

## **Create a Collaborative Work Environment**

Source: Essential Elements of Internal Customer Service – The Telephone Doctor

Here are five steps to help you be sure you're paying attention to the 'lost customers,' the internal ones – the people you work with every day. Keep these by your desk and learn them step-by-step. Good internal customer service creates a collaborative work environment, which benefits your external customer, too.

**1. Internal Service is Everyone's Responsibility.** This includes management. Internal customer service isn't just for the worker bees. It's for everyone. No double standards. Internal customer service is for EVERYONE and it starts at the top.

**2. Respect Employee Differences.** Cub Fan? Sox Fan? Republican? Democrat? Rock Music? Classical? Whatever. Just because you don't agree with someone doesn't make you right. Differences are crucial for an organization. Differences are the key to understanding people. If everyone thought the same way, most of us wouldn't be needed.

**3. Recognize the Personal Space of Others.** Simply put...this boils down to the 'Golden Rule.' Those who can work with a radio playing music may disturb others around them who aren't able to concentrate. Loud voices around someone who's on the phone can be annoying. If you're sharing an area, recognize there are others around you. Be sensitive to their wishes.

**4. Work to Resolve Conflicts.** If you and a co-worker strongly disagree on a project or idea, you need to work it out. Not trying to make it work can only lead to more stress and frustration. Even if you need to call in a mediator...another co-worker or someone not involved and who can keep an open mind.

**5. Show Appreciation.** Everyone wants to be appreciated and you can show you care with a genuine "Thank You." It can be a note, phone call or just stopping by an office and telling someone they did a great job or that you enjoy working with them. This makes a huge difference in internal relationships. There are surveys upon surveys that show how much genuine appreciation is a welcomed, non-monetary reward.