

## Vandelay Home

### CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

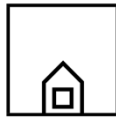
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#### External customers (clients)

- We will greet our customers in a courteous and professional manner.
- We will listen effectively to our customers' requests and promptly take the necessary actions to assist them. We will keep our customers informed of unexpected delays in service.
- We will inform our customers of normal process time, when they can expect completion and any delays that may arise in the process.
- We will touch base with our customers to update them as to where we are in the process.
- We will respond to website questions/requests within 24 hours during normal business hours.
- We will finish our encounters with our customers in a courteous and professional way.

#### Internal customers (other team members dependant on you or your department)

- We will interact with each other in a courteous and professional manner.
- We will inform our internal customers of normal process time, when they can expect completion and any delays that may arise in the process.
- We will touch base with our internal customers daily, either by email or phone, to update them as to where we are in the process.
- We will work to resolve issues with co-workers and other departments by discussing problems directly and working toward agreed-upon solutions.
- We will be considerate, cooperative, and helpful to every staff member to assure quality services.
- We will hold ourselves and each other accountable for addressing inappropriate comments and behaviour.



## Telephone etiquette

- When at our desks, we will answer the phone within two rings.
- We will identify ourselves when we answer.
- We will listen to the caller's request and assist the caller accordingly.
- If we cannot assist the caller, we will direct the call to the appropriate person. Before transferring the call, we will obtain the caller's permission and provide the caller with the name and extension number of the person who will be helping the caller.
- We will obtain the caller's permission before placing the call "on hold" by asking and waiting for a response before initiating the hold function.
- We will end the conversation in a courteous and professional way by thanking the caller. We will wait for the caller to hang up first.
- We will notify our customers that someone is unavailable by saying, "He/She is unavailable. Is this an urgent issue, or may I take a message?"

## Email

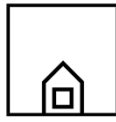
- We will respond to emails within 24 hours during normal business hours.
- We will update our email notification message when we are out of the office for an extended period of time (full day or more). We will indicate our expected return date and indicate a contact person (if applicable).

## General

- We will make our goal to exceed the expectations of all of our customer groups.
- We will work to anticipate the needs of those we serve by proactively working to meet their needs.
- We will hold ourselves and each other accountable for our service commitment.
- We will be conscious of our communication style (i.e., audible voice, eye contact when speaking to someone, tone of voice) and communicate in a professional manner.
- We will make a conscious effort to compliment co-workers when their actions comply with these standards.

## Complaints

**Acknowledge the complaint** - Complaining customers have a perception that somehow their needs and expectations were not met.



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Acknowledging their concern is the first step in diffusing the emotion of an upset customer.

**Apologise** - Apologising with sincerity can do a lot to help ease the tension of high emotions. Look the customer in the eye, smile and sincerely apologise and communicate that their issue is important and that you want to make things right for them.

For example, Ms. Smith, I am sorry that you did not have a good experience.

**Maintain positive communication** - When listening to a complaining customer, keep your facial expressions and responses as positive as possible.

Do not do anything that could cause a more emotional response and make matters worse.

Be as pleasant as possible as you try to resolve the issue for the customer.

For example, think about your facial expressions and don't inadvertently add fuel to the fire by having an uncaring smirk on your face.

**Work towards a solution** - Allow the customer to vent and explain their issue.

This is a good time to try and gather all the details of the situation and try to find out where the breakdown happened.

Sometimes there are minor misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication that can create an emotional response to a situation.

Find out the facts and then try to find out what the customer wants.

**Give the customer options** - An upset customer is not interested in what you can't do, so focus on what you can do.

You probably won't always be able to do exactly what the customer wants, but there is always something you can do. Focus on what you can offer the customer.

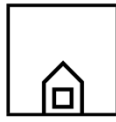
Customers don't necessarily want to hear the why behind an issue; they just want their problem solved. Try to offer a couple of options for things you can do to fix the situation for them.

**Document and track complaints** - It is important to document and track complaints.

Document: Date, time, description of the complaint, employees involved, what customer wanted, what was given to the customer, was the issue resolved, follow-up with the customer at a later time.

It is always important to check with a customer after the fact to ensure that their issue was resolved to their satisfaction.

**Trend complaints** - Collecting complaint data can help provide the information needed to resolve systemic problems that may not be as evident without supporting data.



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As an example, if you continually get the same complaint about the same employee, there may be an issue with the employee and the way they provide a service or respond to customer needs. This could be a training issue or a performance issue.

**Service recovery** - There is a theory that if there is an effort to recover from a bad service experience, the customer will be more loyal to the organisation.

Create a **service recovery process** and empower employees to take action and offer solutions to customers for bad service experiences.

Finally, customers are human and deserved to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

However, a customer that crosses the line of appropriate communication, specifically cursing and threatening should not be tolerated.

Good communication skills in response to a complaint can help minimise angry emotions.