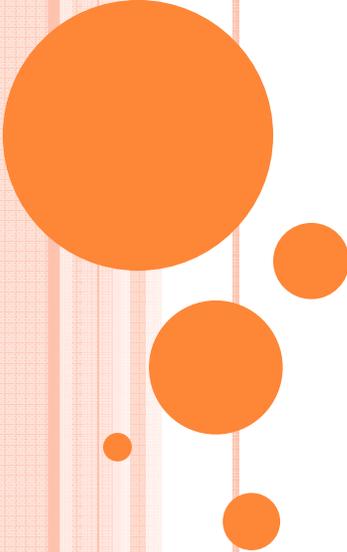


# **THE CUSTOMER-IS *ALWAYS* RIGHT!**



**A Back to the basic look of  
customer service skills in the  
PSAP**

**Nicola Tidey-Training Coordinator, Culpeper County  
Public Safety Communications Center**

# WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?

- Most people think of service in a restaurant-was it good or bad?
- Convenience in a store
- There is **NO** single definition of customer service
  - Activity
  - Performance measurement
  - Or Philosophy



# WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?

- Is the ability to provide a service or product in the way that it has been promised
- Is about treating others as you would like to be treated
- Describes the process of taking care of customers in a positive manner
- Is any contact between a customer and a company that causes a negative or positive perception by a customer
- Is a process for providing a competitive advantage and adding benefits in order to maximize the total value to the customer
- Is the commitment to providing value added services to external and internal customers and involves support and quality of service in a timely manner.



# THE CUSTOMER

## External

- The Public
- Law Enforcement
- Fire/Rescue
- Support Personnel
- Public Sector-schools, CERT,

## Internal

- YOU! The employee.
- You are the internal customer



# THE COMPLAINT

- “ The call taker I spoke to was very rude!”
  - “ The call taker was very unprofessional!”
  - “ The radio dispatcher has an attitude problem!”
  - “ I can’t believe Joanna didn’t help me with these 3 wanted entries I had to do!”
- In 2007 a woman in Parsippany (NJ) dialed 911 as she was being chased by a man, who later caught her, assaulted and raped her. The handling dispatcher was later fired for improperly handling the call although State Police officials didn't explain specifics. The firing was revealed when the 911 call was played during the suspect's trial in March 2009
  - Media clips of attitude



# CUSTOMER SERVICE-MAKE IT COUNT

“I pay your salary!”



Citizens typically don't have a choice on who serves them

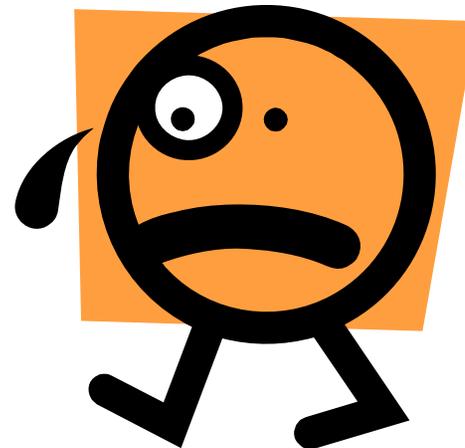
but.....

They can call local governing bodies, the media, vote down funding priorities or refuse a grant



# CUSTOMER SERVICE-MAKE IT COUNT!

- Emergency Responders
  - Can choose maybe to work for a different PSAP that provides better service
- Co-Workers
  - Can file grievances
  - Terminate us!

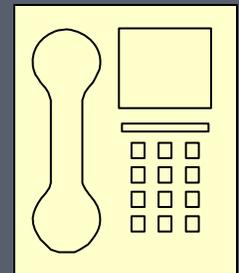


# CUSTOMERS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT TO ANY PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY!

Customers are NOT dependent on us  
We are dependent on them

• They are not interruptions to our work ; they are the purpose of it

911, where  
is your  
emergency



# SO HOW DO I BECOME THE FAIREST ONE OF THEM ALL?

- Assurance
- Empathy
- Responsiveness
- Attitude
- Quality
- Problem-solving
- Listening Skills
- Knowledge
- Skills
- CONFIDENCE
- Know your SOP's
- I Understand
- "I'm here to help"
- Smile in your voice
- Here is who can help you...
- They are the most important, and you are interested
- Lack of confidence and knowledge=you don't know what you are doing



# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- Walk In their shoes
- Credit Card Agencies-
- Angry
  - Frustrated
  - Bored
  - Idiots
  - WOW!



# BSI-WEAR IT!

- Attitude is like a virus

Goooo....Team...  
Dispatchers!  
I love my job!!!



Tracy the Terrific Dispatcher!



Steve the Grumpy Dispatcher ©

- Good Attitude =  
Positive ending to the  
call
- Bad Attitude  
=Negative ending to  
the call



# YOU ARE THE TONE OF VOICE BEHIND THE CURTAIN



○ You are the image of your departments;

- Voice of the Sheriff



- Voice of the Police

- Voice of F/R



- Voice of your agency



# DEAR DIRECTOR...I'M WRITING THIS MEMO...

## Not what to say....

- “I’m sorry but that’s not our policy!”
- “It’s against the rules”
- “That isn’t my departments responsibility”
- “We’ve never done it that way”
- “You have to calm down or I won’t help you”

## What to say...

- I understand
- I’m sorry
- Thank you
- Please
- You’re welcome
- I can help you
- Please don’t curse. I need to know...
- I don’t know but I can find out



# HOW CAN I HELP YOU!



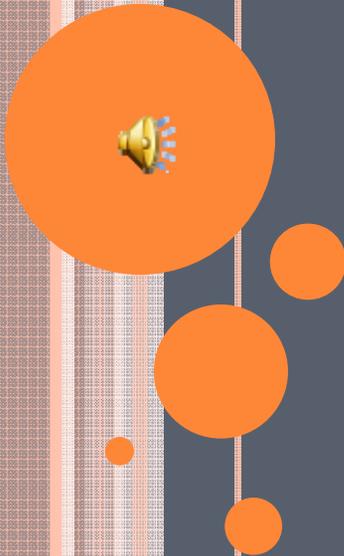
## ○ Characteristics

- Set personal standards that exceed customer expectations
- View work as a show
- Smile
- Self-image
- Everyone is a customer!
- Good customer service is a circle...not a square!
- You cannot please everyone



# THE CUSTOMER IS *ALWAYS* RIGHT

Even if *you* don't agree...

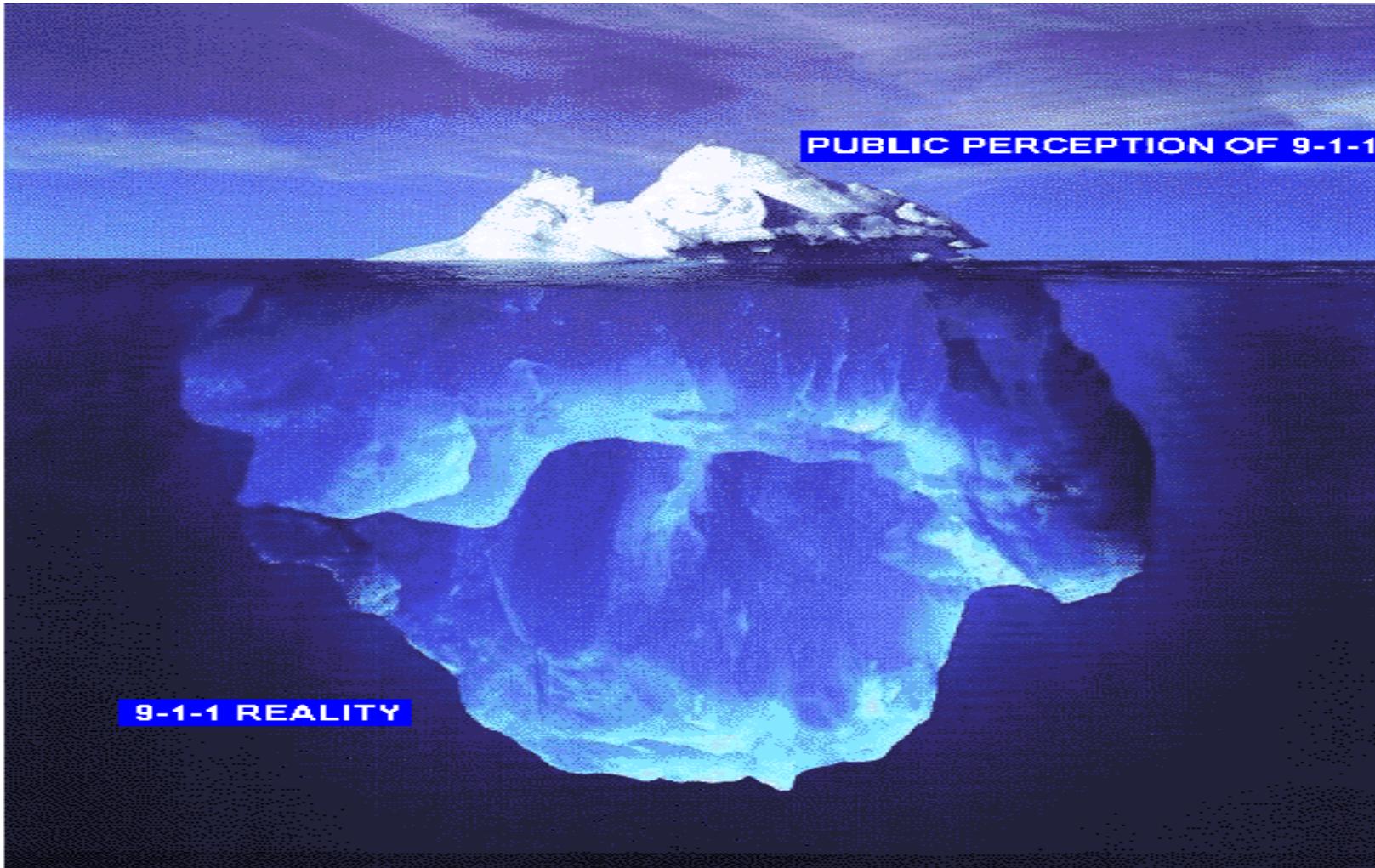


# CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

- If there were a 100 calls for service, and customer service was poor there will be complaints on 10/100 calls.
  - However, not all complaints are filed within the agency
  - Satisfied Customers will tell 7 people about their experience
  - Unsatisfied Customers will tell 28 people about their experience
  - Their perception is their reality



# THEIR REALITY VS. OUR REALITY



# CONCLUSION

- Always shoot for the satisfied customer
- Every agency should demand excellent customer service
- Remember, customer service starts with you, it's more than just a poster
- TRAIN, TRAIN and TRAIN some more
- Develop QA/QI programs and address weaknesses in CDE
- Golden Rule: Treat others as you wish to be treated!



# CREDITS

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- APCO Customer Service in Emergency Communications, Shiela Hanna-Wiles.
- APCO The Way It Is How Corporate Culture Affects Customer Service & Your Comm Center, Raphael M. Barishansky.

