

## Positive Customer Experiences

Customers generally want four kinds of treatment in any interaction:

- **Friendly, caring, respectful service** — People want to feel as if their needs are important to you and your organization and feel that they are treated in a respectful and friendly way. This includes such things as giving information and answering questions.
- **Flexibility** — People want the person who helps them to be able to “jiggle” the system to make it work for them when the present situation does not totally meet their needs.
- **Problem solving** — When people have problems that need some attention, they want to know that you are able to figure out a solution. They want to know that they will not be transferred or shuffled around and left with the feeling that they are responsible for taking care of the problem.
- **Recovery** — If a mistake is made, people want it to be taken care of quickly and to their satisfaction. They want some kind of action that recognizes a mistake has been made and that every effort is being made to correct it. This includes acknowledging the mistake, with an apology.

Adapted from Creating Satisfied Citizens and Customers for Local Government, Kaset International.

## Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is not the same as customer service. Customer service is measured by standards you set. Customer satisfaction is measured by the customer's standards, whether or not they make sense to you. Customer satisfaction is the relationship between what the customer expects and what s/he perceives s/he receives. Expectations might include:

- **Availability or accessibility of service:** the degree to which your customers can readily and easily contact you.
- **Responsiveness of service:** how promptly you can react to customer needs.
- **Timeliness of service:** whether you can provide service within the customer's stated and/or negotiated time frame.
- **Comprehensiveness of service:** the degree to which the service is complete and covers the range of your customer's needs.
- **Pleasantness of service:** the degree to which you use a suitable professional behavior and manner while working with customers.
- **Reliability of service:** whether your organization does what it promises customers it will do.
- **Overall satisfaction with service:** the degree to which the customers are satisfied with what they ultimately receive.