

The Township of Ramara

# CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

2022-2025



***'Kindness and  
courtesy are at the  
root of a positive  
customer service  
experience.'***  
**~ Shep Kyken**

# CUSTOMER SERVICE AT THE TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA

Today, many organizations are faced with significant challenges in the area of customer service and service delivery, both internally and externally. The constant change in demographics coupled with high customer expectations is making organizations rethink their customer service strategies.

With this revelation, the Township of Ramara needs to reflect and adapt to these changes in expectations to ensure that they are providing residents with efficient and reliable services that are offered both online and in person.

This strategy is a result of a series of consultations, research, collaboration, and best practice review. The goal of the strategy is to link citizen expectations of services with achievable standards that unite to create a positive customer service experience. Overall, the Township wants to create a positive customer service culture.



# What we know:

- In 2021, the Township received 42,635 calls and 1,972 in person visits.  
**\*Please note that the Township fully opened on September 7, 2021, so the data for 2021 is skewed with on and off closures. The Township Administration building was open to the public for Financial services for 173 days and fully open for 75 of those days.**
- With the 42,635 calls made to the Township, the majority of calls go to the following departments:
  - Building and Planning
  - Finance
  - Bylaw Enforcement
  - Infrastructure
- In 2021, our Administrative staff at the Township of Ramara building
  - Received 74% of the calls in 2021
  - Had an average ring time of 3 seconds
  - Spent 1,263 hours on the phone
- In 2021, the Township had 66,779 new visitors to the website with 292,962 page views. Comparably, there were 150% more page views in 2021 to 2019. Visitors in 2021 viewed these pages more frequently:
  - Homepage
  - Permit Parking Page
  - Contacts Page
  - Employment Page
  - Zoning Page
- Over the last three years, Ramara has received the following service requests/complaints:
  - 1231 in 2019
  - 1187 in 2020
  - 1263 to date in 2021
- Less than half of the Township departments use the Service Request/Complaint Management System. There is an opportunity to expand and optimize its use across the organization.

- Since 2020, our overall workforce is down. The following departments are impacted the most by this deficiency.
  - Planning is down 50%
  - Building is down 40%
  - Infrastructure is down 20%
  - Legislative is down 25%
  
- Over the past year, the Township has seen a significant change in the ability to recruit new employees. In the past, several qualified resumes would be received in a two-week period with interviews occurring shortly after. Overall, this process would take approximately a month and a position would be filled. Currently, positions are posted and rarely qualified resumes are received resulting in positions being re-posted. This results in positions being vacant for longer periods of time.
  
- 63% of residents feel that they received Fairly good value and very good value for the programs and services that they receive.
  
- 79% of residents would like to provide input for the purpose of influencing decision making about Township projects and services.
  
- When asked how residents would like to be contacted by staff
  - 56% preferred email
  - 52% preferred phone
  - 25% preferred in-person

Please note that residents were offered to select more than one choice.



# VISION

Creating a consistent customer service experience with realistic and achievable standards and expectations.



# PRINCIPLES

**PROFESSIONALISM**

**QUALITY**

**CONSISTENCY**

**POSITIVITY**

# Customer Service Principles

1

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

We recruit and train staff to provide great customer service and recognize those employees who exceed expectations.

2

## **QUALITY**

We are committed to improving our customer service practices through performance management.

3

## **CONSISTENCY**

We have agreed upon standards for customer service and service delivery.

4

## **POSITIVITY**

We create a culture that endorses a positive customer service experience.

# FOCUS AREAS

# Focus Area 1: Accessible Services

*Provide services to residents that are easy to access and understand.*

## GOAL

**Increase access to services at Township facilities.**

**Expand knowledge sharing between departments.**

## ACTION

- Investigate extending operating hours to increase access to customer service representatives.
- Utilize partnership with the Ramara Township Public Library to support access to digital services.
- Utilize community centers to help increase access.
  
- Create an internal document that outlines contacts and other important information such as FAQs.
- Improve internal communication to ensure that all staff are updated on process and service changes that occur in other departments.
- Expand the use of GIS internally and train staff accordingly.
- Continue a customer service committee that will consist of administrative staff that will meet quarterly to discuss any concerns, issues and things going well.

# OUTCOME

**Expand information and services online and in print**

**Create a customer service hub that will help in providing first-response answers.**

**Develop and implement consistent messaging**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2022-2025**

# ACTION

- Ensure departments update online information regularly to ensure information is up to date and accurate.
- Add other topics to the News and Notices subscription list for residents to receive them via email.
- Promote and utilize the Community Calendar to increase awareness. Encourage community groups to post to the calendar.
- Expand the use of GIS externally
  - Add Zoning Bylaw in 2022
- Provide information and train administration staff on providing first-response answers to residents to reduce call back.
- Create an internal and external document that provides the answers to commonly asked questions
- Create a Citizen Portal that provides residents a 'one-stop' shop to information such as their tax/utility bills, news, other information.
- Develop external and internal messaging specific for each department, i.e. out of office, service request follow up, etc.
- Develop and implement a communication schedule to ensure residents are informed on changes to services or programs.

# Focus Area 2: Efficient Services

*Provide clear and easily understood expectations to citizens and staff and commit to ongoing improvements through routinely measured performance.*

## GOAL

**Create, implement and report on attainable service standards**

**Survey quarterly citizens' satisfaction with our services**

## ACTION

- Create service standards that are attainable and achievable.
- Review service standards yearly to ensure optimal performance and to make necessary changes.
- Report to Council once a year on service standard changes and statistics.
  
- Survey will be sent to residents in the following way during the customer service exchange:
  - Email
  - in person
  - Link posted on social media, website and other modes of communication.
- Survey will examine their recent customer service experience.

# GOAL

**Develop and execute an internal and public communication campaign to create awareness and understanding of service expectations.**

**Review and analyze department processes to improve performance and meet best practices to optimize the customer and end user experience.**

# ACTION

- Internal campaign will consist of training, information sheets, and discussions to ensure understanding and expectations.
- External campaign will consist of website information, social media, public notifications, media release and other communication publication.
  
- Initiate a process review of services offered by each department.
  - Document the processes
  - Set performance metrics
  - Review and discuss process changes
  - Incorporate technology, if needed.
  
- Processes will be shared internally to ensure that staff have access to processes and process changes.
- Create position manuals that incorporate processes and information pertained to that position.

# GOAL

**Review and expand the use of our complaint/work order system and align service expectations and delivery.**

**Regular review of department staffing needs.**

# ACTION

- Review of our 'report a concern' practices and processes to ensure that customers can easily access the form and submit their concerns.
- Review work order system practices and processes to ensure that all applicable departments are meeting best practices and service standards.
- Regular review between the Manager of HR and Directors to ensure that departments are staffed to meet service standards.
- In 2022, the following staffing needs in the following departments will be addressed:
  - Building and Planning  
Administrative Support.
  - Bylaw Administrative Support
  - Infrastructure - Manager

# Focus Area 3: Customer Service Culture

*Enhance the Township's customer service culture through recognition and clear objectives*

## GOAL

**Engage residents and employees in process improvements in response to feedback.**

**Create a recognition program for employees, residents and volunteers**

## ACTION

- Increase engagement opportunities to the community through multiple communication channels.
  - Surveys (Paper and online)
  - Public meetings
  - Website
- Increase opportunity for all staffing levels to collaborate together in response to process improvements.
- Create a recognition program for internal staff that recognizes their excellence in customer service and service delivery.
- Create a recognition program for our residents/volunteers that would recognize their effort.

# GOAL

**Hire and train staff on practices and service standards. Train staff yearly on customer service practices and standards.**

**Create a platform that ensures staff are updated on service and policy changes.**

# ACTION

- Train on customer service standards and other service standards
  - Provide yearly training on dealing with difficult customers
  - Provide cross training to improve customer help and first-time response.
  - Review job descriptions and recruitment tools to include customer service competencies.
- 
- Develop and implement an intranet that will provide internal access to news, notices, links and up to date information.

# **SERVICE STANDARDS**

# CUSTOMER SERVICE



Phone inquiries will be returned in **2 Business Days.**

*Staff's response, within two business days, may not provide a complete resolution, but will be an acknowledgment that the message has been received.*



E-mail inquiries will be returned in **2 Business Days.**

*Staff's response, within two business days, may not provide a complete resolution, but will be an acknowledgment that the message has been received.*



Social Media inquiries will be returned in **2 Business Days.**

*Staff's response, within two business days, may not provide a complete resolution, but will be an acknowledgment that the message has been received.*