

**Communication and Customer Service Committee
Meeting Minutes
11/14/05**

Next Meeting Date:

December 14, 9:30 am at the Supreme Court Administration building (location to be confirmed)

Members Present:

Larry Gilpin, Chair, Mary Krueger, Terri Peterson, Retha Fielding

Committee Organization

The committee decided that our primary means of communication will be email, but that we need to check with Will and Kathy regarding any right to know issues.

Mary volunteered to act as clerk, taking notes of meetings and submitting minutes to Julie and committee members.

Our role/mission

Members each suggested ideas of what our committee can do and are summarized as follows:

Customer Service v. Communication

There is overlap, but, improving customer service focuses on the individual's experience whereas communication can encapsulate public outreach regarding the court's role in the community and overall functions and services available. The group may want to think about how our work captures these two concepts.

Public Perception

We could conduct "process mapping" to track the communication triggers. Where does the public first encounter the court and how do those interactions and communications continue? Where do court "customers" get lost? Today's perception is that services are available 24/7. Can people communicate with the court in off hours, leave messages, email, etc.?

When the idea of using comment cards came up, Terri mentioned that there was a time when the court provided a customer survey. She thinks this was part of a study and that someone may have compiled the results. She will check to find out whether we can have access to that information.

Can there be improvements not only to the service at the desk, but also from the bench? What would it take to do that?

Ongoing Changes

The court is currently going through several changes that could impact customer service such as the new Odyssey system and implementation of the family court. The group

discussed whether these changes can be smoothly implemented and how our committee can contribute to making sure that there is proper staff training to ease the transition. We also discussed the importance of informing the public of the changes so that they are aware of what is happening, and can understand any setbacks due the inevitable snafus that go along with implementing new programs and systems.

Terri mentioned that there is a court administrative group called the Business Process Enhancement Committee looking at many of the same issues this committee is looking at. She will check into our attending one of their meetings in order to better coordinate with their efforts and to better understand from the staffing perspective their ability to serve the public.

Technology

There are lots of ideas related to using technology to better serve the public. Some courts currently have kiosks where the public can check on the status of a pending case. There is some discussion about making printers available so that the public can print court forms from kiosks. We discussed how the new Odyssey system may be made available online and at court kiosks so that people can conduct court business online.

Scheduling issues can also be better coordinated through technology – for example, court could eliminate the “cattle call” where the court schedules the list for the entire morning at 9 am, rather than block schedule cases.

Greeter/Concierge

We discussed the idea of having someone whose job it is to greet and direct people to where they need to go in the court. Individual courts handle this differently, some bailiffs take it upon themselves to help people, in other courts the clerks do it, and in others, no one does.

Uniformity

The concierge discussion led to another observation about how courts are so varied as to the level of service a person will experience once he/she walks in the door. The experience seems directly related to the overall tenor of the court staff, or the size of the court. The group agreed that some uniformity from court to court in how questions are answered and how the public is helped could be beneficial to the overall public experience.

Court hotline

It was suggested that there be a court hotline that people can call to ask questions about court processes. Terri mentioned that often administrative clerks find themselves tied up having to answer questions on the phone and at the counter, detracting from their other duties. The hotline could be an additional resource for the public to direct questions, comments and complaints about the courts.

Court staff training

There was much discussion about increasing staff training to ensure good customer service, especially given that there are so many changes going on in the courts today.

Assignments

All committee members - peruse the court websites in order to better understand what is currently available online for the public and what could be made better.

Terri - will check into finding out more on the customer surveys that were done. She will also find out about the possibility of attending a Business Process Enhancement Committee meeting, she will reserve a conference room for our next meeting.

Larry – will get in touch with other committee members to welcome and to let them know about our next meeting date, time and location.