

WORLD CLASS COURTESY

A Best Practices Report

The seal of the President of the United States is a large, light blue watermark in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, holding an olive branch and arrows, with a shield on its chest and a banner that reads "E PLURIBUS UNUM". The eagle is surrounded by stars and is enclosed in a circular border with the text "PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES".

A REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Vice President Al Gore

WORLD-CLASS COURTESY

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PARTICIPANTS

STUDY PARTNERS

Defense Commissary Agency
Federal Express Corporation
GTE Directories Corporation
Nordstrom
Portland VA Medical Center

The Ritz-Carlton® Hotel Company
Social Security Administration
Ultimate Support Systems, Inc.
USAA
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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The study partners were selected because of their reputation for high quality customer service and their representation of a cross-section of industries. This report highlights commendable practices that have led to such customer satisfaction. The inclusion of the organizations listed in this report does not, however, constitute a general endorsement of any organization by either the National Performance Review or Vice President Al Gore.



PARTNERS

The following organizations served as partners in our study of best practices in world-class courtesy. **Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA)** operates a worldwide system of grocery stores committed to providing quality products at the lowest possible price to current and former members of the armed services and their families. The Agency's vision is "quality first, people always."

With more than 110,000 employees worldwide, **Federal Express Corporation** delivers more than 2 million packages to over 200 countries each business day. In 1990, Federal Express was honored with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Located in Dallas-Fort Worth, **GTE Directories Corporation** has published yellow pages since the 1940s. Today, GTE publishes more than 2,300 directories in 47 states and 15 countries, and employs more than 5,000 people. In 1994, GTE Directories was also honored with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Founded in 1901 in Seattle, **Nordstrom** is a family-owned company offering fashion apparel, shoes, and accessories. With 81 stores in 16 states, Nordstrom continues to be guided by its founder's commitment to "offer the customer the best possible service, selection, quality, and value."

Guided by the philosophy "ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen," **The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company** operates 32 resorts worldwide and employs more than 14,000. In 1992, the Ritz-Carlton was honored with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

With 1,300 field offices and 37 telephone service centers, the **Social Security Administration (SSA)** delivers programs that provide continuing income to retirees, insurance payments to individuals with disabilities, and health benefits to older Americans. An independent agency since 1994, SSA is committed to "putting customers first."

Ultimate Support Systems of Fort Collins, Colorado, designs, builds, and sells durable, lightweight stands and other support equipment for musicians and biking enthusiasts worldwide.

USAA provides insurance and diversified financial services for current and former members of the armed forces. Headquartered in San Antonio, USAA was founded by a group of military officers. Today, USAA employees number 16,500 worldwide.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (**USDA's**) mission is to ensure the well-being of Americans, especially with regard to commercial agriculture and sensible management of natural resources; families needing nutritional services; consumers dependent on a safe, affordable food supply; and residents of depressed rural areas. USDA administers more than 200 programs and an annual budget of over \$54 billion.

The **Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center** in Portland, Oregon, is a 482-bed research and teaching hospital committed to providing "services that match the best in business." More than 30,000 veterans received care at the facility in 1996 through outpatient visits and approximately 10,000 inpatient stays.



OVERVIEW

Courtesy among individuals and organizations has long been recognized in all major societies of the world as a sign of respect and civility. Even among parties with divergent points of view, think, for example, of the chambers of the United Nations—courteous behavior among individuals and countries sets a tone of mutual respect with which further productive dialog and successful outcomes may be achieved. In all its forms and styles, courtesy behavior, has been hailed by kings, presidents, and religious leaders as behavior that provides a foundation of good manners and goodwill—and from which all other good things may follow.

Be ruthless with time and gracious with people.

SSA's Baltimore Teleservice Center

WE MUST CHANGE

Many feel that changing organizational behaviors in the federal sector is not only possible, but essential. In today's business environment, government agencies, like organizations in the private sector, are subject to the forces of downsizing, customer satisfaction, customer retention, revenue loss, and streamlining of services. How customers are treated is often the difference between organizations that succeed and those that fail. Courtesy, and the behaviors involved in it are integral to achieving world-class recognition and customer satisfaction.

LEADERSHIP

The National Performance Review and Executive Order 12862, along with the President's Management Council, have directed government agencies to look for smarter and better ways of doing business. The purpose of this report is to identify courtesy best practices in "best-in-class" organizations. The study team's working hypothesis was that courtesy, as perceived by the customer, is an integral component of customer satisfaction.

Based on this, the team developed a working definition of both courtesy and world-class courtesy.

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH COURTESY

The study team determined that courtesy, as an organizational objective, relates to the establishment, preservation, or improvement of relationships. We found that those behaviors associated with courtesy seemed to have more significance for organizational improvement when viewed within the larger context of customer service. Courtesy is generally a component within the customer service strategy of an organization, as well as a series of identifiable, measurable behaviors.

The team learned that an organization's values and actual behavior toward the customer and among its own employees are often different. To address this, the partners in this study tended to focus on both employee-to-employee courtesy as well as employee-to-customer courtesy.

We found throughout our research that employees who are highly valued and well-trained by their organizations provide a higher level of service to their customers. Whether it is a veteran applying for care in a Veterans Health Administration facility, a vacationer checking

COURTESY: *Using accepted and appropriate manners, as interpreted from the customer's perspective, to **meet** the expectations of the customer.*

WORLD-CLASS COURTESY: *Using exceptional manners, as interpreted from the customer's perspective, to **exceed** the expectations of the customer.*

Government agencies must do what many of America's best businesses have done: renew their focus on customers.



into a four-star hotel, a beneficiary contacting the Social Security Administration, or a family just entering a national forest, customers should expect their needs to be addressed both competently and courteously.

WORLD-CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This report offers insight into how world-class companies use courtesy to improve customer satisfaction and their own bottom line. Each of the organizations studied exhibited the following characteristics:

- The organization's cultural climate reflects a commitment to meeting and exceeding customer expectations.
- Senior leaders demonstrate by example the organization's commitment to exceptional courtesy.

- Employees are empowered to fully meet the needs of their customers.
- Courtesy is practiced by everyone throughout the entire organization.
- Specific and ongoing training in courtesy is provided.
- Formal and informal screening techniques are used to hire employees with exceptional skills in courtesy.
- The organization establishes systems to measure the value of its services to customers.
- Services are provided seamlessly from the customer's perspective.
- There is zero tolerance for discourteous service.
- All the organizations found that courtesy improves customer loyalty.

COURTESY AND BEHAVIOR

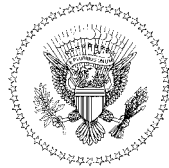
Courtesy is expressed as a wide range of respectful behaviors and positive attitudes. Personal characteristics and behaviors that were repeatedly expressed by our partners as essential elements of courteous behavior are:

- a willingness to discover opportunities to exceed the customer's expectations,
- sincerity,
- a friendly smile (even over the phone),
- using the person's last name (unless the customer indicates otherwise),
- a neat appearance,
- proper use of the language,
- exceptional listening skills (attentiveness),
- a relaxed and natural tone of voice,
- appropriate eye contact,
- clear communication at the customer's comprehension level, and
- knowledge about the product or service.

DELIVER WORLD-CLASS COURTESY

What must the government do to deliver world-class courtesy? The following sections provide information, best practices, and techniques to help you develop an organization that delivers world-class courtesy.

How customers are treated is often the difference between organizations that succeed and those that fail.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 12862***"Setting Customer Service Standards"*

- Identify customers who are, or should be, served by the agency.
- Survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services.
- Post service standards and measure results against them.
- Benchmark customer service standards against the best in business.
- Survey front-line employees on barriers to, and ideas for, matching the best in business.
- Provide customers with choices in both the sources of service and the means of delivery.
- Make information, services, and complaint systems easily accessible.
- Provide means to address customer complaints.

Bill Clinton

1. CREATING WORLD-CLASS COURTESY

SECTION 1.1

CULTURAL CLIMATE

We will create a professional, secure, and healthy work environment that values diversity and fosters world-class courteous service for our customers and employees.

SSA Vision

A world-class organization's culture reflects its customer beliefs. In the broadest sense, the culture of an organization is interpreted by customers through both direct and indirect experiences. The overall quality of services provided tends to be defined by customers based on their cumulative experiences with the organization. For example, they notice the ease of parking and locating the proper office, or how attractive and clean the facility is, or how courteous and responsive the staff is to their questions. They especially notice how well employees and managers treat each other when they are not directly working with customers. For these reasons, the organizations studied emphasized the importance of viewing courtesy within the larger context of the organization's customer service culture. The partners in this study demonstrated that an organization's "cultural climate" is formed within a collective reservoir of the shared values, expectations, and commitments of their employees, managers, customers, and stakeholders. In each organization visited, the cultural climate reflected a commitment to

meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

The organizations the study team visited also stressed that employees who worked in a nurturing environment and had the tools they needed to do their jobs were more courteous and helpful to their customers and fellow employees.

The employees at USAA work in a campus-like environment situated on 286 acres of rolling land, which provides a sense of space and tranquillity. Employees are provided with parking, fitness and recreation facilities, and many other employee benefits that enhance their cultural climate.

The corporate philosophy of Federal Express – "People-Service-Profit" – teaches that if you take care of your employees, the employees will deliver a superior service which their customers reward.

SECTION 1.2

LEADERSHIP

Any program of customer service and/or employee courtesy can succeed only when it has total commitment from the top of the organization.

Portland VA Medical Center

Senior leaders in world-class organizations demonstrate by example their organization's commitment to exceptional courtesy. It was apparent from listening to our partners that, although leadership styles vary, they all agreed that leaders are responsible for creating, communicating, exemplifying, and reinforcing

the organization's commitment to courtesy.

The concept of "servant-leadership" was discussed by our partners as a highly effective means for ensuring that the needs of employees and customers are being met. This style of leadership, now practiced by many successful businesses, focuses on continually increasing the empowerment of employees. A servant-leader serves his or her employees by providing support needed for each person in the organization to grow both professionally and personally.

Senior leaders in the organizations visited strongly emphasized creating and sustaining a customer focus with clear values, high expectations, and exceptional courtesy. Leaders "walk the talk": They serve as examples of the organization's commitment to customers. They set the tone by displaying courteous and respectful behavior in all situations. And senior leaders provide timely, positive recognition when employees are found delivering exceptional, courteous service.

The CEO of The Ritz-Carlton conducts new employee orientation training during the opening of each new property. At DeCA, the Director speaks to every basic and advanced commissary management class to emphasize the mission and goals of the organization. The Director at the Portland VA Medical Center uses a portion of his time to personally meet and greet veterans applying for care; the owners of Nordstrom walk around the store chatting with the customers and employees— and helping out where needed.

The leadership at SSA has developed a written national strategy and vision for improving courtesy. This vision has been taught to all SSA employees and has received recognition throughout the public and private sectors. It reads in part "To become courteous, qualified, professional, positive people dedicated to helping our customers with efficient and accurate service."

During our visit to Federal Express, the study team learned about its management development program known as LEAP (Leadership, Evaluation, and Awareness Process). LEAP stresses courtesy, individual con-

sideration, and respect for others. Senior leadership fosters an organization with:

- a clear customer focus,
- customer-driven, decentralized decisionmaking;
- quality and process improvement mechanisms; and
- quick rewards for employee recognition.

SECTION 1.3

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

*From the customer's perspective, the employee he or she is talking to **is** the organization!*

"Courtesy without empowerment," noted the CEO of one of our study partners, "is doomed from the onset. Our employees cannot be expected to have greater accountability without greater authority." Thus, employees of world-class organizations are empowered to fully meet the needs of their customers. And, backing up their commitment to courtesy through employee empowerment, the partners in this study make sure that their employees have the tools, technology, and training they need to perform at the world-class level.

Empowerment means that each employee is given the responsibility, the training, and the full confidence of the organization to meet and exceed customers' expectations...often without any hand-offs to another employee. One manager described it this way: "We are so confident in our employees' abilities with customers that we take a relatively hands-off posture and often just sit back and watch our staff delight one customer after another."

The USAA staff is trained to handle every conceivable customer issue, request or complaint—by themselves—during the first interaction with the customer. Employees seeking greater responsibility and empowerment are identified and mentored.

The USAA employee “Pride Principles” include:

- Exceed customer expectations.
- Live the “golden rule”...courtesy is modeled by organizational leaders. Everyone in management, from the CEO to front-line supervisors, is dedicated to treating employees and each other with respect.
- Be a leader.
- Participate and contribute.
- Work as a team.
- Share knowledge.
- Keep it simple.
- Listen and communicate.

The employees at The Ritz-Carlton are empowered to use their own good judgment in doing “whatever it takes” to ensure a customer’s satisfaction. This often involves committing some portion of the company’s resources without permission from anyone. Each employee can: (1) “move heaven and earth” to satisfy a customer, (2) contact appropriate employees to solve a problem swiftly, and (3) spend up to \$2,000 in order to satisfy a guest.

Nordstrom has empowered its employees to do whatever is needed to satisfy and exceed customer needs and expectations. Employees serve their customers as if they are running their own personal business.

Customer service representatives at Federal Express are empowered to make on-the-spot adjustments to customer accounts up to \$100, send gifts of apology, and give a \$100 cash or credit refund at their discretion.

Employees of the Ultimate Support System, Inc., have full authority to do whatever it takes to satisfy customers. Once an employee takes a customer’s call, he or she oversees the action



Ritz-Carlton Team Pyramid

from start to finish until the customer is completely satisfied. Ultimate Support System’s “best in business” reputation among working musicians across the country bears out its commitment to customer service.

SECTION 1.4

ORGANIZATIONAL COURTESY

Treat everyone as you would like to be treated.

Courtesy is practiced by everyone throughout the world-class organization, and courteous behavior is viewed as underpinning every interaction. In customer-driven companies, courtesy among employees is as important as courtesy to customers. In fact, our findings indicated that organizations that practice world-class courtesy extend the concept of

courtesy not only to customers and employees, but to *all* stakeholders in the organization, including the community at large. In this study, we learned that courtesy among employees at all levels in the organization is as important as the provision of courtesy to the customers. Moreover, this courtesy is the very basis of customer courtesy. Employees treated internally with respect and honor will most often give that same treatment to customers.

The Ritz-Carlton's motto is "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." This concept is entrenched in The Ritz-Carlton philosophy and can be seen throughout the organization. Employees are treated like customers. The heart of The Ritz-Carlton is the common area, where the employees take their breaks and their training, and which serves as the hub of the hotel. This area is as spotless as the main hotel, and every employee is courteous and respectful to his or her counterparts regardless of position in the organization. The managers all eat with the staff in a cafeteria provided to them free of charge. The food served to the employees is the same food served to the customers in the main dining rooms.

GTE Directories Corporation told the study team that quality improvements or customer satisfaction is only sustainable and continuous when employees are highly motivated, informed, involved, and satisfied with their work environment. These employees treat each other with courtesy and respect in an environment based on a win-win philosophy.

SECTION 1.5 TRAINING

Training is not an expense but an investment.

GTE Directories Corporation

World-class organizations provide specific and ongoing training in courtesy. Best-in-class businesses or agencies use effective training protocols to ensure that their customer service goals are achieved. The organizations we visited used a number of innovative training approaches to ensure that employees were prepared to provide exceptional levels of courtesy and caring to their customers. Most included training in courtesy during their new employee orientation. Several had specialized programs that focused on those employees with direct customer impact duties. Role playing was often used to demonstrate what exceptional courtesy looked like while giving the participants a chance to assess their own unique styles of working with the customer.

All the organizations studied expressed the importance of continuous training. The message from these organizations is that their best asset is a trained employee.

The Portland VA Medical Center provides all its employees training in value-added service. This training, taught by medical center staff, emphasizes that service excellence is an organizationwide commitment that focuses all the organization's resources to one end: customer satisfaction. Within the training is a section on Courtesy and Value-Added Behaviors which covers: courtesy skills related to greeting and acknowledging patients and their families; special send-off skills when a patient is discharged; and showing appreciation for patients, families, and staff.

Be faithful to your job and co-workers by being on time, starting promptly, and doing your share of the work. Treat each other with respect, both as human beings and co-workers. Refrain from bickering, gossip, and horseplay.

USAA Code of Conduct

DeCA employees are offered sensitivity training, tapes, and films all aimed at improving courtesy and customer satisfaction.

Employees of The Ritz-Carlton are trained to be aware of language and cultural differences that could hinder communication. All new employees attend a two-day orientation that stresses courtesy and customer service. The company dedicates 80 percent of its training budget to improving customer courtesy and provides over 100 hours of training to each employee.

SSA telephone service representatives receive two months of training in telephone courtesy, presentation skills, dealing with difficult customers, equipment and computers, technical job aspects, image and self-projection, conflict resolution, active listening, and handling customer complaints. They also are given a courtesy handbook designed by SSA, *Courtesy in the Workplace*, and can view an SSA-produced video on courtesy.

USDA is currently training 225 facilitators to roll out a customized courtesy training program to 40,000 employees across the nation.

GTE Directories Corporation believes that training is not an expense, but an investment. It designed and offers a two-day orientation on quality customer care, which is given weekly or upon request. This course covers all customer service topics, including telephone techniques and handling customers effectively.

One training department at Federal Express has been dedicated to educating employees about courteous behavior. Employees dealing with the public receive six weeks of training on interacting with customers.

SECTION 1.6

HIRING TECHNIQUES

World-class organizations use formal and informal screening techniques to hire employees with exceptional skills in courtesy. People seeking employment with any of our study partners will

find the hiring process both fascinating and thorough. Interviews with structured feedback from up to 10 different people are not uncommon in organizations with outstanding reputations for courtesy. Some use formal testing such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Style Inventory, while others have developed a rigorous screening and interview process to select those employees who now possess or who have the potential to develop exceptional customer service skills. Across the board, the message was “hire right” to ensure high levels of exceptional courtesy and overall service excellence.

Our partners all agreed that it is important to hire people who already have a predisposition to service excellence. Organizations with reputations for world-class courtesy stress the importance of finding and hiring individuals who already have strong customer service skills. Combined with proper training, these strong skills become exceptional skills.

The patient representative positions at the Portland VA Medical Center are filled based on the candidate’s proven record of successful customer relations. In addition to the skills and knowledge needed about the clinical management system at Portland, the final success of the patient representative lies with his or her ability to see creative options for problem solving. The Portland patient rep calls this type of problem solving “thinking outside the box.”

USAA’s hiring practices ensure that employees have the qualifications and background needed to support a courteous environment. The hiring standards require that service representatives be college graduates (internal candidates excepted), take a specialized skills and aptitude test, and participate in a series of interviews.

Nordstrom believes there is no mystery to its outstanding reputation for customer service. Its approach is simply to hire “nice” people. Combining nice folks with Nordstrom customer service training guarantees that customers will be treated with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect.

SSA, in hiring field office representatives, looks for candidates with outstanding interpersonal skills, compassion, and an ability to grow

and learn. To be hired, applicants must participate in a panel interview and role play for the prospective job. SSA knows that the first contact a customer might have with the agency is during a telephone call to its 1-800 number. The service representatives the agency hires therefore must be dynamic, sensitive, and well-informed.

The Ritz-Carlton has taken a very proactive role in making sure it hires the right people for the right job. It created a standard for hiring for each position in its organization. It implemented a “character trait recruiting” program which reduces service variability among employees, acts as an aid to productivity, and has reduced turnover by 50 percent. Once applicants complete the initial screening, it is not unusual for them to complete several more interviews before being selected.

SECTION 1.7

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

First, measure and assess customer expectations for courtesy, then systematically work toward exceeding their expectations.

Ultimate Support Systems, Inc.

Courtesy is measurable. Our partners all had systems for measuring courtesy within the context of their customer service initiatives. Measuring courtesy with any degree of accuracy requires capturing information on the perceptions of the customer following an interaction with a member of the organization. To understand the significance of that perception, the organization needs to know the customer’s expectations prior to that transaction. This

requires that the organization use focus groups, complaint data, or other tools to assess the expectations of their customers.

Each organization determined acceptable outcomes by first learning what their customers expected. Focus groups and customer surveys were used by some partners, but the most prevalent method of determining customer expectations was to talk to the customers. Employees at all levels were encouraged to ask customers how services offered were meeting their expectations and what suggestions they had for improving those services. As a mid-level supervisor stated, “there is no substitute for getting the customer’s perspective on things first hand.”

USDA’s Forest Service created and uses customer surveys and personal inquiries. Every visitor to a national park is given a customer survey card upon exiting.

Since 1991, the GTE Directories Corporation has used its Customer Satisfaction Measurement Program to collect and analyze data on customers’ perceptions on courtesy, value, and other expected customer services. This program provides a mechanism for the company to listen to its customers; anticipate their needs; and respond with appropriate products, services, processes, and improvements.

So Ultimate Support Systems, Inc., can improve services wherever possible, it collects and records all customer feedback on its products as well as on staff behaviors, including courtesy. The information collected is then used for continual improvement within the company.

The Customer Service Evaluation System developed by DeCA is used to survey 70,000 patrons in over 300 commissaries. The agency has also activated a customer hotline and an employee action line so customers and employees can lodge complaints, make suggestions, or express their satisfaction.

The Portland VA Medical Center uses a variety of tools to measure customer satisfaction. These include direct lines for customers and employees and several different types of surveys—for example, the National VA Customer Feedback Survey, the ONE-VA

Employee Survey, and numerous hospital-based surveys.

SSA uses several different instruments to ask customers what is important to them and how well SSA is doing. These include:

- regional and local customer comment cards,
- national Office of the Inspector General customer satisfaction surveys,
- courtesy self-assessment surveys,
- exit and entrance surveys, and
- customer focus groups.

USAA not only uses repeated written surveys, customer meetings, and focus groups, but takes it all one step farther by contacting customers who have canceled their policies. The information gathered from these interviews is used to continuously improve customer service.

In order to stay on top, companies need to have a clear understanding of their customers' needs and expectations. The Ritz-Carlton does—by using extensive research tools, focus groups, information gathered through employees' daily contact with customers, and from guest and travel planner satisfaction systems. The company also makes it simple for customers to voice their needs and expectations by having available:

- customer service managers 24 hours a day,
- customer comment cards,
- toll free numbers, and
- an automated system used by employees to capture guest information.

SECTION 1.8

SEAMLESS SERVICE

Customers expect pleasantness and courtesy when they deal with you—but they also expect results.

**Forest Service
Customer Service Pledge**

- Visitors will always be welcomed with prompt and courteous service.
- Our offices, worksites, and visitor centers will open at times convenient to our customers.
- Customers will receive the services and information they request, or we will explain why we cannot meet the request.
- Customers will be fully informed of the procedures required for grants, agreements, contracts, and permits; and we will respond in a timely manner.
- Customers will be asked regularly to help us improve our services and business practices.
- Our facilities will be safe, clean, attractive, and informative.
- Our facilities and programs will be accessible to persons of all ages and abilities.

Courtesy is a major contributor in providing seamless service to customers. Seamless service implies no “hand-offs,” or at least the appearance, from the customer’s perspective, of no hand-offs. In fact, hand-offs normally do occur even in the best companies or agencies but the difference lies in how they are done.

Our partners understand the importance of reducing the number of employees with whom customers must speak before they receive the service they want. Important strategies include the development and use of toll-free numbers and centralized customer assistance centers. These services are widely publicized to customers to promote their use and ensure “one-stop shopping” and seamless service. As an example, one of our partners routinely gets questions from its guests regarding the location of certain areas within the facility. The response to these requests (hand-offs) is to first answer the customer’s questions

courteously, and then to escort them personally to the location they requested. That's seamless service.

With the introduction of high technology, employees at USAA can access the customer's full history from their computer workstations during the first contact. They then can answer the customer's questions with a touch of a button.

The saying "When you see a problem, you own it" is followed by all employees at The Ritz-Carlton. If a customer stops an employee and asks a question, that employee is responsible for finding out the answer for that customer.

The Portland VA Medical Center's goal is to be known as the most caring and courteous medical center in the community. All facilities, equipment, and organizational policies and procedures are redesigned as needed to remove obstacles to the patient's ability to receive quality health care and superior personal service.

At DeCA, the experience of shopping for food has been taken to a new level. All employees are instructed to follow through on any ques-

tions asked by their customers. If a customer asks for the location of an item, the DeCA employee is to escort that customer to the item and, if necessary, help retrieve it. DeCA also has Customer Service Support Teams present at all times to help customers with their needs. These team members are dressed in special outfits so customers can find them easily.

The SSA field offices are, to a large extent, run by the employees. They know how to please their customers, and they have the ability and tools to make all decisions necessary for their jobs. SSA has also created a world-class call center with its 1-800 number. This center completes 80 percent of all calls the first time.

SECTION 1.9 DISCOURTEOUS SERVICE

In world-class organizations, there is no tolerance whatsoever for discourteous service. That's because, of the three most important elements of customer service—timeliness, quality, and courtesy—only discourteousness will cause customers to go elsewhere, regardless of the timeliness or quality of service provided.

Our partners clearly emphasized that discourteous behavior is every employee's responsibility and must be addressed immediately. While intentional discourtesy is rare, behavior *perceived* as discourteous by the customer is more prevalent—and perception, to the customer, *is* reality. World-class organizations need a "zero tolerance" policy for discourteous behavior. Such a policy should be supported by clear and timely processes that can either retrain or remove the employee from a customer service role. Remember: For every customer who complains directly to management, there are at least 10 more who complain to their friends and associates. The damage done to an organization by discourteous behavior is thus severe and lasting. Discourteous behavior will, of itself, cause customers to make choices detrimental to an organization's success. Even if the services provided cannot be easily obtained elsewhere,

Some Ritz-Carlton Basics

- All employees will know the needs of their internal and external customers.
- Each employee will continuously identify defects.
- Any employee who receives a customer complaint "owns" the complaint.
- React quickly to correct the problem.
- Smile—Always maintain positive eye contact. Use the proper vocabulary with our guests.
- Escort guests rather than pointing out directions to another area of the hotel.
- Be knowledgeable of hotel information.

the organization's reputation—and, ultimately, its survival—are endangered by unresolved discourtesy to customers.

Everyone experiences an occasional bad day. In world-class organizations, though, employees work hard to keep a bad day from leading to discourteous behavior toward customers and co-workers. These employees and their organizations also know the importance of a sincere apology. They listen attentively to dissatisfied customers and continue working with a customer until his or her problem is addressed. Most importantly, complaints are tracked and analyzed, and lead to decisions that improve customer service.

DeCA Customer Bill of Rights

Our customers have the right to:

Article I. Professional, courteous service.

Article II. A clean, pleasant store.

Article III. Fresh, high-quality merchandise.

Article IV. Well-stocked shelves.

Article V. The best possible prices.

Article VI. Quick, efficient checkout.

SECTION 1.10

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Growth through 100% customer satisfaction.

GTE Vision

The distinct message from each and every one of our partners is that courtesy increases customer loyalty. Our findings show that customers of

both business and government expect courteous treatment. Customer loyalty expressed by visitors comes from experiences that are truly exceptional and seamless. Getting to this level of courtesy—and staying there—is what this report is all about.

Customer loyalty is critical to the survival of all organizations. We learned that customer loyalty is significantly increased only when courtesy is exceptional. Customers interviewed during the study team's site visits described exceptional courtesy in a variety of ways:

- “The employees here treat me as an individual.”
- “They look me right in the eye when they talk to me.”
- “Once they meet you, they call you by your name from then on.”
- “They always seem glad to see me.”
- “They always have time for me; I never feel rushed.”
- “Employees here give me the impression they can personally address any problem I may have.”
- “These folks are very interested in my opinion about what kind of job they are doing and how they can make things better.”
- “I've actually seen how my opinion makes a difference here...they don't just listen, they act.”
- “No matter who I talk to, I'm treated with the same respect and courtesy.”
- “These people really seem to enjoy what they're doing!”

Exceptional courtesy is often that which is provided in a random and unexpected way so that it surprises and delights the customer. A classic example by The Ritz-Carlton to providing exceptional service is to capture and use customer data to anticipate customer needs. This means, for example, that a frequent guest returning to the hotel will find a special gift in the room such as a refrigerator filled with his or her most frequently requested beverage or snack.

100% customer satisfaction after every transaction.

Federal Express Motto

Many people have heard the story of the woman who was helped by Nordstrom employees with her flat tire in front of their store. The Nordstrom employees saw an opportunity to provide exceptional service and were empowered to act on it.

At Social Security, exceptional courtesy is the standard. It has developed the following pledge:

- We will provide service through knowledgeable employees who will treat you with courtesy, dignity, and respect every time you do business with us.
- We will provide you with our best estimate of the time needed to complete your request and fully explain any delays.
- We will make sure our offices are safe and pleasant, and our services are accessible.

- When you make an appointment, we will serve you within 10 minutes of the scheduled time.

Customer courtesy is an important part of DeCA's strategic plan. Employees are projecting more courtesy, and customers are noticing and appreciating it.

Thus, last December, a major in the Royal Netherlands Air Force, working with the 416th Flight Test Squadron, was shopping for the first time at the Edwards Air Force Base, California, commissary. Upon checking out, he discovered he could not use his European credit card to pay his grocery bill. The DeCA cashier volunteered to write a personal check to cover the major's total amount of purchase, \$273.

When the major repaid the debt the next day, he also expressed his appreciation for the outstanding service and trust he had been extended as a customer. His parting comments were: "It's good to know America still has outstanding people."

2. IMPLEMENTING WORLD-CLASS COURTESY

SECTION 2.1

QUICK TIPS FOR IMPROVING COURTESY

Be flexible. People's expectations regarding courtesy vary. Learn to take your lead from your customer. Quiet, reserved people tend to appreciate a more reserved and dignified sort of service. Loud, spirited people often like to know that the person they are talking to is "getting it." Use good judgment always, but be ready to stretch a little to make your style better match your customer's expectations.

Take some risks to delight and surprise the customer. Consider the chef who, upon realizing he sent a dinner to a table with the meat slightly overcooked, immediately went out to the table, sat down, took a bite from the overcooked meat and said, as the surprised couple looked on, "Hmm...I thought so, a bit overcooked. Please forgive me. The next one will be perfect and on me!"

Practice servant-leadership. Develop a passion for service and then put that passion to work in whatever position you now hold. If you are already a recognized leader in your organization, then serve as a mentor for others who wish to become servant-leaders.

Smile your best smile. Customers appreciate a pleasant atmosphere. A smile always helps. Use your smile frequently when dealing with

the public. You will come to enjoy the many benefits it will bring you and your customers.

Listen as if you mean it. The greatest compliment to another person is listening to them. *Really* listening. You have to listen as if you mean it. Sit up, take a few notes, ask clarifying questions, show some reaction to what is being said.

Call people back. If you must use voice mail, update your message daily, check it at least twice a day, and get back to people within one day at the latest. Returning calls has a direct relationship to dependability and dependability is the cornerstone of good customer service.

Demonstrate phone courtesy. The tone and pitch of your voice can assure the caller that you are sincere, friendly—and that you are listening. Create a vision for your caller that you are responsible and dedicated to resolving his or her issue.

Develop a team focus. Team work is definitely needed when it comes to improving courtesy. Demonstrate your team commitment on a daily basis.

SECTION 2.2

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING
WORLD-CLASS COURTESY

The following strategies are a composite of the ideas worked out by the team members for implementing world-class courtesy in their own agencies. Depending on your individual circumstances, these suggestions will hopefully serve to stimulate interesting and practical ideas.

Remember—Your journey toward world-class courtesy begins from where you are, not from where you wish you were. The important thing is to get started.

1. Establish credibility. Unless you are the CEO in your organization, you may want to first establish some credibility on this topic. Develop a good knowledge base of what world-class courtesy is, or could be, in your organization. You can start by reading this study thoroughly, marking those sections that look interesting, and taking some notes as you go along. You may also want to read several of the articles listed in the selected bibliography.

2. Determine your organization's attitude toward courtesy. Determine what your organization's current mission, vision, strategic plan, or value statements say about courtesy. With the issuance of the President's Executive Order 12862 on setting customer service standards, the enactment of the Government Performance Results Act of the 1995, and the National Performance Review's publication of customer service standards, you probably have a good basis for assessing your organization's current level of and attitudes toward customer service.

3. Take a "snapshot". Determine where in your organization might be the best place to take a "snapshot" of how courtesy is currently being practiced. Choose an office or section that already has an interest in knowing more about its customer service capabilities. If it's not obvious at first where to start, arrange a meeting with an appropriate official or committee to which you can provide a short briefing on the benefits of

looking at organizational behaviors leading to world-class courtesy.

4. Publicize, promote, and popularize.

Through information, actions, and tools, help your organization journey toward world-class courtesy:

- Send a copy of this report to the formal and informal leaders in your organization and ask for their thoughts and ideas. Use their suggestions as the basis for your next steps in moving toward an organizational culture that supports world-class courtesy.
- Help organize an action team that assesses the organization's current level of courtesy and establishes recommendations for improvement.
- Administer the Organizational Self-Assessment on Courtesy in section 2.4 to a randomly selected group of employees. Then perform the suggested analysis (see section 2.5) and present the findings to a group of individuals who are empowered to lead the organization toward world-class courtesy.
- If you have identified an interested group or section within your organization, let its employees complete the short Employee Courtesy Attitude Assessment in section 2.3. Use their answers and ideas to stimulate a discussion on courtesy. Use the survey's last question as a springboard for introducing this follow-up question: "What do you think we could do in our office to achieve that level of courtesy and service?"
- Summarize and publish your findings on courtesy in your newsletter or any similar publication that reaches the maximum number of employees within your organization.

S E C T I O N 2 . 3

The following short survey tool has been used successfully by members of the study team in soliciting information from their organizations and stimulating dialog in small discussion groups about improving courtesy. You can use this survey to gain some preliminary information from members of your organization—at all levels—regarding their beliefs about courtesy.

EMPLOYEE COURTESY ATTITUDE SURVEY

Date: _____

To: _____

Subject: **World-Class Courtesy**

We're reviewing a recently completed National Performance Review report on world-class courtesy, and we would like to gather some preliminary information from a random sample of staff in our organization. I would greatly appreciate it if you would answer the following brief questionnaire and return it to me by _____.

Please circle your answers on the following scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (not important).

1. When *you* are the customer, how important is "courteous behavior" compared to other characteristics of quality service that you value?

1 2 3 4 5
Very Important Neutral Not Important

2. As someone *who provides services* to customers, how important is "courteous behavior" compared to other characteristics of quality service that you value?

1 2 3 4 5
Very Important Neutral Not Important

3. Within your own work area, how would you rate the level of courtesy now practiced on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5
Very Important Neutral Not Important

4. Please list any organization or type of service where you have personally experienced world-class courtesy? What made this experience stand out in your mind?

S E C T I O N 2 . 4**ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT ON COURTESY**

This survey tool may be used to determine how close your organization is to providing world-class courtesy. Because this survey instrument will result in an item-by-item score as well as an aggregate score, it will be easy to assess and organize the findings. After reviewing it, feel free to reproduce or adapt it in any way to better meet your organization's customer service objectives. Use this survey with senior executive, mid-level supervisory, and nonsupervisory staff in your organization. The more employees who participate, the more useful the information will be.

ASSESSING COURTESY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

This self-assessment survey covers 10 areas organized as an easy-to-complete checklist. These 10 areas comprise important characteristics for an organization to consider in moving toward world-class courtesy. Answer this survey from your perspective in the position you presently occupy in the organization. Perspectives will differ from person to person, which makes the findings much more useful when they are discussed later.

For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions are provided.

COURTESY: *Using accepted and appropriate manners, as interpreted from the customer's perspective, to meet the expectations of the customer.*

WORLD-CLASS COURTESY: *Using exceptional manners, as interpreted from the customer's perspective, to exceed the expectations of the customer.*

Organizational Self-Assessment on Courtesy

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check either (Yes), (No), or (N/A) to all characteristics. When you are not completely sure which to select, check the answer closest to your current understanding of the situation being described. Only (Yes) answers count toward your final score.

1. The cultural climate reflects the organization's attitude toward meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

Yes No N/A

- () () () The physical environment (floor, halls, waiting areas, grounds, etc.) is attractive, clean, and otherwise conducive to meeting and exceeding customer expectations.
- () () () Senior management ensures that all staff members have a clear understanding of the organization's mission and key objectives.
- () () () There is a written document(s) that describes the organization's beliefs on how customers should be treated.
- () () () The organization's beliefs regarding courtesy are included in a written document provided to all employees.
- () () () Employees are provided with parking, food services, fitness and recreation facilities, and other comparable employee benefits.
- () () () The organization features employee amenities.
- () () () The organization solicits feedback from both customers and employees regarding the quality of service provided.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Employees who believe that they are valued partners in the organization are more likely to treat customers in the same way.

Possible strategy: Ask 10 customers currently using your services what their first impressions of your employees and environment were and why. Take notes. Discuss the results and make changes. Do this again in four months to see if there has been improvement.

Notes/ideas: _____

2. Senior leaders demonstrate by example the organization's commitment to exceptional courtesy.

Yes No N/A

() () () Leadership has developed a written strategy, mission, and vision that include courtesy.

() () () Senior managers demonstrate by personal example the organization's commitment to providing the highest quality service to customers.

() () () Mid-and entry-level supervisors demonstrate by personal example the organization's commitment to providing the highest quality of service to customers.

() () () Courtesy among employees is as important to Senior-, mid-, and entry-level managers as courtesy provided to customers.

() () () The organization's leadership development program includes a segment on courtesy.

() () () Leadership plays a significant role in new employee orientation.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Among world-class organizations, courteous behavior is an intrinsic and inseparable aspect of the customer service strategy, and is supported by senior leaders and all employees who seek to lead and improve the organization.

Possible strategy: Who in your organization seems to be a leader in courtesy? Seek out these people and talk to them about their approach to courtesy. Work with them to design and implement a courtesy program in your organization.

Notes/ideas: _____

3. Employees are empowered to fully meet the needs of their customers.

Yes No N/A

() () () Employees are fully empowered to perform their jobs at a high level of competency (e.g., sufficient training and mentoring, good computer support, functioning equipment, adequate space to perform their jobs, and strong management support).

() () () Employees are empowered to do whatever it takes to satisfy the customer.

() () () Employees are encouraged to be innovative, take risks, and seek out opportunities to improve services provided to customers.

Yes No N/A

() () () Employees are formally rewarded for outstanding work, skills, and accomplishments pertaining to customer service.

() () () Employees are informally rewarded for outstanding work, skills, and accomplishments pertaining to customer service.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Who in your organization is most likely to be the first person your customers will see or hear? You really need to focus on this idea and on this person: In his or her first few seconds of contact with the customer, this person will be seen as the exemplar of everything your organization knows about courtesy and customer service.

Possible strategy: Ask your employees what would better empower them in meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Act on these suggestions and give your employees what they need to do their job.

Notes/ideas: _____

4. Courtesy is practiced by everyone throughout the entire organization.

Yes No N/A

() () () Substantive efforts are made in this organization to provide and encourage the same level of courtesy to employees, contractors, and stakeholders as is provided to customers.

() () () Management and union representatives conduct business in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy.

() () () Employees are as courteous to and respectful of each other as they are to the external customers of the organization.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Employees treated with dignity and respect will provide the same to their customers and co-workers.

Possible strategy: Write down what you consider the three most important aspects of being a good friend. Now ask “Do I practice these behaviors with my co-workers? With my boss?” Reflect on your answers with an eye to possible improvements.

Notes/ideas: _____

5. Specific and ongoing training in courtesy is provided.
Yes No N/A

() () () Employee orientations specifically address the organization’s expectations regarding courtesy.

() () () Employee orientations include presentations by senior-level management on the organization’s expectations regarding customer courtesy.

() () () A training manual or other written material used for training exists that specifically addresses customer courtesy.

() () () Employees are given specific courtesy or customer service training.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Timely and innovative training should be linked to the organization’s key values and services.

Possible strategy: Create a list with two columns, one titled “Customer Service Goals” and the other “Training.” Write down your organization’s key customer service goals in the left column. Then list the completed or planned training for that goal in the right column. Are there any goals for which no training is offered? And, if you are providing training, who is attending? Should others also attend?

Notes/ideas: _____

6. Formal and informal screening techniques are used to hire employees with exceptional skills in courtesy.
Yes No N/A

() () () A screening protocol or process that addresses courtesy is used when hiring employees for positions requiring customer service skills (such as multiple interviews or personality testing).

() () () Customer courtesy is included as an element in an employee’s job or position description.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Can you imagine The Ritz-Carlton hiring a concierge who didn't smile, speak clearly, dress neatly, or seem particularly enthusiastic or helpful to customers? Why not? Because this hotel understands the requirements of a professional concierge and selects only those employees who are best suited and expertly trained for this type of work.

Possible strategy: Coordinate a meeting of key staff in your area of the organization and thoughtfully answer the following questions.

- How do you know you're hiring the right people for the right job?
- What options are available to you to ensure a "hire right the first time" model?
- How might your organization achieve the same certainty of success that The Ritz-Carlton has when hiring?
- What two things can your organization do now to begin needed improvements in this area?

Notes/ideas: _____

7. The organization establishes systems to measure the value of its services to customers.

Yes No N/A

- () () () At least one reliable and validated system of measuring customer feedback is used in this organization (e.g., customer survey cards, employee survey cards, team meetings, focus groups, complaint-handling system).
- () () () Data collected from this system are analyzed and distributed throughout the organization for review.
- () () () Specific improvements in customer service were made over the past year as a direct result of the system for measuring customer satisfaction.
- () () () Customer waiting times for services are monitored, analyzed, and otherwise used to produce continuous improvements in services.
- () () () An integrated and effective complaint-handling system is in place that is easily accessible to all customers in the organization.
- () () () Organization-specific customer service standards exist, and are periodically monitored, and results are provided back to the customer in a timely manner.
- () () () The organization solicits feedback regarding services provided.
- () () () Customers are encouraged to provide specific feedback regarding their perceptions about courtesies.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Characteristics that relate to courtesy like “sincerity,” “respect,” “dignity,” and “being treated as a valued person,” are best determined through the use of a validated survey tool that asks customers to determine whether, and to what degree, they feel these qualities were present.

Possible strategy: Ask 10 customers about the following behaviors they observed in your organization, then record the answers and discuss them with an appropriate courtesy team.

- **Initial contact**– Did your greeting include a smile and a handshake?
- **Use of eye contact**– Did employees maintain good eye contact with you?
- **Appearance**– Was the employee’s appearance neat, well-groomed, and appropriate for the setting?
- **Customer assessment**–Did you say anything to the employee that would imply satisfaction or concern?
- **Use of customer’s name**– Was your name used appropriately in the context of the dialog?
- **Tone of voice**– Did the employee’s tone reflect confidence, helpfulness, and friendliness?
- **Body language**– What effect did the employee’s body language and posture have on the interaction?

Notes/ideas: _____

8. Services are provided seamlessly from the customer’s perspective.

Yes No N/A

- () () () Computer technology and other technological support mechanisms are fully utilized to support employees who serve in a front-line role with the customer.
- () () () Front-line employees are encouraged and expected to take a prominent and active role in determining how to improve services to their customers.
- () () () Front-line employees are authorized to take whatever actions are required to ensure that customers receive the full measure of service expected by the organization.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: As your customers are transferred from one employee to another (handed off), their perception of your service quality will most likely decrease in satisfaction and expectations.

Possible strategy: Write three examples of what you consider to be seamless service between two parts of your organization. Then write two examples of what you consider poor hand-offs between two parts of your organization. What makes these situations different? What opportunities can you explore to improve the poor hand-offs? Where could you start immediately to apply these lessons to other parts of your organization?

Notes/ideas: _____

9. There is zero tolerance for discourteous service.

Yes No N/A

() () () Discourteous behavior *to customers*, if observed, is viewed by the vast majority of employees in the organization as a situation requiring their immediate attention.

() () () Discourteous behavior *among employees*, if observed, is viewed by the vast majority of employees in the organization as a situation requiring their immediate attention.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: Effective complaint-handling systems provide a pathway for quick resolution of allegations of discourteous service. How's your complaint-handling system?

Possible strategy: The next time you are waiting for a telephone call or have a few moments to spare, perform a quick check of your attitude and evaluate your performance in the midst of an otherwise hectic day. Ask yourself:

- How good was I with my last customer?
- Am I really listening to my customers to determine their needs?
- If I fail to meet my customer's expectations, do I apologize sincerely and stay with the customer until the problem is solved?

Notes/ideas: _____

10. Courtesy improves customer loyalty.

Yes No N/A

- () () () The vast majority of employees in this organization take pride in their ability to exceed customer expectations.
- () () () The organization presently enjoys a reputation within its community and among its peers as “best in class” in the area of customer support and services.
- () () () The organization has been publicly recognized for its outstanding customer service and support within the last year by an outside evaluator.
- () () () The organization spontaneously and frequently recognizes outstanding staff achievements.

_____ Total number of yes answers

Consider: World-class organizations strive for 100 percent customer satisfaction. How would a goal of 100 percent customer satisfaction work in your organization?

Possible strategy: Save articles with outstanding customer service ideas in a file. Keep this file and refer to it often in your customer service areas. Play “secret shopper” and explore customer service areas in other organizations rated as world-class. While visiting, rate the aspects of the organization that relate to your own.

Notes/ideas: _____

SECTION 2.5

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Survey Question	Number of Yes Answers
1. Culture Climate	()
2. Leadership	()
3. Employee Empowerment	()
4. Organizational Courtesy	()
5. Training	()
6. Hiring Techniques	()
7. Performance Measurements	()
8. Seamless Service	()
9. Discourteous Service	()
10. Customer Loyalty	()
Total number of yes answers	()

Organizations that provide world-class courtesy generally score at least 35 on this survey; a perfect score is 43.

Based on initial results from organizations that volunteered to pilot this self-assessment, a typical score is 24 or less. If you score substantially lower than 24, do not be discouraged. Each world-class organization went through the phase you are now in. They were committed to world-class courtesy, and never stopped identifying opportunities and implementing improvements.

You can do the same: Use the exercise to identify those areas in which you have opportunities for improvement. Plan, experiment, and implement in order to create an organizational culture that will be identified by the exceptional courtesy provided to your employees and customers.

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APPENDICES

A P P E N D I X I

REPORT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This report is intended as a best practices guide to world-class courtesy. The organizations studied and visited demonstrated to the team numerous characteristics of world-class courtesy at work.

In brief, the team's methodology in preparing this report was divided into four segments: (1) secondary research, (2) primary research, (3) collection and organization, and (4) final report preparation.

A kick-off meeting for all participating federal agencies was held at the study's outset and speakers from The Ritz-Carlton and the Social Security Administration discussed the important role courtesy plays in their organizations. General guidance from the National Performance Review staff and the report team leaders regarding the report's objectives, projected time lines, and expected level of commitment were also discussed.

This best practices report is a means of determining which businesses—public and private—are doing the best job in the specific area of courtesy, and then assessing the performance gap between the best-in-class organizations and your own. You should then create action plans to move your organization toward—and beyond—the best-in-class organizations.

A P P E N D I X I I

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was used to gather data from the best-in-class organizations identified during our primary research phase.

National Performance Review Field Questionnaire: World-Class Courtesy

Name of your organization: _____

Approximate number of employees: _____

Employee unions? Yes No *(Please circle the appropriate answer)*

Name and telephone number of contact person for this questionnaire: _____

1. Have you ever been asked by another organization or group to discuss your views on the concept of "courtesy"? Yes No

2. Is the concept of “courtesy” stated in your organization’s mission statement or some other document that directly relates to your organization’s objectives? Yes No
If yes, would you please name this document(s), and, if possible, fax a copy to us?

3. Does your organization have a definition that pertains to the concept of “courtesy”? Yes No
If yes, would you share it with us in the space below?

4. Does your organization describe in some document the manner in which employees are expected to treat their fellow employees? Yes No
If yes, could you fax a copy of this document to us?

5. Do you look for particular qualities when hiring that relate to a person’s ability to successfully interact with customers? Yes No
If yes, would you briefly describe your selection method(s), including those traits you look for in potential employees?

6. Do you provide training to employees regarding “courtesy”? Yes No
If yes, would you please describe the type and frequency of training provided?

7. Who designs the content of your training?

8. How do you measure the effectiveness of your training efforts?

9. Can you approximate the percentage of your total training budget that deals directly with improving courtesy to customers? _____%

10. Are you able to measure (either directly or indirectly) the impact your organization’s emphasis on courtesy has on the profit margin? Yes No
If yes, could you briefly state how this is done?

11. Do you use any of the following feedback mechanisms?

- Customer surveys _____
- Employee surveys _____
- Customer focus groups _____
- Employee focus groups _____
- Customer complaint/feedback system _____

Employee complaint/feedback system _____

360-degree performance rating system _____

Other (please list) _____

If possible, would you fax us a copy of any of the above-mentioned surveys?

12. How would you define your organization's leadership style?
13. How do you feel the leadership style in your organization contributes to an environment that promotes courteous behavior?
14. What employee empowerment strategies do you use to ensure courteous behavior? We're specifically interested in how you empower your front-line employees when dealing with the customer.
15. What types of employee rewards and incentives are used in your organization to promote courteous behavior?
16. How are you able to determine if your rewards and incentives programs are effective?
17. Please describe briefly any "lessons learned" that would help us better understand the subject of customer or employee courtesy.
18. Please use the space below to include any other thoughts or comments you may have regarding the concept of "courtesy" or this questionnaire.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

NATIONAL
PERFORMANCE
REVIEW **AL GORE**
Vice President of the United States



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