

## DIRECTING THE PERFORMANCE



A great service performance cannot occur by chance; it is the result of sound planning and management. To manage the service performance, you must establish goals, design and implement systems to meet them, and maintain service excellence once it is reached.

A good service plan is an organized, systematic method of handling customer service. Planning involves analyzing a goal, situation, assignment, or problem and then developing a step-by-step method for handling it.

### **"Plan your work, then Work your plan"**

The 5 key steps towards achieving consistent standards in customer service

1. Identify problems and their causes
2. Set goals
3. Consider available resources
4. Develop policies and procedures
5. Obtain feedback and monitor results

The manager who plans can shape and improve the future by developing the systems and policies that result in a great show. This is much more preferable to the all too common approach of reacting to situations caused by existing policies and unexpected crises.

The following example illustrates the process and value of planning.

Richard Parsons operated a chain-owned family-style restaurant. The system for picking up food from the kitchen- which had been used for years, involved wait staff calling out their table numbers and waiting in line for the chefs to put up the food. The wait staff would then garnish the plates and put the order together. Because of marketing efforts and increased business, the system had become inefficient. Wait staff spent too much time in the kitchen waiting for food and service to customers suffered. Richard did not question the system; instead, he blamed the cooks and wait staff. During busy periods, he expedited orders himself, keeping him from other management responsibilities. He responded to daily emergencies rather than correcting the underlying problem. The result was confusion, leading to poor staff morale and customer service.

When a new manager, Janet Miller, took over, she was unwilling to accept the inefficient ordering system. She considered her goal, which was to provide friendly and efficient service, and identified the cause of the problem as the faulty system. Next, she considered her resources. She did not have the money for a state-of-the-art system or to hire an expeditor, and she was unwilling to expedite herself, since it took her away from other responsibilities.

By considering the goal and her resources, Janet came up with a solution. She asked for a volunteer from the wait staff to act as expeditor. She expanded the stations of the

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other wait staff on the grounds that they would be able to handle more tables when they no longer had to co-ordinate their orders in the kitchen. By asking the wait staff to tip the expediter, that person's earnings did not fall. The system worked and was adopted permanently, the caitiff made more money with less stress, and customer service improved greatly.

Next month's article 'Creating a service plan', will help you to create a blueprint for success.

### About the author

Robert Duprey has over 22 years management and training experience in the Restaurant and Hotel industry. He started Lexington Interactive to provide eLearning specifically for the Restaurant & Hotel Industry. The company is developing a catalog of interactive hotel and restaurant training courses for the video game generation. Contact Robert at: [robertduprey@lexingtoninteractive.com](mailto:robertduprey@lexingtoninteractive.com)  
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