

The Leader: Heightened Customer Awareness

by **Frederick E Roach**

We live in a time when the customer is king! Individuals and businesses failing to recognize and aggressively act on this fact, tend to flounder.

It is rewarding to be appreciated. We shop at places known for their excellent customer service. We avoid places where we've experienced the disinterest of those selling us goods and services.

Customer service programs are alive and well in business today. While many organizations already have developed a culture based on extraordinary service, others are discovering the tremendous value of these initiatives.

We at Baylor are known for excellence in a number of areas, including: medical innovation and excellence; a history of strong quality initiatives; a heritage built on spiritual values; aggressive leadership; community service; educational opportunities and a firm commitment to providing the best possible medical care for our patients.

A booklet provided to our patients in 1930, says: "It is our earnest desire in Baylor Hospital to make the patient as comfortable and their return to health as prompt as possible ... Baylor Hospital exists for the service of its patients." The next several Leadership Briefs will focus on customer service. It's a topic of special interest lately throughout BHCS, as our facilities increase their customer service training, pilot new programs and make customer service a key topic of meetings including the annual Management Retreat.

We will review other organizations known for the service they provide, what our Baylor employees consider critical in providing the best possible service, the positives that result from great customer service, the importance of treating our fellow employees with a customer service attitude, and how excellence of service has been and should be a basic part of our culture -- the Baylor way.

Who Are Our Customers

1. Our Patients

Ultimately, we exist for the well-being of our patients. They deserve to be the focus of our attention. I've heard it said that nothing should exist within Baylor that in some way does not benefit our patients. Because the patient is our No. 1 customer, it is our task to make their visit to Baylor as pleasant and healing as possible.

2. The Patients Family and Friends

Family and friends can be a big help in the healing process. If we aid them to the maximum extent possible, they in turn may positively affect our patient. We should remember that friends and family are under extreme stress.

3. Our Physicians

One of our biggest assignments is to support our physicians. When we're providing service for them, they are our customers. Other times, they become our



partners as we work for the patient's well-being. This partnership helps make the experience in the hospital are satisfying one for patients and their families.

4. **Our Fellow Employees**

The degree to which we positively or negatively affect each other as "internal customers" ultimately affects patients. Building strong service teams and honing our interpersonal skills heightens our job satisfaction and job effectiveness.

5. **Our Payers**

Here again we see a mutual customer relationship. When we provide information to payers as we seek reimbursement, they are our customers. The better the job we do, the better financial results we gain. A recent audit showed us virtually perfect in supplying appropriate data to payers for reimbursement.

6. **Our Suppliers and Vendors**

As purchasing and material acquisition becomes more sophisticated, we usually need fewer suppliers. This makes our relationship with suppliers and vendors even more important. Maintaining open lines of communication enhances the opportunity for better quality goods and services.

7. **The Community**

We recently reinforced the importance of the entire community as a key customer. We serve because of need. We continue to serve because of the community's belief in our commitment to our vision, mission and values.

8. **Our Sustainers**

Many individuals and groups sustain Baylor in meeting its goals. We owe them the effective stewardship of our resources. We meet our role as faithful stewards by staying sensitive to our corporate objective of providing world-class customer service.