

CLAREMONT EAP IMPACT

January-March 2010

Employee Newsletter

DID YOU KNOW?

- Free "Simple Will" Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

800.834.3773

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IN THIS ISSUE

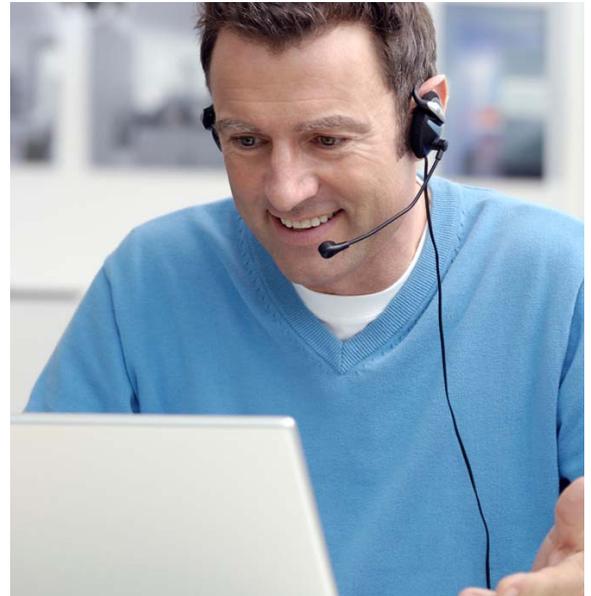
- 1 Giving Outstanding Customer Service
- 2 Among the Missing: Vitamin D
- 3 Allowance For Your Kids
- 4 Top Ten New Year's Resolutions

Giving Outstanding Customer Service

One of the most valuable things you can do to advance your career is learn how to take care of customers.

"While supervisors should provide ongoing customer service training for employees and create a system that rewards employees for taking care of the customer, many companies faced with budget crunches shortchange their customer service training," says Michael LeBoeuf, Ph.D., author of "How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life." "So, what can an employee do? Lots!"

Dr. LeBoeuf suggests acknowledging the following.



Customers pay your salary

Realize that without customers, your company wouldn't be in business, and you wouldn't have a paycheck. If you visualize your customers putting cash into your wallet or purse each time you interact with them, you'll be more likely to thank them with outstanding customer service.

You are the company

"You know you work for your company, but whenever you come in contact with a customer, to that customer you are the company," says Dr. LeBoeuf. "Your customers are going to come away either feeling better or worse about your organization because of how you treat them, and that's going to determine the success of the company."

Complaints are an opportunity

One of the greatest opportunities to improve customer service perception is how you handle a complaint. When a customer complains, it may feel like an attack, and your immediate reaction may be to act defensively.

Don't. Instead, say, "How can I make this right for you?" This way, your customer proposes a solution that will make him or her happy. Then, try to handle it on the spot. The faster you handle a customer complaint, the greater the chance you have of keeping that customer.

Continued on Page 4

Among the Missing: Vitamin D

Just when you thought you had your summertime outdoors routine down -- plenty of sunscreen, a large hat, limited exposure between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. -- comes the news that Americans aren't getting enough of the "sunshine vitamin" -- vitamin D.

A recent study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine found that vitamin D deficiency was a "substantial problem" among Americans. Vitamin D is essential to help your body absorb and use calcium. Vitamin D works with calcium and magnesium to help build strong bones and teeth.

What's a person to do? Stay in the sun and risk skin cancer? Stay out of the sun and risk weak bones?

The decision isn't all that difficult, says Connie Pepe, outpatient dietitian at Jefferson Health System. For adequate sunshine to help your body make vitamin D, you only need to expose your face, hands and arms 10 to 15 minutes sometime between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. two to three times a week. The sunshine stimulates a hormone in your body to manufacture vitamin D.

Unfortunately, even if you spend the right amount of time outdoors, you can't always get enough sunshine. In many parts of the country, the sun doesn't shine intensely enough in the winter months to help our bodies make vitamin D



Cloud cover, air pollution, altitude and a person's skin color also affect the amount of sunshine available to the body. Sunscreens can block the amount of sunshine reaching the skin, as well.

Older adults also have problems making enough vitamin D, Pepe



says, because older skin is less efficient at using the sunshine. In fact, elderly Americans are the most at risk for vitamin D deficiency because of that, and because they also don't eat enough foods that contain vitamin D and take medications that interfere with the body's manufacture of the vitamin.

The current guidelines for daily vitamin D intake are 200 International Units (IU) for people 19 to 50, 400 IU for those 51 to 70, and 600 IU for those 71 and older.

Other than the sun, the best way to get vitamin D is by drinking milk or certain cereals, such as Total, which have been fortified with the vitamin. One cup of fortified milk contains 100 IU; other foods such as eggs, fatty fish and liver contain some vitamin D, but they are also high in cholesterol or fat. One serving of a fortified cereal can provide the full daily requirement for vitamin D, Pepe says.

For some people, particularly the elderly, a vitamin supplement may be necessary, but Pepe warns that any supplement should be monitored closely by a physician. Too much vitamin D can be toxic.

Wellness Library Health Ink and Vitality

Allowance for Your Kids

An important step in the process of teaching kids about money management is deciding whether or not to give your child an allowance. The decision to provide an allowance (or not) really depends on what system works best for your particular family and each particular child. If you are thinking of giving your kid an allowance, clarify your goals and the purpose of the allowance first. Here are some questions to ask yourself when considering allowances for your children.



When Should I Start?

You can start giving your kid an allowance when he or she understands the concept of, and has an interest in, money. No specific age is right or wrong - each child is different, and the age at which a child is ready to handle money will vary.

How Much Allowance Should I Give My Kid?

Many parents choose to provide a weekly dollar amount equal to the age of the child (for example, \$11 a week for an 11 year old kid). But the answer to this question really depends on what you want your child to spend his or her allowance on. Are you only providing money for incidentals (in which case the amount will be smaller), or do you want the allowance to cover larger purchases like clothing, toys, and outings with friends? A good rule of thumb is to start out small and as the child gets older, expand what's included in the allowance.

If your child is a pre-teen or teenager, consider asking them to make a list of what *they* think their allowance should cover. This can help both you and your child understand what you'll pay for

and what needs to come out of the allowance, eliminating the need for negotiation over every purchase.

Should I Attach Strings to the Allowance?

Another important consideration is whether or not to attach rules to the allowance. If you don't want to give your child complete discretion over how the money is spent, consider attaching some conditions. Here are some ideas.

Tie the allowance to household chores.

Having children do household chores is a good way to teach them responsibility and important life skills. Tying the allowance to the completion of household chores can help them develop a sound work ethic, so make sure that kids follow through with their assigned tasks.

Encourage charitable giving. Requiring that part of your kid's allowance go to a charity or cause of the child's choice is one way that some parents teach their children about generosity.

Encourage saving.

Some parents believe that requiring their kid to save a certain portion of their allowance (say, 25%) encourages saving in later life. Whether or not this is right for your child is up to you.

An allowance is just one way in which you can teach your child about money management.

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Expectations should be exceeded

One of the best ways to increase customer perception is to exceed expectations. We all go into a business with a certain expectation, and when the expectation is exceeded, we're pleasantly surprised.

Friendliness counts

Customers stay loyal to people they like and trust. Help your customers buy the product or service that's right for them. Take time to listen and learn what's important to them.

Make notes of your customers' personal interests, so the next time you speak to them you'll be able to say, "How is your son Brad's baseball team doing this year?" or "Tell me about your Alaskan vacation."



You should reward yourself

Don't be frustrated if your company doesn't reward you personally. You can motivate yourself with your own reward system. Keep a detailed daily journal of your customer service experiences. Give yourself a point for every time you exceed a customer's expectations. Give yourself extra points for handling difficult problems.

"Then make a list of rewards that you could exchange for the points, and reward yourself every week," says Dr. LeBoeuf. "Save your journal to show your supervisor when it's time for your employee review. It will illustrate your outstanding customer service and your value to your company."

Krames Staywell

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions

Claremont EAP Can Help!

I resolve to:

1. Get out of debt.
2. Complete that Simple Will Kit (finally).
3. Explore elder care options for my aging relatives.
4. Find answers to my tax questions (before April 15th).
5. Talk to a therapist to improve my communication skills.
6. Find a veterinarian for my pet.
7. Improve my credit score.
8. Research new summer programs for my kids.



Claremont EAP can help address all of these issues.

**Call to find out how.
 800-834-3773
 It's never too late.**

CLAREMONT EAP

Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance.

You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.

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www.claremonteap.com