



Creating Memorable Customer Service Office Setting

Customer Service Standards: Courtesy and Communication

When a book is first opened or the opening music of a movie begins, it is fairly easy to ascertain if the story is a mystery, thriller, comedic or romantic tale. Story tellers refer to this as setting and it defines the course of a story. Consider for a moment, how your office setting communicates to both current and future customers and what story it tells.

Child welfare agencies can elevate and enhance the customer experience by focusing on setting. In fact, this is a more easily controlled component of customer service delivery than any other customer service element in a child welfare agency. The setting of an agency includes the sum total of the physical environment including both the external and internal environment. The external environment can include the parking area, break areas, signage and landscaping of an agency. The internal environment includes the reception area, internal signage, all modes of communication, décor, meeting spaces, temperature and lighting. It also includes the courteous interactions between customers and agency staff.

Key Considerations of Creating Memorable Office Settings:

- Customer service begins at the first point of contact including the physical location beginning in the parking lot and written communication which includes fliers, social media, email and the telephone.
- Parking lots should be easy to navigate and easily directs visitors to the reception area.
- Outdoor landscaping should be clean, attractive and well maintained.
- Exterior signage should be easily visible including: visible from vehicles, brightly colored and directs visitors to visitor reception areas.
- Outdoor break areas should not be visible to visitors if at all possible. If this is not possible, break areas should be clean and well maintained. Consider relocating smoking areas to areas not seen by arriving visitors.
- Walkways should be free of hazards and clean. If visitors arrive at night time, consider aspects of lighting and safe entrance into the building.
- Premium parking spaces should not be reserved for just agency staff but keep customers in mind.



- The agency's identity should be clearly communicated through signage. Consider public postings to reinforce the agency's mission, customer service standards, etc. This is the foundation of the overall personality of the agency.
- Internal office signage should be easily visible, directing visitors to appropriate visitor areas.
- Office areas/desks should be neat, free of clutter and confidential information secured.
- Staff conversations should be at a low noise level, free of vulgar language and protective of confidential information.
- Lighting levels should be appropriate for conducting professional activities but not so bright as to be intimidating.
- There should be comfortable space and seating to conduct private meetings.

PRO TIP: AN AGENCY'S STORY MAY BE TOLD BEFORE THE FIRST WORD IS SPOKEN. CREATING AN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BEGINS IN THE SMALLEST DETAILS OF SETTING.