

City of Greater Sudbury

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY



2019-2022

RESPECT

EXCELLENCE

CONNECTION

SERVICE





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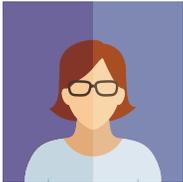
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“Providing quality municipal services and leadership in the social, environmental and economic development of the City of Greater Sudbury”

CUSTOMER SERVICE AT THE CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY

The City of Greater Sudbury operates approximately 60 lines of business. Each line of business is unique, but all of them involve some aspect of customer service. The City's Mission – "Providing quality municipal services and leadership in the social, environmental and economic development of the City of Greater Sudbury" – is all about customer service.

The landscape of customer service is changing though, and it is critical for the City to adapt its service strategies and adopt a plan that brings together organizational needs and citizen expectations.

This plan is a result of a series of consultations, research, collaboration, and best practice review. It is the City's first enterprise-wide customer service strategy and is intended to connect the dots between what citizens expect from their local government, how the City can participate in the transformation of customer service, and how we can, together, build a consistently positive customer service culture.

Customer service – like communication and information technology, with which it is intrinsically linked – is about many things, but it is above all about connection: connecting people with services, citizens with municipal employees, expectations with results. This strategy recognizes that customer service is everyone's responsibility – it needs to be provided in an environment where mutual respect and knowledge connect to create service excellence.

Outlining a framework for the City's customer service approach over the next three years, this strategy is intended as a roadmap for employees and citizens alike to make a positive customer service culture part of the City of Greater Sudbury brand.



WHAT WE KNOW:

To make the most impact on customer satisfaction, the best things government agencies can do is focus on their ability to resolve issues, the timeliness of the services they provide, the willingness of their staff to go the extra mile, and improved telephone service.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED OVER THE COURSE OF 2018 HAS TOLD US THAT:



The City's 311 Call Centre takes nearly 220,000 calls per year. It plays a critical role in improving the customer service culture at the City.

5% of calls made to 311 each day are calls intended for outside agencies or 411 – that is, are calls placed by residents looking for directory assistance.



Less than one-quarter of City work areas use the Customer Relationship Management system: there is an opportunity to expand and optimize its use across the organization.

More than 50% of Canadians are interested in connecting with their government through social media for diverse reasons. Today, only about 8% do so.



Canadian government agencies should maximize the use of online channels for citizens.

Canadians are less satisfied now than in 2014 when it comes to timeliness and timely help in customer service in government.



The gap between the time citizens expect a service request or call to take and the time it actually takes has increased since 2014: service expectations related to government services continue to grow.

Online information needs to be readily available, so it needs to be properly catalogued and searchable. In 2014, the average number of minutes Canadians were willing to search for information for a routine service on a government website was 6.5 minutes – reflecting a downward shift.

Online information needs to be well organized so that people don't have to click through too many pages to get it. In 2014, the average number of web pages Canadians were willing to search was 3–5 pages – again reflecting a downward shift.



57% of citizens hold the view that the hours at government offices should be more flexible.

Approximately 25% of the 20,000 calls the City's 311 operators take each day are requests for direct transfer. The majority of 311 call centres across Canada have implemented dial-by-name directories.



51% of employees say they see more emphasis on customer service than they used to. Only 14% of employees who responded to the 2018 employee survey disagree with this statement.

The top three customer service priorities for employees who responded to the 2018 survey are: improved customer feedback programs, organization-wide service standards, and increased training and education.



According to the 2018 citizen survey, 81% of residents who had some kind of customer service contact with the City were very (54%) or somewhat (27%) satisfied.

More should be done by governments to manage expectations for service delivery. It improves customer service overall and also reduces the amount of complaints and call backs from citizens, which could increase staff efficiency.



RESPECT

EXCELLENCE

CONNECTION

SERVICE

CUSTOMER SERVICE VISION

We foster and build a service-focused culture with empowered employees who know what to do, how to do it, and who go the extra mile to provide a positive customer experience. When citizens engage with the City, they receive consistent, timely, and solution-oriented service.



CUSTOMER SERVICE PRINCIPLES

- 1** We have agreed upon standards for customer service.
- 2** We recruit, train and empower employees to provide great customer service and recognize those who go the extra mile.
- 3** We resolve issues on a first contact basis where possible.
- 4** Our staff are knowledgeable and consistently have the information they need to provide the right answer.
- 5** We are committed to measuring and improving our customer service performance.
- 6** We use technology to effectively leverage customer service opportunities and address customer service issues.
- 7** A positive customer service culture is part of the City of Greater Sudbury brand.



**FOCUS AREAS FOR
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**FOCUS AREA I:
BUILDING A
SERVICE CULTURE**

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GOAL

To build and enhance the organization's capacity to provide great customer service, every time.

OUTCOMES

- Residents and local businesses agree the City of Greater Sudbury provides great customer service
- Municipal staff and contractors understand the role they play in building the corporation's reputation as a great service provider
- Residents and local businesses trust the City of Greater Sudbury



ACTIONS

- Establish a customer service commitment statement and action framework for employees to increase accountability and empowerment related to service delivery
- Review job descriptions and recruitment tools to include customer service competencies
- Develop and implement a tiered customer service training program to staff across the organization
- Develop feedback and recognition programs that celebrate employees both internally and publicly for excellence in customer service
- Increase understanding of service expectations in the community through a combination of education, communication, and standards
- Develop service provisions to address hostile or vexatious customer interactions



**FOCUS AREA 2:
ENHANCING
SERVICE
EFFECTIVENESS**



GOAL

To commit to ongoing improvement in customer service by routinely measuring our performance against defined standards and building our capacity to resolve issues at the first point of contact.



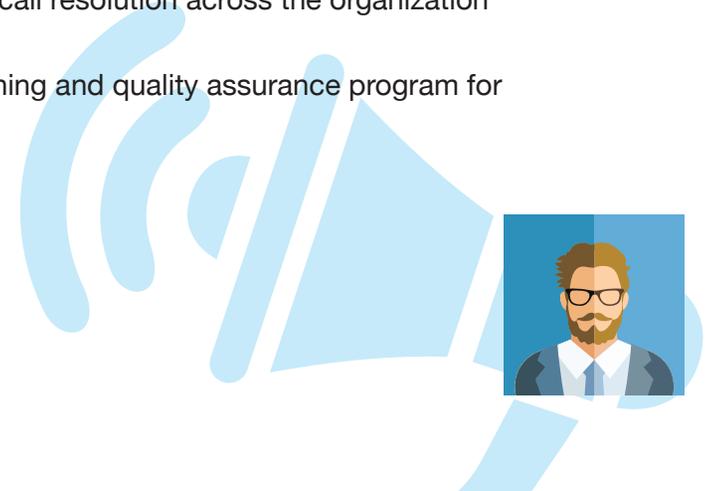
OUTCOMES

- Customer service standards are consistent across the organization and well understood by employees and citizens alike.
- Service areas routinely measure their customer service delivery against agreed upon standards.
- Issues are resolved at first point of contact wherever possible.



ACTIONS

- Establish, implement, communicate and report on customer service response standards
- Continue to on-board new areas to the 311 knowledge base and to the Customer Relationship Management system, to track customer interactions, identify trends quickly, increase information sharing between departments, and ensure consistency of service
- Develop and execute an internal and public communication campaign to create awareness and understanding of service expectations
- Establish key performance indicators and a regular reporting framework, both internal and external, for customer service
- Revise the “Citizen Service Policy” to reflect new customer service strategies
- Establish 311 and department processes that maximize the rate of first call resolution across the organization
- Establish a training and quality assurance program for 311 staff



**FOCUS AREA 3:
SERVICE SIMPLY
ACCESSED**



GOAL

To make sure that services are easy to access and easy to understand.

OUTCOMES

It is easy for staff and citizens to understand the services we provide.

Customer service practices are consistent across the organization.

We invest in the right channels to provide service to residents in the way they wish to receive it.

Citizens can access the services they want using the channel of their choice where possible.



ACTIONS

Review 311 and departmental customer service processes and align for the highest customer service outcomes

Review job descriptions in 311 and telephone systems to optimize for customer service

Continue to expand information and service provision through www.greatersudbury.ca

Explore technology solutions including 311 Live Chat and 311 Twitter for citizens to access services

Review high-volume, routine service transactions for potential transfer to an online self-service delivery system

Review wayfinding and signage at key municipal facilities and develop plans to create easy access for citizens

Develop and award the RFP for a new Customer Relationship Management system

Implement a new Customer Relationship Management system

Extend operating hours for 311 to increase customer service outcomes

Review after-hours service provider contract and processes to align service expectations and delivery



HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'VE IMPROVED?

We'll know we've improved by what citizens and our employees tell us about the customer service we're providing.



WE WILL

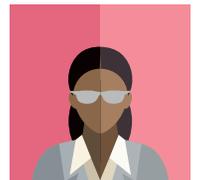
- Survey customers regularly about their satisfaction with our services
- Ask customers for feedback as part of the way we work
- Measure progress routinely and in diverse ways, including “secret shoppers”, key performance indicators, and more
- Engage residents and employees in process improvements in response to feedback

Residents can expect us to report progress publicly on a regular basis.

We look forward to working with you to create a positive customer service culture!

SOME OF THE MEASURES WE EXPECT TO SEE WHEN WE IMPROVE OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE INCLUDE:

- Employees report increased focus on and improved performance in customer service
- Customer feedback mechanisms reflect increases in customer satisfaction
- Service delivery and expectations are consistently understood in the community
- Positive or neutral citizen feedback about City services is more frequent than negative feedback
- Service standards that are reported against show increases over time
- Citizens reflect greater understanding of service expectations and delivery
- Service standards are consistent and consistently understood both internally and externally
- The number of citizens calling about unresolved cases diminishes and is minimized
- Service areas are appropriately reflected in the Customer Relationship Management system and the 311 knowledge base



The actions outlined in this strategy will allow us to build a foundation of customer service excellence.

BEYOND 2022

Citizens expect a lot from their municipal government, and rightfully so. Research shows that mutual respect and a clear alignment between expectation and delivery are critical to creating an environment where excellent customer service can be provided and recognized. Municipal employees must be trained, equipped, and supported in meeting customer service expectations. Similarly, citizens must have access to information that allows them to align their expectations with the realities of municipal services.

Beyond 2022, we will evolve further in our vision for customer service with a focus on expanding our service excellence to achieve national recognition.

