

Case Study



“Customer First does exactly what it says on the tin – it emphasises the importance of the customer at all levels and their impact on service delivery”

Who Are You?

University of Exeter – Corporate Services

What is Your Customer First Status?

Achieved compliance in May 2009

Why Go For Customer First?

- To fully integrate the many diverse business areas of Corporate Services
- Improve our customers experience
- Continuous improvement
- Ensure the needs of our customers are fully understood

What Were The Benefits of Being Assessed?

- The self-assessment process makes you take a long, hard look at exactly how you operate
- It provides an opportunity to identify areas for improvement
- The two stage process allows you to give detailed information about some of the processes and initiatives that may not be fully investigated during external assessment

What Improvements Followed?

- Cross-departmental working united the different teams within Corporate Services
- We introduced a customer satisfaction index which monitors year on year improvements
- New customer research initiatives have been introduced
- We now have a renewed understanding of the importance of being truly customer focused

Why Are You Recommending Customer First?

- The Customer First Standard was perfect for us as it provided a user-friendly customer-focused framework for continuous improvement
- The Standard also emphasises the importance of the customer at all levels

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“Customer First UK has been at the core of our work towards improving the customer experience and has provided Corporate Services with a shared goal and an opportunity to work together to achieve the Standard”

As part of the University of Exeter, Corporate Services encompasses a variety of services comprising Campus Services, Finance, Legal and Estate Development Services, Quality and Training, Sport, and Procurement, all of which are committed to working towards the provision of an efficient and pleasant experience for all customers, staff, and visitors.

Their primary aims are to improve the infrastructure of the University's campuses; continually improve all student, staff and visitor facing services; efficiently and effectively deliver outputs to their customers, and improve the quality of management and customer information they provide.

Corporate Services was formed in 2007 with the key objective of integrating the many diverse business areas within the University. This has been achieved with the help of Customer First.

When taking on the Customer First Standard, Corporate Services felt they had been provided with a framework on which they could focus their programme of continuous improvement. The Standard also supported a wider cultural shift which ensured that the needs of customers were fully understood and at the centre of all processes and procedures.

The assessment process allowed departments to work together towards gaining achievement, through taking a hard look at exactly how they operated and the procedures and levels of customer focus they already had in place. They could then work to identify areas for improvement and action any necessary changes prior to the formal assessment.

In working towards their final assessment, Corporate Services made huge efforts to involve everybody within the department in a variety of ways. The production of a Customer First Newsletter was completed for all staff to read, detailing vital information about the upcoming assessment. A section of the Corporate Services website was also dedicated to informing staff about Customer First. What it is, how it works, and why Corporate Service decided to work towards achievement. Links were also provided to Customer First literature and presentations, which highlighted the vast amount of overall support for staff during the achievement process. This in itself is a great credit to the department, as it provides the evidence that the whole of Corporate Services really are striving to put their customers first.

As a result of their hard work, Corporate Services now know that a genuine customer-focused approach is embedded within their department across all levels, and believe that their staff understand the importance of, and want to be part of such a forward thinking organisation.

With ever increasing competition between Universities, not just nationally but also internationally, the University of Exeter, a top 10 University, is now putting itself on the map by providing its customers with a standard of service and business excellence which exceeds their expectations.

