

1,17



“CUSTOMER IS KING”



ace parking

**CUSTOMER SERVICE
TRAINING HANDBOOK**

This Handbook Issued To:



1.17

OFFICE OF THE
CITY MANAGER

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

CITY HALL
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SACRAMENTO, CA
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 24, 1997

TO: Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mark Miller, Parking Operations Supervisor *MM*

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE AT CITY LOTS OPERATED BY ACE PARKING

On July 29, 1997, City Council requested information regarding customer service at lots G, K and U, which serve the Downtown Plaza. Customer service for these lots is provided by Ace Parking under the direction and constant evaluation of the Downtown Department's Parking Operations Division. Since December 1995, the City and Ace Parking's Management team have worked cooperatively to establish and maintain customer service at the Plaza that is consistent with City-wide level of service standards.

The City Parking Operations Division is committed to maintaining a high level of service throughout the City's Parking Lot operations. Since September 1994, City Parking staff have collaborated with Ace Parking to operate Lots G, K and U and adequately serve the Downtown Plaza.

In December 1995, the Ace Parking contract was revised to include service measurements, customer satisfaction ratings and a bonus program that resulted in improved operations at Lots G, K and U. This "hands on" approach assisted with the achievement of standards that are consistent with City-wide level of service standards and, the establishment of customer service and quality assurance benchmarks which are linked to management compensation (see Exhibit A).

The following components of the City's customer service program are used to maintain and identify standards:

- "Ghost shopper" audits are coordinated by parking staff on a monthly basis. In these audits, individuals posing as shoppers enact scenarios designed to test employee responses to situations focusing on customer service. (see Exhibit B)
- Weekly informational and troubleshooting meetings between the City and on-site Ace Parking Management staff
- Monthly customer satisfaction surveys (see Exhibit C)
- Regular lot inspection by City representatives
- City staff interface with Downtown Plaza staff/patrons/customers and follow-up on all complaints

Additional customer service components provided by Ace through their corporate program are:

- Corporate training and customer relations program which includes new hire screening, orientation and supervised in-booth training (see Exhibit D for more specific detail on training outlined in the *Customer Service Training Handbook* for Ace Parking)
- Ace customer comment cards (see Exhibit E)
- Corporate office visits on a quarterly basis

The minimal costs of the customer service program consist primarily of printing costs for survey cards. These costs are included in the operating budget for the Parking Enterprise Fund 412.

Attachments (Exhibits A-E)

Cc: William H. Edgar, City Manager
Thomas V. Lee, Deputy City Manager

Management Fee Compensation Schedule

Administrator shall provide Contractor with detailed definitions of what performance level, for each element of the categories identified below shall constitute Low, Average, and High levels of service. Bonus amounts shown represent Contractor's *total* possible monthly bonus. Bonuses earned by Contractor shall be prorated equally between the invoice for Lot G & U and the invoice for Lot K.

Possible monthly compensation as proposed:

Service Levels	Poor	Low	Avg.	High
Total compensation	1,000	1,490	2,230	3,750
Bonus amount based on level of service	0	490	1,230	2,750

Monthly Adjustments

Performance Bonuses by Category

1) Customer Service

	Low	Avg.	High
a) Attendant's appearance/test results	40	80	150
b) Satisfaction surveys	20	40	100
c) Enforcement of parking restrictions	30	60	120
d) Staff turnover (voluntary)	10	20	40
e) No missing signs	25	50	100
f) Prevention of "Rotating" Parkers	40	80	140
g) All gates operable	0	0	300
Possible bonus by service level	165	330	950

2) Lot Maintenance/Safety

a) Overhead stairwell lights	0	60	120
b) Overhead lights	40	100	150
c) Work requests done	0	30	80
d) Lot/Elev./Stairs clean	50	150	250
e) Equip trouble calls per procedure	20	80	150
f) Graffiti free	0	20	50
Possible bonus by service level	110	440	800

3) Financial/Reporting

a) Missing tickets	50	100	170
b) Misrung validations	25	50	100
c) Timely & accurate revenue/activity repts.	40	80	200
d) Undoc. Manual tickets	20	50	150
e) Keycard monitoring/collection	20	40	80
f) Tickets in spitters sequential	10	40	100
g) Audit ticket verification	50	100	200
Possible bonus by service level	215	460	1,000

Performance Penalties

Inspection Any Time

Penalty/ Incident

- 1) More than 20 vehicles in exit line without opening addl. gate -250
- 2) More than 100 vehicles in exit lines of either lot with any gate closed -1,000

PARKING DIVISION
CITY OF SACRAMENTO

GHOST SHOPPER AUDIT FORM

Lot: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Booth # _____ Attendant Name: _____

Conditions: Busy Not Busy

Describe Transaction: _____

Transaction Rating - 60 Points Possible:

Comments: _____

General - 40 Points Possible:

Service Element (3 point each item)	Points	Service Element (5 point each item)	Points
Employee greets customer	<input type="text"/>	Employee wears name tag	<input type="text"/>
Eye contact is made	<input type="text"/>	Employee is in clean uniform	<input type="text"/>
Employee thanks customer	<input type="text"/>	Time display is operating	<input type="text"/>
Booth exterior is clean	<input type="text"/>	Employee smiles/is friendly	<input type="text"/>
Booth is clean/uncluttered	<input type="text"/>	No gum, cigarettes, radio	<input type="text"/>
		Total Points	<input type="text"/>

AUDIT SCORE

PERFORMED BY: _____

City of Sacramento Parking Division

The City of Sacramento has hired a company to operate City-owned parking lots at Downtown Plaza. We need to know how well the company is serving our parking customers. Please help us by taking a moment to fill out this postage paid questionnaire, then drop it into any mailbox.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT BOX BELOW:

Parking lot employees are helpful, friendly and knowledgeable.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

Parking lot employees are dressed in clean uniforms, are well groomed, and do not smoke on duty.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

The parking lots are well maintained, clean and fully lit.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

I feel safe when I park in Downtown Plaza parking lots.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

Vandalism and graffiti are rarely seen & are promptly corrected.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

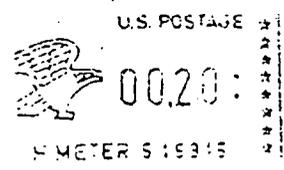
A sufficient number of booths are always open to ensure that exiting is not delayed.

True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
------	---------------	----------	------------

I park in this parking lot:

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely
-------	--------	---------	--------

Comments: _____



NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY
POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY:

**CITY OF SACRAMENTO
PARKING DIVISION
312 K STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
ATTN: FINANCE AND AUDIT GROUP**

1.17

Exhibit E

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your parking needs during your visit.

We would appreciate your feedback on our performance because your comments help make our service better.

Please take a moment to complete this form. You may leave it at the attendant booth, or mail it directly to me. I can assure you that your evaluation makes a difference to us.

Sincerely,

Scott Jones,
Chief Executive Officer

1-800-925-PARK 24-Hr. Customer Service Hotline *Tear Here*

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS:

Location LOT K 550

Date _____ Time _____

	<i>Exceeded My Expectations</i>	<i>Met My Expectations</i>	<i>Did Not Meet My Expectations</i>
Courtesy of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed/Efficiency of Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness of Facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Company or Employer: _____

If any members of our staff were especially helpful, please tell us so we can thank them: _____

Do you have any suggestions you feel would improve our quality of service? _____

Optional:
Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone () _____

Convenient Parking with Outstanding Service



CUSTOMER COMMENT CARD

Ace Parking Management, Inc.;
serving customers for over 40 years.

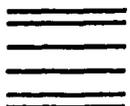
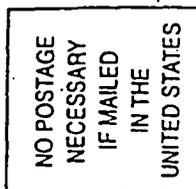
Specializing in parking service for:

- Hotels
- Business & Industry
- Hospitals
- Airports
- Surface Lots
- Restaurants
- Shopping Centers
- Municipalities
- Garages
- Office Buildings
- Sporting Arenas & Stadiums

...And all major special events.

Convenient Parking with Outstanding Service to

Satisfy our Customers



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 24309 SAN DIEGO CA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

SCOTT JONES
CEO
ACE PARKING MANAGEMENT, INC
645 ASH STREET
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-9493



The Mission: Convenient parking with outstanding service

Ace Parking
Management, Inc.

Scott A. Jones
Chairman
CEO

Dear Ace Employee,

The company we work for has a rich tradition of providing outstanding customer service. I firmly believe, in fact, that it has been the quality of our service through the years which has driven Ace Parking's phenomenal growth.

In 1950, my father, Evan Jones, established our company with one San Diego parking lot. Today, Ace now manages over 300 parking locations in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Texas and Utah. Well over 400,000 vehicles park on Ace-managed lots each day!

While we can be especially proud in being part of the Ace team's success, we cannot ever rest on our laurels. To sustain our successful heritage, we must each and every day, remember to treat our customers like kings.

In the 45 years we've been managing parking, we've learned a thing or two about customer service. And so, with this training, we want to give you the benefit of all that experience. When you return to work after this training, you'll do so with new skills - ones we've learned consistently lead to customer satisfaction.

Importantly, the training emphasizes our "Ace Values" -- those beliefs and attitudes we believe are most essential to truly making a customer feel like a king:

Outstanding service and poor service are always acknowledged by the customer. It feels better when we're praised for going the extra mile.

First impressions are made in seconds, yet leave lasting impressions in the mind of the customer. Professional appearance suggests professional service.

Corporate Office: 645 Ash Street San Diego, CA 92101-3211 (619) 233-6624 FAX (619) 233-0741

Regional Offices: Newport Beach, CA, Pasadena, CA, Dallas, TX, and Portland, OR

Customer Service: 1-800-925-PARK (7275)





Anticipating problems, along with their respective solutions, goes a long way to building customer confidence...and loyalty.

Treating customers as we would like to be treated is the cornerstone of great customer service.

Best of success -- and thanks for being part of the Ace team. I'm counting on you to treat your customers like kings!

Scott A. Jones
Chairman and CEO

Lesson # 1. The History Of Ace Parking:

You've chosen to work for one of the fastest growing parking companies in the United States! Ace Parking, in fact, is the oldest and largest parking firm in San Diego and one of the ten largest parking companies in the United States.

Ace operates every conceivable type of parking need ranging from surface lot management to hotels, stadiums, shopping centers, airports, office buildings, hospitals and more.

Some of our outstanding accomplishments include:

- Demonstrating a proven expertise, Ace management has helped design several stadiums/sports arenas throughout the United States. These include Texas Stadium -- home of the Dallas Cowboys --, Irvine Meadows, the Pontiac Silverdome, and San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium.
- Ace has managed the parking for two Superbowls and has done the same for P.G.A. Golf tournaments, Pasadena's Rose Parade and Mission Bay Hydroplane races.
- Ace presently manages parking for such locations as the City of Sacramento, Horton Plaza, the Irvine Company, the San Diego Convention Center, the Portland and Tucson airports, and some of the finest hotels in San Diego.

Ace Parking was founded in: _____

The Chairman and CEO of Ace is: _____

Who is an Ace Customer? _____

Summary

- Ace Parking continues to be a rapidly growing company largely because it has built an outstanding nationwide reputation for service excellence. Importantly, we recognize that this reputation has been earned through the daily efforts of our employees. We seek to reward and promote employees who treat customers like kings and who, through these efforts, inherently help our company to grow.

Notes:

Lesson # 2. The Value of the Customer:

The Customer is always: _____.

Summary

- We say that the customer is the customer as a way of remembering that he/she is all of these things and more. The customer *is* paying. He/she *is* valued, important, etc., so they deserve the very best service we can give to them.
- The customer is also someone who has choices. No one has to park at an Ace location. They'll choose to park with us only if we deliver a satisfying experience.

Notes:

Lesson # 3. The Importance of Customer Service Part 1:

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Steven Covey

Some businesses manufacture a product (e.g. automobiles, computers, furniture etc.) and other businesses sell the manufactured product (auto dealerships, department stores, etc.). At Ace, we don't build a *product*, nor do we sell a *product*. What we sell is a *service*.

When we buy products, a new car for example, we'll judge its value by how well it performs and by how often it requires repairs. If a car holds up well to these tests, we'll likely buy another in the future. And we all know how we'd respond if we ever bought a "lemon"....

At Ace, the "product" we sell to building owners and to building managers (our primary clients) is the "service" that we will deliver to each of their parking customers. When we fail to give a customer the outstanding service we promised we'd give, we risk losing that individual parking customer and our building owner client as well.

One objective of providing you with our customer service training is to introduce you to the practices and attitudes we believe will help you to serve your customer with distinction and to uphold our tradition of service excellence.

What are other reasons why your receiving customer service training is important?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Lesson # 4. The Greeting:

We first must congratulate you! When you were hired, you showed us that you are a friendly, caring and people oriented person. While you might be inclined to take these qualities for granted, you can be assured that we don't. That's because not everyone has them. In fact, we believe your having these qualities is essential to your ability to treating your customers like kings.

Because of how you are naturally, we don't need to teach you how to greet someone. What we want to emphasize, however, is the value of the greeting when it's done well. Whether we're aware of it or not, we leave an impression with each and every customer. For the most part, we control whether that response is positive or negative.

HERE'S A SUMMARY OF THE INGREDIENTS OF A PROPER GREETING:

- **Firm handshake.** *You won't shake the hand of each and every customer, but, when given the opportunity, firmness shows sincerity.*
- **Maintain direct eye contact.** *Make sure you stand!*
- **Use an enthusiastic tone of voice.** *Enjoy your interaction with people!*
- **Use sincere expressions.** *Personalize them when possible.*
- **Have a warm smile.**
- **Be an attentive listener.**

What is the most important ingredient of a proper greeting?

Sincerity

Greeting Self- Evaluation # 1:

	Poor							Excellent		
Firm Handshake	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Direct Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Enthusiastic Tone Of Voice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sincere Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Warm Smile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Attentive Listener/Observer:

Use Of Other Person's Name?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mention Something Personal?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Personal Goal For Improving Second Greeting: _____

Greeting Self- Evaluation # 2:

	Poor							Excellent		
Firm Handshake	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Direct Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Enthusiastic Tone Of Voice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sincere Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Warm Smile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Attentive Listener/Observer:

Use Of Other Person's Name?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mention Something Personal?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Personal Goal For Improving All Future Greetings: _____

Summary

- Delivering a proper greeting is your first step toward building trust and rapport with your customer. And while the five ingredients to a proper greeting – as discussed and practiced in the training – are a good foundation, they're assuredly not enough. What's missing is your individual personality. Without it, your greeting will become old, predictable and ineffective.
- Remember that people want to feel special. Dale Carnegie said that:

"A person's name is, to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language".

Strive to catch a name and use it whenever possible. **Key Thoughts:**

- Try to learn something about your customer and surprise them with it the next time you see them.
- Wave when you can't make verbal contact!
- The expression "Have a nice day" *can* be spoken with true sincerity. But remember how you feel when it isn't.
- You leave two impressions with your customer. One when they arrive and one when they leave. "Make a difference"!

A greeting can only come to life if you make it personal.

Notes:

Lesson # 5. How To Make A Difference:

We have committed the Golden Rule to memory, now we must commit it to life.

Edwin Markham

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt

Whether we're consciously aware of it or not, each of us has expectations of the kind of service we deserve each and every time we buy something. This is true for inexpensive things and expensive things. A carton of milk or a week's groceries. New tires or a new car. A McDonald's cheeseburger or a five course meal.

Every time we buy something, we make a decision as to whether the service meets our expectations. Typically, we have one of three responses to the service we receive:

- 1. We feel neutral about the experience.** The service was efficient, but the person who helped us failed to distinguish him/herself in any meaningful way.
- 2. The service was a tremendous disappointment.** We feel as though we were cheated in some way, leading us to feel let down. We likely won't go back to these establishments unless the problem is promptly resolved to our satisfaction.
- 3. The service was outstanding and exceeded our expectations.** This is the kind of service that makes us smile; it makes us feel good about ourselves. We're likely to return to this business...often.

While we may not think about it when it occurs, usually the difference between a neutral experience and a truly positive experience is a subtle one. Often it's the result of someone who takes the time to treat us personally – *as an individual*. To treat our customers personally, strive to satisfy them one at a time.

TRAINING EXERCISE:

Part 1

Think back to a recent experience when you made a purchase (in person at a store, over the phone, at a restaurant etc.) and you left feeling completely dissatisfied. *Briefly*, describe the circumstances: include what your expectations were before you made your purchase, why they weren't met (the reason you were made unhappy) and what behavior(s) from the person who served you could have prevented your dissatisfaction:

Part 2

Now think back to a recent experience when you made a purchase (in person, at a store, over the phone, at a restaurant etc.) and the person who assisted you gave you outstanding service – they exceeded all of your expectations. *Briefly* describe the circumstances: include what your expectations were before you made your purchase, along with the behavior and attitude of the person who served you. Define what that person did specifically to treat you like a king.

20 *Ways You Can Make a Difference* *At Ace through outstanding customer service.*

1. Make people feel good about themselves.
2. Solve problems. (Anticipate problems and their solutions).
3. Do your job efficiently.
4. Be courteous to everyone. Always.
5. Maintain a professional appearance at all times.
6. Smile.
7. Where available, pass out mints
8. Say "Thank You".
9. Know where the nearest rest rooms are located.
10. Know where the nearest phones are located.
11. Know directions to local freeways and attractions. (Impress them with your knowledge).
12. Stand up when dealing with people. (Show them respect).
13. Develop "Car Memory"; remember who drives what car.
14. Learn and use names for monthly and return parkers.
15. Pull tickets for customers when it's slow.
16. Keep booth and equipment clean and neat.
17. Know the rates and hours of your location.
18. Know the main office and 1-800 phone numbers.
19. Know the procedure for purchasing a monthly permit.
20. Be a team player with your co-workers.

Summary

- We remind ourselves through this exercise that people who serve us (and we who serve others) truly make an impression with each and every customer. These, of course, can be good or bad impressions. And, usually, the difference between the effort given to achieve a good impression is not significantly greater than the effort which receives a negative response.
- Besides such things as convenience of location and competitive rates, what gives Ace its true competitive difference? YOU DO through outstanding customer service. Knowing this, what are some of the ways you can "make a difference" with your customers? (See the previous page in this handbook for a summary of 20 things you can personally do to make a difference. We encourage you to add to this list and use your personal approach to making our service perceivably different).

Lesson # 6. The Importance of Customer Service Part 2:

Do you remember the last time you saw an Ace Parking advertisement on television? Do you know the words to our jingle? Have you seen our ads on the side of transit buses or in the local paper?...

The reason you don't remember any of our advertising is because we very rarely advertise!

What form of advertising *does* Ace rely on (hint: it's the best and cheapest form of advertising available)?

Word Of Mouth Advertising.

Importantly, however, word of mouth advertising is effective only if people are relating *positive* experiences with Ace:

A customer will tell an average of _____ people about a negative service experience.

It takes an average of _____ positive service experiences to make up for one negative experience.

Summary

- One Dallas Centre, the Tucson International Airport and the U.S. Bank Centre in Seattle are new Ace Parking clients. We're prideful in gaining new business because it validates our expertise and that the word-of-mouth reports from other Ace clients is strong and positive. Our goal is to maintain this fine tradition.
- When a person gets angry or is otherwise unhappy with Ace after they leave will likely tell twelve others about his/her experience. It will require that same unhappy customer to receive twelve positive experiences with us to offset the one bad one. That assumes the customer will return.
- Customers who are pleased with our service will likely only tell six other people; by satisfying our customers we ourselves can derive pride and satisfaction for a job well done.

Lesson # 7. Problem Situations and Resolution:

Life is difficult.

Scott M. Peck

Scott M. Peck is the author of the best selling book, "The Road Less Traveled". On the first page of his book, he states that life is indeed difficult. This isn't to say that life is unmanageable, but rather to say that we better be prepared for challenges. They're inevitable. While the seas in life (and at work) are mostly calm, storms do occur. If not today, then tomorrow. And to overlook that fact will only cause greater problems when they do.

By accepting the fact that life is difficult, it's much easier to accept problems when they occur, to satisfactorily deal with them and then to move on.

Example Situation: Let's say it's your first day on the job at Ace Parking and to make a good impression, you have planned to arrive early for work. But while you are getting ready to get in the car and be on your way, your brother asks you to take him to the shopping mall beforehand, since he knows it will be on your way. Almost immediately after you drop him off, you hear a *thump thump thump* and realize that you have run over a nail and indeed have a flat tire. You will most certainly be late for work.

Analysis: While it should seem to us as being unreasonable, many of us would first be inclined to blame our brother in this situation. "This never would have happened if I hadn't taken him to the mall" we think.... As if our brother had the flat or left the nail in the road..

We're not always rational when problems occur. It's human nature to want to blame away our problems on others. Or to think that "these kinds of problems only happen to me". The fact is, flat tire, like all problems, are inevitable. If not at the mall, somewhere else. They happen to all people, and it's just a question of when. The best and only response when they do is to not find fault or blame, but to instead find the best solution to the problem and to move on. Too much energy is wasted when we take our focus off the solution. Fix the tire and move on.

Which leads us to a discussion of what can go wrong at work, and, importantly, how to deal with them when they occur....

- **The best solution to any problem is one you've thought of before the problem occurs.** It does you no good to realize, when a customer is locked out of their car, for example, that you don't have the name of a reliable locksmith available.

- **Anticipation of problems cannot only prepare you to solve the problem when it occurs, it can often prevent the problem.** Many problems can be prevented if their solution is considered and implemented before it occurs.

What are some problems we're likely to experience at Ace Parking:

1. Missing tickets
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Recognizing that these problems will occur – along with some that we haven't thought of – what are the steps we need to take to satisfactorily resolve them for our customers?

1. **Anticipate solutions to problems to prevent them from occurring:** Keep keys properly tagged, remember that American cars can be locked without a key, have sufficient change etc.
2. Accept your role as a diplomat. Especially when we (you) didn't create the problem. **Sincerely empathize with the customer.** Consider how you would feel in this situation?
3. **Express your eagerness to help.** Fix the problem yourself (if its a problem you are able to and permitted to fix) or tell the customer that you will do everything you can to get the problem resolved.
4. **Identify the problem.** (Sometimes the real problem may not be expressed. The customer may be late for a meeting and less concerned for the moment about getting a locksmith to open his car).
5. **Identify possible solutions.** Involve your customer in the process. Provide options when they're available.
6. **Involve the manager if they are quickly available (two minutes or less).** Otherwise, make the decision.
7. **Solve the problem with the least possible impact and in the least amount of time.** The problem can be much further aggravated by your delays.

8. **Get the customer's name, address and phone number** so your manager can follow up to assure ultimate satisfaction – (and to help reconcile your reports).
9. **Apologize again.** Simple problems always require an apology (and a mint when available). More complex problems may require our extending free parking, a refund, or even more depending on the problem and our ability to satisfy our customer.
10. **Record your actions for your manager, always.** Your notes will help your manager to intelligently discuss the situation with the customer assuring that no additional delays are created for the customer.

Putting these strategies in use:

Example situation:

- Customer is late for a meeting.
- Customer has come in and parked in a reserved stall.
- You notice this and must ask him to move his car.

Solution:

- Acknowledge that, in his hurry, he might not have seen the sign indicating reserved parking. Tell him that you're sorry, but he'll need to move his car. **Empathize (see the situation from the customer's point of view).**
- Describe the problem patiently (Don't get angry!). A customer has paid a premium for the exclusive use for that space and it is our guarantee that we'll keep it available for him. Despite his being in a hurry, we must ask him to move. **Identify the problem.**
- Remind the customer that his car can be moved quickly; direct him to the closest available space. Offer to move the car for him if appropriate in your location. **Express your willingness to help. Identify possible solutions.**
- Acknowledge again that you appreciate his support and that he'll feel better to get the car moved and get on to his appointment. **Solve the problem and thank him again.** Pleasantly remind him to get his ticket validated (if appropriate) – offer a courtesy to re-demonstrate that your goal is to be fair.

95% of all customers will return if their complaints are resolved quickly.

Lesson # 8. First Impressions... And What We Communicate Through Words, Tone and Body Language:

First impressions are the most lasting.

Proverbs

The ancestor of every action is a thought.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Serving many customers – day in and day out – is challenging work! And making a difference is difficult when you have to take care of a hundred or more customers on any given day. We acknowledge that *it's hard to stay positive and friendly with every customer. But it's not impossible.*

When you think about it, we don't often spend a lot of time with any one customer. So when we communicate with them, we have to make it count.

Consider the fact that we communicate in three different ways:

1. **Verbally** – *through the words we think to use,*
2. Through our **Tone** – *how we say those words, and through our*
3. **Body Language** – *what people interpret from our communication via our actions when we speak, our expressions, posture and appearance.*

If our goal is to make our communication count – no matter how brief the interaction – upon which of these three forms of communication would we most want to focus?

For the answer to that question, estimate what percentage of your communication is derived from each form of communication:

Verbal (words)	_____
Tone (sound)	_____
Body Language (actions/expressions)	_____
Total	_____ 100%

How quickly do we usually form an impression of someone else's attitude toward us? 5 Seconds after first seeing and hearing us.

As we have discussed already in this training, we typically have only brief interactions with our customers and thus very little time – if any – to fix a bad first impression. So our obvious goal is to make a favorable first impression.

When you first meet a customer, remember that he/she is making a judgment in those first few seconds. The customer's goal is to feel good about him or herself; and they'll be quickly assessing whether we intend to take care of their needs.

And they'll judge us in three ways:

1. **Appearance.** How we appear to a customer can often mean more than anything we may do. (*Professional appearance suggests professional service*). If a customer sees that we're dressed in a clean and pressed uniform, and that we're well groomed, we're well on our way to making a good first impression.
2. **Communication.** Welcoming a customer to your location with a warm "hello" and saying good bye to them with an equally warm "thank you" demonstrates your *personal* warmth and courtesy. Remember the importance of tone and body language in this communication
3. **Our actions.** Parking customers don't have many expectations of us, but meeting the expectations they do have is critical. If we can demonstrate efficiency, friendliness, patience and honesty, we can't help but create a most favorable first impression.

Summary

- We can't ever fake an attempt at making a difference. If we don't want to go the extra mile, there's nothing we can say to a customer that can persuade him/her otherwise. People we serve notice our attitudes and our feelings no matter how hard we try to hide them.
- So the goal is to start with ourselves. We need to begin our day by reconfirming our commitment to making a difference... by caring for people... by being friendly and by being courteous. If we genuinely feel and believe those things, it just naturally comes through in our communication. *And since 93% of our intentions are communicated through body language and tone, we can make a huge difference with people by projecting a natural sincerity even if there isn't much time for a conversation.*

Lesson # 9. Customer Service Measurements:

One never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done.

Marie Curie

As we seek to improve upon our customer service skills, we're also seeking to improve the measurement of our performance. Our goal is to get close to our customer, to stay close to our customer, and to continue to improve upon the service we provide them based upon their feedback. **At Ace, meeting and exceeding customer expectations is a goal and not a program.**

Here's how we'll hear from them:

Customer Comment Cards:

Postage-paid comment cards are available to customers at virtually all Ace locations. Customers may be anonymous in completing these cards and often use them to recommend service improvements or thank us for a job well done. *Many comment cards we receive mention the names of the Ace employee whose service to them exceeded their expectations.*

Once each quarter, all monthly customers should be given a comment card and asked to provide us with their report card. Managers of Ace locations receive monthly reports relating how well their location performed. Landlords of our locations are also shown these results. These reports include all customer comments along with a the percentages of customers grading our service as either meeting their expectations, exceeding their expectations and failing to meet their expectations.

Toll-Free Hotline:

Customers who are anxious to get a problem resolved may call us directly at **1-800-925-PARK**. Ace's Customer Relations department assists customers on these calls with a goal of solving the problem and keeping our customer. Executive management reviews all call logs and implements service improvements accordingly.

Landlord Questionnaires and Tenant Surveys:

To complement the feedback we receive from our parking customers, we also stay close to our landlords. Property Managers and building owners are sent questionnaires regularly to attain their report card of our performance. Building tenants who park at an Ace location may also receive a survey form which solicits their perception of our service.

Summary

We seek to meet and exceed customer expectations with each customer we serve. The measurement systems we have in place help assure we always know how the customer feels.

THE CUSTOMER IS KING CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING QUIZ

Name _____

Location _____

1. What is the single best way you can make a difference to your customers?

Make customers feel: _____

2. State three reasons why your receiving customer service training is important.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. What percentage of your communication comes from **Words** _____%, **Tone** _____%,
and **Body Language** _____% (Total = 100%)

4. Within how many seconds does it take to make a first impression? _____

5. A greeting can only come to life if you make it _____

6. What is the sweetest sound a person can ever hear? _____

7. List three ways you can make a difference with your customers

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8. What is the Golden Rule of Customer Service? _____

9. Who makes a difference at Ace Parking? _____

THE CUSTOMER IS KING TRAINING EVALUATION

Please take a moment to evaluate the training you have just received. Thanks!

	Poor	Excellent
• The class was logically sequenced.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• Adequate time was devoted to the class.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The class had a good balance of materials (mix of lecture, roleplays, discussion).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The class handbook supported your learning.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The knowledge gained is relevant to your job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The class was interesting and worthwhile.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The facilitator was well prepared.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The facilitator encouraged participation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• The presentation was clear and well paced.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
• Overall, the facilitator was effective.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

Any suggestions for improvement? _____

What was the best part of the training? Why? _____
