

**PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
JOHN B. COLEMAN LIBRARY**

**The Ten Commandments of
“Quality Library Customer Service”**

A primary goal of the *John B. Coleman Library* is to provide “quality library customer service” to our users. Nothing undermines the progress of a library’s efforts more than having a bad relationship with its users or patrons. Today, customer service includes fielding telephone calls, responding to E-mail and Web site inquiries. To insure that the *John B. Coleman Library* practices continuous positive customer care, please remember the following guidelines, and remind other staff members to do the same.

1. BETWEEN 7:00AM AND DESIGNATED CLOSING TIME.

While the Library opens at 7:00am, most Prairie View A&M University offices open at 8:00AM. It is our responsibility to insure that Library telephone coverage is provided at that time and continuously until the designated closing time. If the assigned person is unavailable, it is the responsibility of the department head or manager to insure coverage. If the department head or manager is not on campus, it is the responsibility of the designated backup to assume this responsibility.

The telephone response should include the following information:

- *Name of Department*
- *Your Name*
- *“How may I help you?”*

2. KEEP CUSTOMERS INFORMED OF MAJOR CHANGES.

From time to time, a major changes or problem may occur in your department. If e-mail is available, management should provide a daily status update of the situation to customers. In the absence of the supervisor, this becomes the responsibility of the supervisor’s designee. Should E-mail be unavailable, FAX or telephone should be used. As a last resort, student workers should deliver written communication to the customer community. A follow-up communication informing customers of the final outcome of a major problem should be provided.

3. PROJECT A POSITIVE IMAGE

No one likes a negative attitude.

It is important for the John B. Coleman Library staff to always project a positive image. Do not criticize other members of the Library or the Prairie View A&M community or gossip to the customers. It is not professional and is inappropriate.

4. DEVELOP A METHOD TO TRACK REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

When working with customers, it is important to document requests made of you or your department. This will permit your department to regularly review your outstanding assignments and insure service to the Library customer. These records could be easily maintained using Microsoft Office programs. Review requests on a regular basis and make sure to meet your deadlines. It is also important that the customer is aware of the status of their request. A status report should be provided to customers on a regular basis.

5. PRACTICE DISCRETION

It may be difficult at times, but try to maintain an even disposition with customers. Regardless of the situation, it is important for customers to have a positive outcome when dealing with Library departments, offices, or service desks, both in person and on the telephone. If a customer believes he/she is receiving negative feedback, they will probably avoid further contact with the Library, and file complaints through the University system. This is not how we want to do business, or the image that the Library intends to project.

If you find yourself unable to control the situation, politely excuse yourself from the situation and immediately inform your supervisor of the matter. Request that he/she speak with the customer directly.

6. RETURN TELEPHONE CALLS AND E-MAILS

We all receive many telephone requests and e-mail inquiries. It is important that we are diligent in returning calls and following up on e-mail communications. This includes making sure that your voice mail is checked periodically throughout the day. It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to insure that all customer requests are addressed in a timely manner.

7. DEFER - NEVER REFUSE – A REQUEST FOR SERVICE

When working with customers, especially dealing with issues viewed as serious by the client, **DO NOT** refuse service. It is important to present a positive customer service attitude.

If you are not prepared to handle the situation, you should defer an answer to your supervisor. Record the information and forward it to your supervisor with a notation that you take exception to the request or question its necessity. The manager must provide follow-up to these situations with the customers. Remember that the purpose of a chain-of-command in a department is to insure that both internal staff and customers have a “next” level to which they can appeal. Use this practice whenever necessary.

8. PROPER E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

E-mail is a relatively new means of communication and requires some structure.

Always complete the subject field in an e-mail message and include a signature if your e-mail software provides this utility. It should include your name, title, address, telephone and fax number. E-mails should be checked for correct grammar and accuracy before sending.

9. PROCESS WEB SITE QUERIES DAILY

If your department has a web site with a return e-mail address, it is the department's responsibility to respond to customer request in a timely manner. Responses should be checked for correct grammar and accuracy before responding.

10.INSURE THAT STAFF ARE TRAINED IN DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES

In most cases, Library staff will have occasion to interact with customers daily. It is the manager's responsibility to insure that the staff is informed of department procedures and that they accurately record and follow through with information requested from your department by customers.

Each staff member should be provided with a copy of the Library Handbook and access to all University and System policies and procedures manuals. Most of the University and System policies are available online through the Human Resources Department. Others may be located in the Library's Administrative Offices. Library procedure manuals and policies should be updated on a regular basis to insure that staff are knowledgeable and have a reliable reference to refer to when communicating with customers.

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Updated: September 5, 2008

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