciplinary Consideration (Additional Occurrences)
Step Four: Final Action – Termination
Step Five: Serious Misconduct/Performance Requiring Immediate Action

You should use the Record of Employee Conference Form to document any compliment or concern/issue/or incident with the employee.
Individual Development Plan

Before focusing on the skills, habits and attitudes you want to improve upon, it is good to acknowledge what you are doing well related to this topic.

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Now think about the areas where you have room for improvement. Which skills, habits and attitudes do you feel you need to develop or improve in order to reach your full potential related to this topic?

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