Michigan Works! blazing the customer service trail

By Orrin E. Bailey
For Upper Peninsula Business Today

As part of the **Delta County Tourism Regional Skills Alliance**, fourteen Michigan Works! The Job Force Board Service Center personnel and Executive Leadership Team members were recently certified to deliver Blazing Service, a dynamic and interactive training program that is designed to ignite great customer service within business organizations.

The International Customer Service Organization cites, "68 percent of customers stop doing business with a company because of poor customer service; yet, 95 percent of dissatisfied customers would continue to do business with a company if their problem was solved quickly and satisfactorily."

Blazing Service builds customer service capacity in employees who play a critical role in the organization's success. It combines blended learning through six modules and offers web-based tools as follow-up to increase the learning retention of those who participate in this unique training.

The complete program consists of 6 two-hour modules:

Blazing the Service Path

- Identify Your Personal Service Style and Quality
- Describe the Blazing Customer Experience
- Avoid the Smoldering Customer Experience

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The purpose of this module is to introduce Blazing Service and to help organizations identify and cultivate the personal qualities and the practical elements that make a great Blazing Service Provider.

Thinking Like Your Customer

- Internalize Your Organization's Customer Service Markers
- Manage the Customer's Expectations and Experience
- Engage Customer Loyalty with Blazing Service

Without satisfied customers, most organizations would cease to exist. The best organizations realize that their ability to anticipate, understand, meet and exceed the customers' expectations is the cornerstone of building customer loyalty.

Winning Customer Hearts and Minds

- Provide Appropriate Empathy to Customers
- Recognize Customer Types and Needs
- Apply the Seven Behaviors that Engage Customers

Much of the success of a customer service professional lies in ones ability to understand and empathize with customers. In order to win their hearts and minds, staff must be able to empathize with them: to see their wants and needs through their eyes.

Solving Customer Problems

- "Own" the Problem and the Solution
- Apply a 5-Step Model to Resolve Customer Issues
- Give Options to Engage Customer Satisfaction

Most businesses are in business to provide solutions to customers' problems or issues. This module will help staff to develop the skills to "own" problems that arise and resolve customer issues.

Handling the Heat

- Defuse Customer Anger
- Manage Your Emotions in the Face of Unreasonable Demands
- Transform Heated Emotions to Resolved Problems

Sometimes smoldering customers erupt. This session explores ways to defuse the eruption -- the angry customer -- and transform the "Smoldering Service Experience" into the "Blazing Service Experience."

Fixing the Systems

- Identify System Issues that Require Attention
- Communicate Issues Without Blame or Judgment
- Recommend Service Enhancements

You know what customers care about and what they complain about. This module is designed to help staff communicate concerns constructively and recommend system improvements effectively.

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Delta County Tourism

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■ Bailey: Blazing Service

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Each Blazing Service module begins with face-to-face group instruction facilitated by a certified trainer. Employing a stylish and powerfully-designed electronic presentation, participant workbook and detailed facilitator guide, the Blazing Service trainer guides participants through fun experiential exercises, insightful small group discussions, skills practice sessions and practical application.

Participants return to their jobs with relevant tools and action plans to apply the new skills.

Shortly after the completion of the classroom workshops for Blazing Service Part I and II, participants access an engaging easy-to-read electronic magazine that includes a case study, role model interview, to-do list and other features crafted to reinforce the face-to-face training.

On-line reinforcement tools, such as Blazing Coach, allows participants to demonstrate their knowledge of the material and their ability to apply that knowledge to real-life customer service situations, and Blazing Service At Work, a performance support tool to construct detailed action plans based directly on learning principles covered in their classroom experience.

A certified Blazing Service facilitator can deliver the Blazing Service program in a two-day workshop format at your facilities, or deliver each module one at a time over the course of several days or weeks, on a time-table that meets your needs.

For more information on Blazing Service, contact 1-800-285-WORKS (9675) or email mwjob@jobforce.org.

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